

Israel Isn't Debating a Palestinian State. It's Preparing for Expulsion.

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September 1st, 2026

Gadi Eisenkot's position on Palestinian statehood is beside the point. Across Gaza, the West Bank and Israel itself, the machinery for making Palestinian life impossible is already operating, laying the groundwork for mass expulsion. Gadi Eisenkot, the election frontrunner and leader of the Yashar party, has a stance on a Palestinian state that is ultimately irrelevant. What is at stake today is not a "diplomatic solution," but the very existence of the Palestinian people between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. The Israeli forces striving to "erase" them recognize no limits or restraints. Their supporters are too numerous for us to rely solely on the steadfastness and resilience of a people that has already endured expulsion plans carried out by Israel.

The world stands by. The left is tiny, weak and hoarse from sounding too many warnings. The anti-Bibi opposition oscillates among downplaying the danger, remaining indifferent to it and outright supporting expulsion. The sporadic condemnations, prompted mainly by something the U.S. ambassador posted on X, are about as useful as a sieve in a rainstorm. The Jewish Phalangists attack constantly and everywhere, not only in Qusra.

The debate over one state, two states or a federation is more theoretical than ever. Any agreed-upon solution requires first acknowledging the problem and agreeing on what it is. Too many Jews in Israel have been conditioned to believe that the problem is the very presence in this land of a Palestinian people with roots, historical and economic continuity, cultural capital and material assets, a rich agricultural heritage and a profound love of homeland. "Erasure" is the nightmare solution being written into reality every day. Knesset laws, politicians' declarations, military orders, school textbooks and the holy real estate battalions operating in Gaza, the West Bank and the Negev all work, together and separately, to advance this "solution" diligently and without fear of international condemnation.

Israeli policy is directed toward making life unbearable for Palestinians wherever they live, so that their emigration can be described as an act of free will. Within Israel itself, the authorities give Arab crime organizations free rein to arm themselves and kill Palestinian citizens in their homes. In the West Bank, those same Israeli authorities give "God's battalions" free rein to arm themselves, kill and expel, while the official army continues its raids day and night. In devastated and thirsty Gaza, the government and the army cultivate armed militias of criminal collaborators, while Israeli pilots continue to launch missiles of revenge and retribution that claim the lives of still more children. All these testosterone-fueled displays are interconnected.

At the same time, Israel is destroying or severely restricting Palestinians' ability to earn a living. In Gaza, that mission has been completed. A "living dead" population of aid recipients, two million people carrying the weight of some 74,000 fresh graves, families and memories, talents and professions, and evaporated savings, is crammed into roughly 150 square kilometers of scorched earth. Creativity, resourcefulness and mutual aid are dwarfed by the scale of the destruction and by

Israel's prohibition on rebuilding and recovery.

In the West Bank, the Finance Ministry's financial noose is tightening around the necks of approximately three million people and the Palestinian Authority. The systematic theft of revenues is compounded by the army's campaigns of destruction in cities and refugee camps, as well as by the other methods used to prevent Palestinians from cultivating and developing their land: checkpoints, bureaucratic prohibitions, fences and Israeli-Jewish shepherds.

Within Israel itself, the "Judaization of the Galilee and Negev" was and remains code for stealing land and resources from Palestinian citizens of Israel. Discrimination against them in allocations, subsidies and employment, along with building prohibitions and demolitions, has always featured prominently in official policy within the Green Line.

Let me reiterate: The very existence of the Palestinian people between the sea and the river is now in danger. Too many active forces are creating that danger: Israel's military might and capabilities; the cult of military service under all conditions and under every government; obedience as a value; weapons and military attacks as the default *modus operandi*; the normalization of PTSD among soldiers and of soldiers dying by suicide; the attractions of a military career and the doors it opens; the lure of an affordable villa in a Galilee exclusionary community or a settler suburb in Samaria; the falsehoods of official and unofficial propaganda; indifference to the hell on earth Israel has created in the Gaza Strip; denial of 60 years of occupation and forced rule; the Pavlovian response, "But October 7"; the synergy among the army, the government, the rabbis and the kippa-wearing militias in the West Bank; equanimity in the face of Lebanon's destruction; disregard for the occupation of more parts of Syria; the normalization of expulsion discourse; justice and education systems tainted by secular and religious racism; and the army of jailers who abuse thousands of Palestinian prisoners, both under orders and by choice.

Together, these and similar forces are creating the material, ideological and psychological infrastructure within Israeli-Jewish society for another mass expulsion of Palestinians and for what might accompany it: mass slaughter.

The heroes of the settler militias openly declare that expulsion is their goal. They clearly recognize the readiness of large segments of Israeli-Jewish society to participate in carrying it out, actively or passively, directly or indirectly. Through their daily provocations and crimes, committed in broad daylight and made possible only by institutional support, the Phalangists constantly seek to provoke a Palestinian act of rage and revenge that "succeeds," so that it can be exploited as the match that ignites a new holy war.

The Jewish Phalangists and the right-wing organizations that fuel them are counting on broad mobilization, including from the leaders, voters and supporters of Yashar and the liberal Democrats party, for a war that could already be given the slogan: "One people, one army, one land cleansed of Arabs."