



BOOKLET
SERIES

CONFRONTING ANTI-ISRAEL BIAS

ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT ISRAEL

StandWithUs

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Arab League countries

Non-Arab countries

* Iran is not an Arab country, but it is a Muslim theocracy that sponsors terrorism.



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About This Booklet

This booklet is the result of StandWithUs staff thinking critically about common questions and accusations about Israel and coming up with factual, direct, and concise answers. As a nonpartisan education organization, we also represent and consider diverse political perspectives. Our process can be broken down into the following steps, which we encourage you to use to think critically on your own:

1. **Educate yourself:** learn the basics about Israel and the conflict.
2. **Understand the question:** identify what exactly the question is referring to by using your prior knowledge or looking it up.
3. **Do the research:** check reliable sources from different perspectives to learn about the issue.
4. **Answer:** analyze the information you gathered and answer the question as directly as possible using facts and context.

We welcome your questions and feedback.

Aren't the Jews in Israel white European colonialists?

Accusing Jews and Israel of “colonialism” is dehumanizing and inaccurate. Jews are a diverse ethnic and religious group who are indigenous to Israel, the birthplace of their unique identity, language, and culture. They have maintained a well-documented presence there for over 3,000 years, including in cities like Jerusalem, Hebron, and Tiberias. For Jews around the world, yearning to be free in their ancestral home has always been an important part of Jewish identity. The families of most Israeli Jews lived across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia before they returned to Israel. As for the Israeli Jews who fled persecution in Europe, they did not represent European colonial powers. They were fighting for the same rights all peoples deserve: self-determination in their ancestral home. The “colonialism” narrative does nothing but fuel endless hatred and conflict. Both Jews and Palestinians have a connection to the land, and neither group is going anywhere. There can be no justice or peace without accepting that reality.



Wasn't the establishment of Israel a grave injustice to the Palestinians?

In an act of historical justice, the international community recognized that after millennia of persecution and expulsions, the Jewish people had a right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland. At the same time, Israeli leaders accepted the UN's 1947 plan to divide the Jewish homeland, so Palestinian Arabs could establish history's first Palestinian state. Israel also granted equal rights to 160,000 Arab citizens who remained in the country after the 1948 war. Unfortunately, Arab leaders refused to accept a Jewish state, no matter how small, and dismissed any compromises that would protect the rights and independence of both peoples. Instead, they launched an unsuccessful war to seize the whole territory, with disastrous consequences for the majority of Palestinians. The violent extremism of Palestinian and Arab leaders was, and continues to be, an injustice to Israelis and Palestinians alike.



STATE OF ISRAEL IS BORN

The first independent Jewish State in 19 centuries was born in Tel Aviv as the British Mandate over Palestine came to an end at midnight on Friday, and it was immediately subjected to the test of fire. As "Medinat Yisrael" (State of Israel) was proclaimed, the battle for Jerusalem raged, with most of the city falling to the Jews. At the

same time, President Truman announced that the United States would accord recognition to the new State. A few hours later, Palestine was invaded by Moslem armies from the south, east and north, and Tel Aviv was raided from the air. On Friday the United Nations Special Assembly adjourned after adopting a resolution to appoint a mediator but without taking any action on the Partition Resolution of November 29.

Yesterday the battle for the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road was still under way, and two Arab villages were taken. In the north, Acre town was captured, and the Jewish Army consolidated its positions in Western Galilee.

Most Crowded Hours in
Palestine's History

JEWS TAKE OVER
SECURITY ZONES

Egyptian Air Force Spitfires
Bomb Tel Aviv: One Shot Down

U.S. RECOGNIZES
JEWISH STATE

Proclamation by Head
Of Government

Isn't a Jewish state, by definition, racist and undemocratic?

Jews, both secular and religious, are a people who have the right to self-determination. What is racist is denying Jews a right granted to all other peoples who are bound together by shared identity and heritage. Israel was established as a democratic state in 1948. When the UN recommended establishing a Jewish state in 1947 and admitted Israel as a member in 1949, it saw no contradiction between Israel's Jewish and democratic identity. Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, is one of the world's most diverse countries. Non-Jewish citizens, who make up 25 percent of Israel's population, have equal rights under the law. Over 15 religions are officially recognized, women and LGBTQ+ people are legally protected from discrimination, and countless Israelis work to make their society more just through affirmative action and other programs.

