

Middle East Notes
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
September 6, 2018



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The five featured articles and the related links in this issue of the Middle East Notes focus on a recommended *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* article featuring the Palestinian refusal to surrender their rights to Israel; Trump's unpublished peace plan, and strategy in cutting all funding to UNRWA; implications of *Israel's Nation-State Law for all Palestinians, especially those with Israel citizenship; casualties from the continuing March of Return;* and links to recent CMEP Bulletins.

Commentary: An area once called the "Holy Land" and sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims has now become "the Whole Land" from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, whose peoples, Jews, Christians and Muslims are now subject to the civil or military laws of the State of Israel. This State is now defined as a state for Jews all over the world, with only Jews having a right to self-determination therein. Only citizens of Israel have varying democratic rights and responsibilities; the other half of the population of this "Whole Land", the Palestinians, have but one "responsibility" – to conform to the laws, restrictions and restraints of their Israeli lawmakers and enforcers. Some commentators call this apartheid; some call this imprisonment; others call it bondage. Not all Israelis and most of the people of other states of the world are supportive of this arrangement; they continue to call for some sort of two States or one State/one vote for all, or a federation of Israel, Palestine and Jordan including Jews, Muslims and Christians. Only the present governments of Israel and the U.S. support "whole land" State of Israel. Leaders of governments come and go; the people remain. Justice remains; new formulations of laws come and go.

- Dr. M. Reza Behnam provides an excellent summary in the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* of Palestinian refusal to surrender their rights to Israel concerning the occupied territories, Jerusalem, and citizenship for Palestinians living in the State of Israel.
- Jack Khoury writes in Haaretz that the U.S. announcement that it is cutting all funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine refugees proves that Trump's goal of this strategy, in line with Netanyahu's, is to decimate the Palestinian national movement.
- Kamal Hawwash states in the Middle East Monitor that Israel's Nation-State Law, celebrated by many Jewish Israelis, is deeply worrying to Palestinian Israelis. Already, after just one month, violence, threats of violence, and discriminatory policies are in high gear – this after decades of unrestrained injustice.
- Evan Gottesman writes in the Israel Policy Exchange that the greatest risk of a one-state outcome to the Palestinian conflict comes from the Israeli government with its proposals to annex the West Bank without regard for democracy or the national aspirations of the territory's residents.
- The Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza released a report on August 10 which stated that Israeli forces shot and killed a total of 167 Palestinians and injured over 18,000 others since the start of "The Great March of Return" protests on March 30th. The number of killed and wounded has continued to grow at subsequent August protests.

1) [Palestinians Refuse to Surrender Their Right To Have Rights](#), Dr. M. Reza Behnam, *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, August/September 2018, pp. 48-49, 52

“FOR 70 YEARS, the United States and much of the world community have ignored the ongoing *al-Nakba*—Arabic for ‘catastrophe’—of the Palestinian people at the hands of one of the last remaining colonial powers, Israel. The establishment of Israel in 1948 meant the loss of home, civil society and citizenship for the Palestinians.” ...

“Israel has conferred the inferior status of ‘foreign resident’ upon the Palestinian inhabitants of the occupied territories, making them foreigners in their own land.” ...

“East Jerusalem, with expanded borders, has been occupied and ruled by Israel since 1967. Palestinian inhabitants do not have Israeli citizenship, but are subject to Israeli laws.” ...

“Today, 21 percent of the nearly 8.5 million inhabitants of the state of Israel are Palestinian.” ...

“Without a state, Palestinians have no voice and no power. But they have steadfastly refused to surrender their ‘right to have rights.’

See also: [Michael Walzer: We must hold on to one central truth: the necessary condition of Jewish sovereignty is Palestinian sovereignty](#), APN, August 28, 2018

2) [Defunding UNRWA Is an Example of Trump’s ‘Peace’ Plan](#), Jack Houry, *Haaretz*, September 2, 2018

“The U.S. announcement Friday that it is cutting all funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine refugees proves the Trump administration already has set in motion its diplomatic plan for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and its goal is to decimate the Palestinian national movement.

“The Palestinian leadership, with its many factions and despite its divisions, agrees that the decision to freeze assistance to UNRWA was coordinated between the White House and the Israeli government, and aligns with the much broader plan spearheaded by Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#): to shelve any two-state solution based on the 1967 borders, and to remove the core issues from any future negotiations, chief among them the status of Jerusalem, followed by the right of return.

“The plan’s outlines are already clear and bold. First is the increase of construction in the settlements, within and without the blocs, as well as in the Jerusalem area, including the A1 region linking Jerusalem with Ma’aleh Adumim.” ...

“Second is the Trump administration’s recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.” ...

“Third is the issue of Palestinian refugees, and specifically the right of return, one of the most complicated disputes in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.” ...

See also: [Refugee Chutzpah](#), Gideon Levy, *Haaretz*, August 30, 2018

The Palestinians yearn for the land. Their yearning will not stop, certainly not on orders from Israel and America.

3) [With Israel’s Nation State Law, violence against Palestinians will increase](#), Kamal Hawwash, *Middle East Monitor*, August 30, 2018

“Ever since Israel passed the Nation State Law, Palestinians and neutral observers have been wondering about its possible impact on the substantial Palestinian minority in Israel as well as those living under occupation in the rest of historic Palestine. The law says that Israel is the state for Jews all over the world and that only Jews have a right to self-

determination therein. It also demoted the status of Arabic, which has up to now been recognised as an official language. The law further proclaimed illegal Jewish settlements to be a national value. The Palestinians, whether citizens of Israel or living under its occupation, did not feature.” ...

