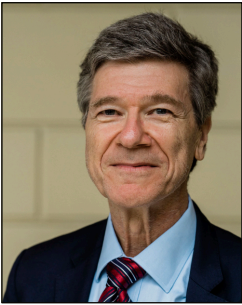


A Framework for Peace in Israel and Palestine

by Jeffrey D. Sachs,* USA



Jeffrey D. Sachs
(Photo Gabriella
C. Marino, 2019)

It is urgent to free the hostages in Gaza; stop the bloodshed in Israel and Palestine; establish lasting security for both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples; achieve the aspiration of the Palestinian people for a sovereign state; and establish a process of true sustainable development in the “Eastern

Mediterranean – Middle East” (EMME) region. This can be set in motion by immediately welcoming Palestine as a UN member state.

Palestine already has broad recognition as a sovereign state, recognized (as of June 2023) by 139 of the 193 UN member states, though not by the US or most of the European Union (Sweden recognized Palestine in 2014,¹ and Spain has recently signaled² a possible move to recognition). Yet crucially for its diplomacy and participation in global affairs that decide its fate, it is not yet a member of the UN. On September 23, 2011, the Palestinian Authority applied for UN membership³ in line with decades of UN Security Council resolutions calling for a two-state solution, based on the pre-1967 borders. The letter was duly forwarded to the Security Council’s Committee on the Admission of New Members.

As the President of Palestine *Mahmoud Abbas* noted in the application letter:

“The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence and the vision of a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been firmly established by General Assembly in numerous resolutions, including, inter alia, resolutions 181 (II) (1947), 3236 (XXIX) (1974), 2649 (XXV) (1970), 2672 (XXV) (1970), 65/16 (2010) and 65/202 (2010) as well as by

United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and by the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004 (on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory). Furthermore, the vast majority of the international community has stood in support of our inalienable rights as a people, including to statehood, by according bilateral recognition to the State of Palestine on the basis of the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the number of such recognitions continues to rise with each passing day.”

After the submission to the UN Security Council the US worked behind the scenes in the membership committee to stop the application, even though there was *overwhelming support for it in the committee*,⁴ the UN Security Council itself, and across the UN General Assembly. The UN Security Council never even voted on Palestine’s application because of the US opposition, and Palestine settled at the time for observer (non-voting) status. The UN Security Council should approve Palestine’s application now, a dozen years later, but this time with the US publicly recognizing what it has claimed all along, but never really supported: full statehood and UN membership for Palestine.

Netanyahu’s war is obviously not in pursuit of a just peace. Netanyahu and his cabinet explicitly reject the two-state solution, aim to subdue the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, and propose *more Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine*⁵ and *permanent Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem*.⁶ Their policies amount to *apartheid*⁷ and *ethnic cleansing*.⁸ Precisely because of these injustices, the war is likely to escalate into a regional war, drawing in Hezbollah, Iran, and others, unless a just political solution is established.

Before October 7, Netanyahu sought to “normalize” relations with Arab states without also addressing the need for a Palestinian state, yet this cynical approach was doomed to fail. A real and lasting peace can only be achieved together with political rights for the people of Palestine.

True leaders for peace on both sides have repeatedly been martyred, including the great

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Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat and the brave Israeli Prime Minister *Yitzhak Rabin*, both of whom were killed because they preached peaceful co-existence. Countless more Palestinians and Israelis, whose names we don't even know, have also died in the quest for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, victims of terrorism often by extremists within their own communities.

Despite these serious obstacles, there is a clear way forward to peace through the UN because the Arab and Islamic nations have long called for peace with Israel based on the two-state solution, as called for by the Palestinian Authority. In the Extraordinary Joint Arab-Islamic Summit in Riyadh on November 11, the Arab and Islamic leaders made the following *declaration in favor of a two-state solution*:⁹

“As soon as possible, a credible peace process should be launched on the basis of international law, legitimate international resolutions and the principle of ‘land for peace’. It says this should be within a specific time frame and based on the implementation of the two-state solution with international guarantees, leading to an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, the occupied Syrian Golan, the Shebaa Farms, the Kafr Hills, Shoba and the outskirts of the Lebanese town of Al-Mari.” (English translation of Arabic original)

Importantly, the Arab and Islamic leaders drew specific attention to the *2002 Arab Peace Initiative*,¹⁰ that already twenty-one years ago affirmed that:

“A just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is the strategic option of the Arab countries, to be achieved in accordance with international legality, and which would require a comparable commitment on the part of the Israeli government [...] [and] Further calls upon Israel to affirm (inter alia) [t]he acceptance of the establishment of a sovereign independent Palestinian state on the Palestinian territories occupied since June 4, 1967 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital.”

The Arab countries stated clearly already back in 2002 that such an outcome would lead to peace between the Arab nations and Israel, specifically that the Arab nations would “consider the Arab-Israeli conflict ended, and enter into a peace agreement with Israel, and provide security for all the states of the region”. Alas, Netanyahu has been in power most of the period since 2009 and has done what he could to ignore the Arab Peace Initiative and keep it out of the view of the Israeli public.

The UN Security Council, including all permanent (P5) members, should immediately admit Palestine to the UN and commit to provide operational and financial support to the implementation of the two-state solution, including peacekeepers welcomed by Palestine. In particular, the UN Security Council resolution should commit the UN and neighboring states to support both Israel and the new UN member state of Palestine to establish mutual security, and the demilitarization of militia forces.

The UN Security Council resolution would usefully include the following points:

- The immediate establishment of Palestine as the 194th UN member state, with the 4 June 1967 borders, with the capital in East Jerusalem and control over the Islamic Holy Sites;
- An immediate release of all hostages, permanent ceasefire by all parties, and flow of humanitarian aid under UN supervision;
- A peace-keeping force in Palestine, drawn largely from Arab nations and operating under the mandate of the UN Security Council;
- The immediate disarmament and demobilization of Hamas and other militias by the peace-keeping forces as part of the peace;
- Diplomatic relations established between Israel and all Arab league states in conjunction with UN membership of State of Palestine.

A new UN Peace and Development Fund, as I recently advocated in the UN Security Council,¹¹ to help finance, among other goals, a long-term sustainable development program in the Eastern Mediterranean region, including Palestine, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and other neighbors.

Of course, there would remain much to negotiate, including mutually agreed border adjustments, but these negotiations would take place in peace, between two sovereign UN member states, and under the auspices of the UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly, and crucially, the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Source: https://original.antiwar.com/Jeffrey_Sachs/2023/11/29/a-framework-for-peace-in-israel-and-palestine/, 30 November 2023

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/30/sweden-officially-recognises-state-palestine>

² <https://www.nakedcapitalism.com/2023/11/spanish-government-threatens-to-break-ranks-with-eu-and-unilaterally-recognise-palestine-as-a-sovereign-state.html>

³ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-184036/>

⁴ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-179982/>

⁵ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-hands-smotrich-full-authority-to-expand-existing-settlements/>

⁶ <https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/article-748435>

⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/08/11/israel-palestine-apartheid-israel-scholars/>

⁸ <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/2021-04-08/ty-article-opinion/.highlight/theyre-israels-far-right-anti-arab-nationalists-but-dont-call-them-nazis/0000017f-f0c0-d223-a97f-fddd7efd0000>

⁹ <https://fm.gov.om/final-statement-of-extraordinary-joint-arab-islamic-summit/>

¹⁰ <https://fm.gov.om/final-statement-of-extraordinary-joint-arab-islamic-summit/>

¹¹ <https://www.jeffsachs.org/newspaper-articles/h2ljgxma4c7p336dcgrx8nab47fb5j>