Isn't Israel's Law of Return a form of racism against non-Jews?

No. Israel's Law of Return allows Jews from all over the world to immigrate to Israel and become citizens. It was adopted in 1950, as Jews were being persecuted and expelled from Arab states. This was also only five years after the end of the Holocaust, in which six million Jews were murdered and many others became refugees. As such, it was and remains central to Israel's existence as a safe haven for Jews facing antisemitic oppression around the world. Israel is also the homeland of the Jewish people, who have a right to self-determination there. Ireland, Finland, Greece, the Czech Republic, Croatia, and other democracies have similar laws giving immigrants with ethnic ties to those countries easier access to citizenship. This does not prevent Israel or any of these other nations from treating all of their current citizens equally under the law, regardless of their background.



Isn't Israel guilty of ethnic cleansing and genocide?

These are slurs that dehumanize and incite hate against Israelis. According to Benny Morris, the most prominent historian of the Palestinian refugee crisis, “ethnic cleansing was not carried out” during the 1948 war. Regarding who created the refugees, Morris wrote that “responsibility is split among [Israel], the Palestinians and the Arab countries—with enormous responsibility lying with the Palestinians who started the conflict.” When Israel declared independence, it offered citizenship to all Arabs in its territory. One hundred sixty thousand accepted, and there are now over two million Arab citizens in Israel. Similarly, the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza has grown massively since the conflict began. Even during major conflicts like the horrific October 7th War, Israel has coordinated massive deliveries of humanitarian aid and taken active steps to avoid harming civilians. This is why more people have been killed during the current Syrian civil war than in the entire Arab-Israeli conflict since 1920. While both Israelis and Palestinians have suffered immensely, accusations of genocide or ethnic cleansing are offensive to actual victims of these crimes. The word “genocide” was created after the systematic murder of six million Jews. Using it to slander the Jewish state is either ignorant, hateful, or both.

Does Israel practice apartheid?

Israel is the opposite of an apartheid state. It is a multicultural democracy and the only free country in the Middle East, according to the human rights watchdog Freedom House. Labeling Israel an “apartheid state” is an insult to Israelis and victims of real apartheid regimes. Israeli law enshrines equal rights for all citizens, and minorities participate fully in public life. While Israel, like other multiethnic democracies, struggles with disadvantages its minorities face, its laws seek to eradicate inequality. Nor does Israel practice apartheid in the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinians are not citizens of Israel, and the vast majority do not want to be. They have been governed by their own leaders— Hamas and the Palestinian Authority—and most want their own state. Israeli measures like the security barrier do not exist to separate people based on religion or ethnicity but, rather, to protect Israeli civilians of all backgrounds from racist terrorist groups. When Palestinian leaders finally agree to peace, these measures will become unnecessary.



Why won't Israel simply leave the West Bank?

Israel has repeatedly offered territorial compromises, but Palestinian and Arab leaders have consistently said no to establishing the first Palestinian state in history. They said no in 1937, 1947, 2000, and 2008 because saying yes would have meant accepting Jewish rights to self-determination. Israel is in the West Bank because Jordan attacked Israel in 1967, Palestinian leaders have refused to make peace, terrorists from the area continue to endanger Israeli civilians, and Israel has no assurances that the Palestinian Authority can maintain law and order. In addition, Israel has legitimate claims to the territory, which is located in the heart of the Jewish people's ancestral homeland. When Palestinian leaders finally decide to make establishing their own state a higher priority than tearing down Israel, there can be compromises that will lead to peaceful coexistence.



Doesn't Israel realize that its presence in the West Bank is illegal?

Its presence is not illegal, despite that claim being made in a non-binding International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion and elsewhere. In a dissenting opinion, the Vice President of the ICJ stated that the body accepted this claim without considering any facts or evidence. Israel entered the West Bank only after being attacked by Jordan in 1967. Under customary law and the Hague Conventions, Israel was obligated to govern the area until peace was achieved. UN Resolution 242 (1967) assumed Israel would administer the territories until Arab countries were willing to negotiate new, more secure borders, as Egypt did in 1979 and Jordan did in 1994. Tragically, Palestinian leaders rejected every Israeli offer of peace and territorial compromise. Meanwhile, terrorists continue to threaten Israeli civilians, forcing Israel to maintain its security activity as agreed upon in the Oslo Accords. When Palestinian leaders finally say yes to peace, these issues can be resolved.

