**[Rethinking peace](https://www.dawn.com/news/1818215/rethinking-peace)**

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IN the discourse surrounding the Palestine-Israel conflict, especially within international arenas, the advocacy for a [two-state solution](https://www.dawn.com/news/1789134/two-state-solution-to-palestine-issue-looks-more-viable-now) stands out as the principal strategy for equitably resolving the Israeli occupation.

This viewpoint is supported by a broad spectrum of governments, ranging from the Palestinian Authority to numerous Muslim countries, including Pakistan. This approach has also become a cornerstone of US foreign policy, emphasising its significance in global diplomatic efforts to achieve peace in the region.

The discussion necessitates a nuanced understanding of the interplay between armed resistance and diplomatic endeavours towards peace, especially in light of the historical context and the commitment to ending the occupation through the ongoing advocacy for a two-state solution. How­e­v­­er, the concept of ‘occupation’ in the context of Palestine is complex and defies simplistic interpretation.

The origins of this concept trace back to Novem­ber 1947, when UN General Assembly Resolution 181 proposed the partition of the territory, allocating approximately 55 per cent to the Zionist movement, comprised mainly of European immigrants. This led to the declaration of the state of Israel in 1948 within territories historically recognised as Palestine, igniting a war that allowed the Zionists to expand their control to nearly 78pc of the land.

The narrative further complicates with the eve­nts of the 1967 war, during which Israel seized the remaining territories previously held by Jor­dan and Egypt. The contemporary discourse focuses on these territories, constituting 22pc of historical Palestine, suggesting their consolidation into a Pa­­lestinian state divided into two regions: the West Bank and Gaza, with Israel situated between them.

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The fragmented nature of the proposed Palestinian state, combined with the historical context of territorial conquest and occupation, suggests that such a solution might not align with the aspirations or best interests of the Palestinian people. Instead, it could perpetuate the conflict rather than resolve it, calling into question the effectiveness of the two-state solution as a path to lasting peace in the region.

The stance of the Palestinian Authority and the international community’s approach to the Pales­tinian issue is fundamentally flawed and in dire need of a transformative re-evaluation. The reliance on archaic paradigms and the use of terminology steeped in colonial history has significantly constricted the breadth of institutional thinking.

In our pursuit of peace, a fundamental principle must prevail: the inevitability of two communities living in harmony, side by side, rather than merely alongside each other. This necessitates a departure from the politics of division, where animosity towards differences shapes the framework for peace negotiations.

We must adopt a new perspective, one that views diversity not as a source of conflict but as an attribute to be celebrated. The persistence of this conflict only compounds the challenge of achieving peace. True peace cannot be attained through the segregation of communities or the division of territories. Instead, it requires an embrace and celebration of our differences, which, in turn, can heal the divisions and bring communities together.

Many Palestinians have shifted their perspective on the [two-state solution](https://www.dawn.com/news/1789134), moving away from viewing it as a viable resolution to their situation. Instead, there’s a growing demand for rights within the state of Israel itself, attracted by its highly advanced healthcare system, sophisticated education opportunities, and the potential for a better quality of life. This emerging movement, which seeks integration and equal rights within Israel, poses a challenge to the foundational Zionist ideology of a Jewish state, and is thus seen by Israel as an existential threat.

Despite the potential of this approach to pave a new path towards peace, it has yet to be embraced by any of Palestine’s political parties as a strategic platform or included in their manifestos. While individual politicians across the spectrum might support the idea in principle, there’s a noticeable absence of collective political will to advocate for it as a party policy.

This reluctance reflects a broader reluctance to engage with what Palestinian youth envision for their future: a society not segregated by differences but united in diversity. The lack of political acknowledgment and action towards this vision underscores a significant gap in addressing the aspirations and rights of Palestinian youth in the ongoing dialogue about peace and reconciliation in the region.

In debates at the International Court of Justice about the legitimacy of the Palestinians’ armed struggle in their quest for liberation, it’s recognised that international law permits armed resistance for liberation. Yet, empirical evidence from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict suggests that violence has been ineffective in resolving the dispute and establishing lasting peace.

This reality necessitates a clear differentiation between the act of armed resistance and the overarching aim of achieving peace, particularly in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian situation. This differentiation underscores the urgency for a strategic reassessment that decouples the goals of peace and liberation, proposing that their separation might foster more effective and peaceful resolutions.

The presence of Zionists, now deeply rooted across several generations without a ‘metropole’ to return to, underscores the need for a resolution that accommodates the coexistence of both communities. The ongoing cycle of violence only serves to distance the prospect of peace, emphasising the importance of seeking non-violent pathways to reconciliation.

Palestinian intellectual Sari Nusseibeh’s call to reconsider the pursuit of a separate Palestinian state through further division and conflict brings to light the necessity of envisioning peace beyond the framework of liberation. His insights reveal how partition has evolved beyond its original intentions, perpetuating a cycle of division that hinders the peace process.

To move forward, it’s crucial to conceptualise peace independently from the notion of liberation, focusing on strategies that foster cohabitation and mutual respect. This approach involves a fundamental shift in perspective, advocating for solutions that prioritise the well-being and harmony of all individuals in the region, rather than perpetuating a cycle of division and conflict.

By redefining the path to peace in such terms, there is hope for a future where coexistence and mutual understanding prevail over the legacies of partition and strife.

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