“The world’s shameful silence at Israel’s open declaration that it is a de facto Apartheid state was deafening”

“The Israeli government can now use the Nation State Law as a backdrop to expand the gap further between its Palestinian citizens and their fellow citizens who happen to be Jews, particularly in relation to creating more settlements within the 1948 borders and further restricting building in Palestinian communities.” ...

“The future, post the passing of the Nation State Law, is worrying for Palestinians across historic Palestine. They need protection from Israeli violence, which is currently going unchallenged. Is the so called ‘international community’ willing to help, or even capable of doing so?”

See also: [Why We Went to the UN Over Israel's Nation-state Law](#), Aida Touma-Sliman, Haaretz, Aug 31, 2018

The choice for all of us, Jews and Arabs, is clear: real democracy or a nationalist ethnocracy

[Abbas: Trump's Team Offered Me to Establish a Jordanian-Palestinian Confederation](#), Yotam Berger & Amir Tibon, Haaretz, September 3, 2018

Palestinian President Abbas said he would agree to such an offer only if Israel is a part of the confederation

4) [Rashida Tlaib’s One-State Illusion](#), Evan Gottesman, Israel Policy Exchange, August 16, 2018

“In Israel, the greatest risk of a one-state outcome to the Palestinian conflict comes from the Israeli government. Members of the right-wing coalition float proposals to annex the West Bank without regard for democracy or the national aspirations of the territory’s residents. But in the West, the most passionate one staters are on the left, and they are gaining traction.”

“Tlaib explained in an interview earlier this week in no uncertain terms that she believes in a one-state solution with a full Palestinian right of return.” ...

“In the long run, there are bound to be fewer David Friedmans and more Rashida Tlaibs. The former’s opposition to two states is based on a contempt for liberal democracy and the latter’s one-state support stems from a failure to face reality. Different in almost every other way, both undermine prospects for a sustainable peace, and both should be challenged on those grounds.”

See also: [Palestinian-American Congressional Candidate Called Out Over Pledge to Cut Military Aid to ‘Discriminatory’ Israel](#), Haaretz, August 15, 2018

Michigan’s Rashida Tlaib, poised to become one of America’s first Muslim congresswoman told an interviewer that ‘US aid should be leveraged’ and support to Israel ‘doesn’t fit the values of our country’

[The Israeli Right’s One-State Delusion](#), Evan Gottesman, Israel Policy Exchange, August 24, 2018

Amid the fallout over Tlaib’s controversial stance, it can become easy to forget that the foundations for a single state outcome are already being laid in Israel.

[An Israeli-Palestinian Confederation Can Work](#), Dahlia Scheindlin, Foreign Policy, June 29, 2018

The two-state solution is dead. Most one-state solutions are unacceptable to the other side. There is, however, a viable peace plan that appeals to both.

5) [Report: 167 Palestinians killed, over 18,000 injured since March 30th, Ma'an News, August 15, 2018](#)

"The Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza released a report on Saturday (August 10) showing new statistics regarding the number of Palestinians killed and injured since the start of 'The Great March of Return' protests in the besieged Gaza Strip. The report showed that Israeli forces shot and killed a total of 167 Palestinians and injured over 18,000 others since the start of 'The Great March of Return' protests on March 30th. The number of killed and wounded has continued to grow at the protests on 8/17,24,31." ...

"B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization, stressed that 'fragments of information reported by the media indicate that: soldiers will be ordered to shoot anyone coming within 300 meters of the fence; snipers will fire at anyone touching it; live fire will be used also in circumstances which are non-life-threatening. In other words: shoot-to-kill unarmed Palestinians taking part in these demonstrations.'"

See also: [180 Wounded in Border Clashes With Israeli Army, Palestinians Say](#), Haaretz, August 31, 2018

Gaza medics said 180 Palestinians were wounded in clashes in the West Bank and on the Gaza border; a third of them said to have been injured from live fire, including a female nurse and a young boy.

[Gaza Cease-fire, Prisoner Swap and Seaport: Details of Israel-Hamas Deal Emerge](#), Noa Landau, Jack Houry, Haaretz, August 17, 2018

A deal negotiated between Israel and [Hamas](#) via UN and Egyptian mediation, whose first stage [went into effect](#) on Wednesday (Aug. 15), entails a commitment to rebuild the [Gaza Strip's](#) infrastructure and a prisoner swap to secure the release of Israeli civilians and soldiers' remains held by the Palestinian organization.

[Reimagining Gaza while recognizing reality](#), [Ynetnews](#), Brigadier General (Res.) Shmuel Tzucker, August 28, 2018

Op-ed: While Hamas may wish to cynically cling to resistance against the State of Israel, some Israelis are ready, willing and able to dramatically improve the lot of the Gazan people by way of the New State Solution

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Bulletins

August 10 – CMEP Bulletin - [First Palestinian-American Poised to be Elected to Congress](#)

August 17 – CMEP Bulletin - [Trump Administration Seeks to Use Aid to Palestinians as Leverage](#)

August 24 – CMEP Bulletin - [Israeli Plan for New Settlement Homes Advances](#)