UN RESOLUTION 242

Are Israel's settlements in the West Bank illegal?

Settlements are an issue of political and legal controversy inside and outside of Israel. Many in the international community say settlements are illegal, but numerous legal scholars argue otherwise. Israel has legal, historic, and security claims to the West Bank, the cradle of Jewish history, which Palestinians want for their future state. Eugene Rostow, the former dean of Yale Law School, argued that the “Jewish right of settlement in the area is equivalent” to the Palestinian right to live there. Settlements do not violate UN Resolution 242 or Palestinian–Israeli agreements signed in the Oslo Accords. Even so, the built-up area of settlements covers only around two percent of the West Bank, and Israel even agreed to freeze building in existing settlements during negotiations in 2010. Settlements are one of many issues to be resolved in peace talks, which have failed primarily due to other factors. Israel's peace offers reflect its acceptance of Palestinian rights to self-determination. When Palestinian leaders also recognize the Jewish people's rights, the conflict can finally be resolved.

Aren't West Bank settlements the main obstacle to peace?

While the dispute over settlements is part of the problem, it is a symptom of the conflict and not its main cause. There were no settlements when Palestinian Arab leaders incited violence against Jews in 1920 or when Arab and Palestinian leaders launched wars and terrorism against Israel between 1948 and 1967. Israel tried to promote peace in 2005 by removing all settlements from Gaza and four large settlements in the West Bank, but instead terrorism and hostility *increased*. Israel offered to dismantle many West Bank settlements for peace in 2000 and 2008, but Palestinian leaders said no. When Palestinian leaders decide to negotiate in good faith, the settlements, which comprise roughly two percent of West Bank land, and other outstanding issues can be resolved.



Doesn't West Bank settler violence show that Israel doesn't want peace?

Violence by Israeli extremists in the West Bank is unacceptable. These extremists are a very small minority and have been widely condemned by Israelis, including many who live in settlements. Israeli authorities have also made efforts to prevent attacks against Palestinian civilians through arrests and other measures. Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority financially rewards deadly terrorism against Israeli civilians through a program known as “pay for slay,” and has allowed terrorist groups to grow unchecked in cities like Jenin. All of this violence must stop for there to be a lasting peace.



Photo by Yonatan Sindel/Flash90

When will Israel remove checkpoints, allowing Palestinians to move freely?

Checkpoints save lives. The hardships Palestinians face due to checkpoints are a direct result of the second intifada (2000 to 2005), when over 1,000 Israelis were brutally murdered by racist terrorist groups. As terrorism decreased after 2005, most checkpoints were removed. By 2012 only 10 permanent ones remained, and the human rights group B'Tselem reported that Palestinians could move relatively freely within the West Bank. The checkpoints that still exist remain vital to the safety of Israeli civilians, because there are still frequent attempts to attack Israelis and smuggle weapons into Israel. It is a tragedy that terrorists forced Israel to choose between making Palestinian lives more difficult and preventing Israelis from being murdered. However, this reality could change tomorrow if terrorists stopped hiding among civilians and attacking Israeli communities. When a genuine peace is achieved, most of the checkpoints will become unnecessary.



Isn't Israel's wall illegal according to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and a violation of human rights?

The International Court of Justice decision was a nonbinding advisory opinion with no standing in international law. Furthermore, the decision's legitimacy was highly questionable as nearly every liberal democracy objected to the ICJ even hearing the case. For example, the U.S. Congress declared that the ICJ was being used to promote a narrow, anti-Israel political agenda. The security barrier was built only to ensure human rights for Israelis of all religions and ethnicities and to separate racist terrorist groups from their intended victims. This is why international law experts have stated that the barrier is in fact a legal self-defense measure. Many other countries, including South Korea, India, Cyprus, Kuwait, and Northern Ireland, use similar barriers to protect their citizens.



India's security fence in Kashmir.

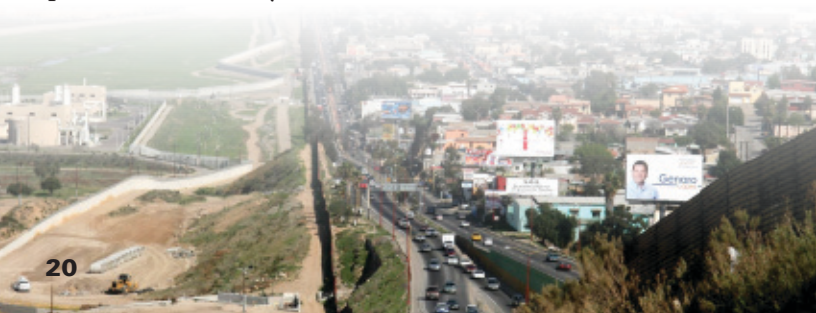


If the “apartheid wall” exists only to protect Israeli civilians, why does it cut through Palestinian towns and annex Palestinian land?

The security barrier was built because in 2000, racist terrorist launched the second intifada, a wave of brutal violence in which over 1,000 Israelis were murdered. Innocent people of all religions and ethnicities were targeted in schools, buses, restaurants, and dance clubs. Israel acted to protect them. The barrier reduced terrorism fatalities by close to 100 percent, and leading Palestinian terrorists admitted that it obstructed suicide-bombing operations. The barrier cuts into the West Bank only to protect Israeli communities. When sections are located on land privately owned by Palestinians, they are offered compensation and can file legal suits to have it rerouted, as many have done successfully. The barrier does harm some Palestinians—an outcome Israel did not want—but without an end to terrorism and a peace agreement, Israel has no other way to ensure its citizens’ safety. When a peace agreement is reached, the route of the barrier can be adjusted to conform to new border arrangements.

Isn't Israel's barrier just like the one being used to keep out immigrants on the U.S.–Mexico border?

This is a factually inaccurate and offensive comparison. Israel put up its barrier to protect Israelis of all backgrounds from racist violence. These measures exist to prevent more innocent people from being murdered and maimed by terrorist groups. The hardships endured by innocent Palestinians are a byproduct of the attacks Israelis continue to face, not a result of Israeli cruelty, xenophobia, or concerns about immigration. In contrast, America's barrier exists primarily to restrict the flow of immigrants into the country. Regardless of where you stand on that issue, there is simply no comparison between American and Israeli policy. Trying to prevent violence against civilians is not the same as trying to restrict immigration. This comparison is an insult not only to Israelis but also to the countless individuals who seek to enter the United States with good intentions and pose no threat to anyone's life.



Is Israel using evictions to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from Jerusalem?

No, “ethnic cleansing” is a slur meant to dehumanize and promote hate against Israelis. The Palestinian population of eastern Jerusalem has increased by roughly 300,000 since Israel took over in 1967. That said, there are multiple conflicts over property and evictions in the city. Some legal disputes focus on property that was owned by Jews but handed to Palestinians after Jordan conquered eastern Jerusalem in 1948. Others focus on structures that were built without permits. Critics argue these cases are part of an effort by right-wing Israeli groups to push Palestinians out of Jerusalem. Others argue this narrative is meant to deny Jews the right to property they legally own and undermine the government’s ability to function in the city. There are many ongoing debates about how to resolve these conflicts in a way that ensures the well-being and rights of all parties involved.



Shouldn't Israel divide Jerusalem so Palestinians can have their capital in eastern Jerusalem?

Israel made such offers in 2000 and 2008, but Palestinian leaders said no. Dividing Jerusalem is not a simple process. The Jewish people have profound ties to the city, which became their spiritual and physical capital over 3,000 years ago. It has never been the capital of any other people or nation. Furthermore, Jews again became the largest religious group in the city over 150 years ago and have lived in eastern Jerusalem for centuries, except between 1948 and 1967, when Jordan illegally controlled the area, expelled all Jews, and desecrated Jewish holy sites. Only Israel has ensured freedom of worship and protection of holy sites for all religious groups. Finally, according to a 2022 poll, almost half of Jerusalem's Arab residents prefer to become citizens of Israel. This complex challenge requires creative solutions that can only emerge through direct negotiations.



Is Israel stealing water from the Palestinians?

Israel is at the forefront of innovations in water sustainability and has promoted regional cooperation to manage this vital but scarce resource. Israel is sharing, not stealing, water. It gives its own water to Palestinians in significantly greater quantities than it agreed to under the Oslo Accords (40 percent more each year between 2008 and 2012). Its water sources today are the same as it used before taking control of the West Bank in 1967, and settlements are supplied by Israel's national water system. Furthermore, Israel helped Palestinians modernize their water systems after 1967, increasing the available fresh water supply by 275 percent and expanding the number of Palestinian towns connected to running water from four to 309. It is true that some Palestinian communities face water shortages today, primarily because Palestinian leaders have failed to maintain their water infrastructure properly. In 2022, NGO EcoPeace reported that the Israeli government is trying to increase cooperation with the Palestinian Authority on this issue.

Why does Israel keep Palestinian political prisoners, including children, in humiliating conditions?

Israel is a democracy and does not take political prisoners. It imprisons those who are involved in violence against Israelis after convicting them in a court of law. Unfortunately, terrorist groups recruit and pay Palestinian children to engage in violence, forcing Israel to detain minors in some cases. However, Israel does not imprison minors under the age of 14 and detains very few under the age of 16. It is also important to note that while the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) incarcerates 16.25 per 100,000 minors in the West Bank (as of 2019), the U.S. justice system incarcerates minors in America at nearly nine times that rate. This is a particularly stark contrast considering that, unlike the U.S., Israel is operating in the context of an active conflict. Israeli prison conditions meet or surpass those of other liberal democracies according to reports from MSNBC and elsewhere. When there is evidence of mistreatment, it is investigated by Israeli authorities.

Wasn't Gaza still occupied after 2005 because Israel kept control of its airspace, coastline, and borders?

Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, hoping to make progress toward peace. However, the territory was taken over by Hamas two years later. From 2007 to 2023, terrorists used Gaza as a base to fire over 30,000 rockets at Israel; militarize schools, mosques, and hospitals; build hundreds of miles of tunnels; and ultimately carry out the horrific October 7 massacre. During this time, Gaza was ruled exclusively by Palestinians and shared a border with Egypt, where Israel had no control. What Israel controlled was its own borders with Gaza, along with Gaza's airspace and coastline, to prevent terrorist attacks and weapons smuggling. It is unclear what exactly will happen after the October 7th War. However, the Israeli government has stated that its goal is to remove Hamas from power and for Palestinians in Gaza to govern themselves, without being able to threaten Israel.



Didn't Israel's illegal blockade and collective punishment of civilians in Gaza cause the October 7 attacks?

Based on its charter and statements by its leaders, Hamas is a genocidal terrorist group committed to destroying Israel. The stated goal of its October 7 massacre was to stop peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia and pave the way for Israel's destruction. The UN Palmer Report found that Israel's blockade is legal to due to ongoing armed conflict with Hamas since it took over Gaza in 2007. However, Israelis still helped deliver thousands of tons of aid every week and allowed tens of thousands of Gazans into Israel for work and medical care before the October 7th War. Hamas could have ended the blockade at any point by stopping all attacks against Israelis, accepting Israel's existence, and entering peace negotiations. However, after the massacre on October 7, there can be no lasting peace until Hamas surrenders or is removed from power in Gaza.



Aren't groups like Hamas just resisting Israeli oppression?

The goal of Hamas is not to “resist” any specific Israeli policy or action. They are Islamist extremists who seek to massacre Jews, destroy Israel, and replace it with an oppressive regime based on religious supremacy. Hamas leaders and officials openly call for the “annihilation” of Jews and promise to “wipe out Israel.” They are funded, armed, and trained by Iran’s regime, which calls for Israel’s destruction as well. On October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists acted out their genocidal goals by invading Israel, massacring over 1,200 people, and committing atrocities such as torture and rape. They also took over 250 hostages. Afterward, they said they will keep committing similar atrocities over and over again until Israel is destroyed. If Hamas truly wanted justice and a better future for Palestinians, it would have stopped attacking Israel, accepted its existence, and negotiated peace. Tragically for both peoples, Hamas chose endless war and suffering instead.





Is Israel guilty of disproportionate force and genocide in Gaza?

This is a lie designed to demonize Israelis. The October 7th War has been horrific for Palestinian and Israeli civilians alike. However, the goal of Israeli military operations in Gaza is to dismantle Hamas and free the hostages, not to destroy Palestinians as a whole. “Disproportionate force” is a legal term referring to how much civilians are harmed in relation to the expected military gain from striking a target. According to John Spencer, Chair of Urban Warfare Studies at West Point, “Israel has taken more measures to avoid needless civilian harm than virtually any other nation that’s fought an urban war.” These measures include sending millions of evacuation warnings to people in Gaza, helping to deliver over one million tons of humanitarian aid and set up field hospitals, and agreeing to numerous ceasefire proposals. Israel has also opened over 70 criminal investigations into cases involving its own soldiers. Tragically, instead of letting the hostages go and ending the war, Hamas has continued to do everything possible to put Palestinian civilians in harm’s way.

Photo by Flash90



Why does Israel believe it has a right to possess nuclear weapons but Iran does not have the same right?

Israel is the only country in the world that has been openly threatened with destruction by its neighbors since its rebirth in 1948. Discussion about Israel's nuclear weapons should begin only when Israel's existence is accepted across the region. Any nuclear weapons Israel may have would only be used as a last resort to defend against an imminent threat to its survival. In contrast, the regime in Iran has been publicly threatening to annihilate Israel for years. It also fuels conflict, destruction, and suffering for people all over the region by funding, training, and arming terrorist groups. There is a difference. Israel is not threatening its neighbors with genocide. However, the Iranian regime openly seeks to bring down both Israel and the West, with its frequent calls for both "death to Israel" and "death to America."

Didn't Israel sterilize Ethiopian women because of anti-Black racism?

Israel did not and has never sterilized Ethiopian women. This slander stems from a scandal in which an Israeli NGO gave small numbers of Ethiopian immigrants temporary birth control shots without properly explaining their effects. While this was a case of medical misconduct, it certainly was not “sterilization” or proof of institutionalized racism in Israel. In the first Israeli media report about this scandal, one of the Ethiopian women who came forward clearly stated that no one was preventing her from having more children in Israel.



Why is Israel training American police to oppress Black people?

This is an antisemitic conspiracy theory. It echoes a dark history in which Jews were scapegoated for injustices they had little or nothing to do with. Firstly, American police of all colors go to Israel to be briefed by experts on counterterrorism, not street arrests or crowd control. Secondly, a tiny fraction of American police has participated in these exchange programs. Those who go are senior staff, not officers who patrol the streets. No officer involved in police brutality or an unjustified shooting of a Black person was trained in Israel beforehand, and any training their supervisors may have received was related to an entirely different aspect of policing. According to Kasim Reed, former mayor of Atlanta and a prominent Black leader, ending these programs in Israel would deprive Americans of crucial counterterrorism knowledge and thus endanger public safety for all. Those who attack Israel in this way are promoting hate, diverting attention from important social justice issues, and harming Americans of all backgrounds.



The UN has repeatedly condemned Israeli actions. Why does the U.S. keep protecting Israel at the UN?

Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has admitted that “Israel has suffered from bias and sometimes even discrimination” at the UN. The UN was founded in 1945 with the goal of maintaining peace and promoting human rights around the world. Unfortunately, while the UN does do some important work, it has also become a forum for dictatorships to undermine global justice and human rights while scapegoating Israel. As such, the U.S. regularly opposes anti-Israel resolutions in order to uphold the UN’s founding principles.



Should the U.S. continue to give money to Israel when it has serious economic problems at home?

Israel is a tiny democracy that faces threats to its existence from genocidal regimes and terrorists across the Middle East. Cutting off military aid would tell the Iranian government, Hamas, and Hezbollah that terrorism works, because Israel is losing international support. This would lead to more conflict and suffering for both Israelis and Palestinians, not less. Israel also provides vital support to the U.S., including innovative technologies that solve major challenges in our society, life-saving intelligence to stop terrorist attacks, and economic cooperation. In Massachusetts alone, Israeli-founded companies have created or indirectly supported 27,000 jobs. Israel is also required to spend the aid it receives in the U.S., providing contracts worth billions of dollars and jobs for tens of thousands of Americans in 47 states. The U.S. spends hundreds of billions on other regions and governments all over the world—from Egypt to the Palestinian Authority, from Europe to South Korea—providing economic aid, military assistance, and defense. In this context, Israel is one of America's best investments.



Hasn't Israeli intransigence been the main obstacle to a two-state solution?

A two-state solution requires mutual recognition and mutual respect. For over 80 years, Israeli leaders have repeatedly agreed to make far-reaching compromises and accept a two-state solution. They accepted two-state proposals in 1937 and 1947, and they offered the Palestinians land for peace in 2000 and 2008. Unfortunately, Palestinian leaders and their allies rejected all of these peace plans and refused to accept the existence of a Jewish state in any territory. While Israelis are deeply committed to making peace, they need assurances that Palestinian leaders will control terrorist groups like Hamas, end incitement to hatred and violence, and uphold a genuine, lasting agreement. When Palestinian leaders say yes to a just peace based on mutual recognition and respect, both peoples can begin building a better future as neighbors.

Isn't the boycott, divestment, and sanctions campaign against Israel (BDS) the best way to promote peace, justice, and human rights in Israel/Palestine?

According to the *New York Times*, Hamas and other terrorist groups are part of the committee that leads BDS globally. BDS is a campaign of hate that seeks to shut down Israeli-Palestinian cooperation. It uses social justice rhetoric to promote what would be a grave injustice: the elimination of Israel and the violation of Jewish rights to self-determination. It promotes slander and misinformation to isolate and dehumanize Israelis, all under the guise of human rights. A core BDS demand is a “right of return” to Israel for millions of Palestinian refugees and their descendants. In the words of former President Barack Obama, “This would extinguish Israel as a Jewish state.” Indeed, BDS co-founder Omar Barghouti declared, “We oppose a Jewish state in any part of Palestine.” People of conscience should acknowledge that stripping away the rights of Jews is not a path to peace or justice for anyone in the region.



How can BDS be antisemitic when even some Jews support it?

While Jewish BDS activists have every right to express themselves, they do not have the right to speak for all Jews or claim to represent “real” Jewish values. American Jews are divided on many issues but very united when it comes to BDS. According to polls, only 4 percent support BDS, while 87 percent believe the BDS goal of ending Israel's existence is a form of antisemitism. Polls have shown more LGBTQ+ people in America opposing marriage equality—7 percent—than Jews supporting BDS. There was also once a tiny group of American women who opposed equal voting rights. The existence of these fringe opinions does not make opposition to women's suffrage or marriage equality any more legitimate. Similarly, the existence of pro-BDS Jews does not make BDS any less hateful. When a tiny minority of any community is used to whitewash something that the vast majority finds offensive, that is called tokenization—a tactic that racists often use when trying to gain legitimacy.

Isn't antizionism different from antisemitism?

Zionism is an expression of the Jewish people's age-old connection and desire to be free in the land of Israel. It is also a movement supporting the rights of Jews to self-determination in their ancestral home. Opinion studies show that the vast majority of Jews see Israel as an important part of their identity. In contrast, the goal of antizionism is to end Israel's existence and strip away Jewish rights to self-determination. This is not just a political stance but an attack against the identity and human rights of Jews. This is why almost all Jews consider denying Israel's right to exist to be a form of antisemitism. While some antizionists may be motivated by support for Palestinian rights, negative experiences with Israel, or opposition to borders and states in general, intentions do not matter more than impact. The impact of eliminating Israel would be extremely harmful to Jews, regardless of intent.



Doesn't the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism silence criticism of Israel?

No. The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is an educational tool that reflects the lived experiences of Jewish people around the world. It covers the different forms of antisemitism Jews face across the political spectrum and has been widely adopted by Jewish organizations, the U.S. Administration, and over 30 other governments worldwide. There is not a single line in the IHRA definition that calls for censorship of any kind. Moreover, it explicitly states that regular criticism of Israel is not antisemitic. However, it does recognize that rhetoric about Israel can and sometimes does descend into anti-Jewish racism. Because it acknowledges this reality, anti-Israel extremists are targeting the definition with a smear campaign. Their goal is not to defend free speech but to avoid being criticized for promoting discrimination, dehumanizing Israelis, and denying the rights of Jewish people to self-determination.



Given that Israelis are much more powerful than Palestinians, don't they have primary responsibility for ending the conflict?

While Israelis are stronger than Palestinians, ending the conflict is the responsibility of both parties. Relative power does not determine morality or responsibility, especially when leaders of the seemingly weaker party reject peace and promote terrorism. Even when Israel was weaker, it offered to exchange land for peace with the Palestinians and its other neighbors. Regrettably, Palestinian leaders said no to every offer and often followed these rejections with violence. Jews are a historically oppressed minority who liberated and empowered themselves to protect their people, rights, and independence in their ancestral home. They have used power with restraint and worked toward peace with their neighbors. Furthermore, their strength is crucial because the Iranian regime and the genocidal terrorist groups it sponsors constantly threaten to destroy Israel and commit horrific atrocities against Israeli civilians. The Jewish people's empowerment should be celebrated, not used as a political weapon by those who seek to tear Israel down and undermine hopes for a just peace.

StandWithUs

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