

President Biden: Welcome to Palestine, and this is where We Stand.

There is a saying in the Middle East “all the problems, the conflicts, and tribulations falls back to Palestine” and one would think that there is some exaggeration to that, but there is not. Meaning that all issues of the Middle East has to do with the Palestinian issue one way or the other, so if there is no direct involvement of Palestinians, the Palestinian issue will be used to justify an act or consolidate one.

Almost 30 years have passed since the Oslo Accord was signed in 1993. At the time, the Palestinian people and the leadership were barging into new uncharted territory for them ... peace with the Israelis. Many; Palestinians and Israelis alike have doubted the viability and the authenticity of such peace in terms of durability, sustainability and overall effectiveness to resolve one of the most complicated conflicts in our modern history. On one hand, the Palestinians argue that their rights to this land indisputable and they have the heritage and history to show for it, more than that they have lived and breathing testimonies of those who once existed in what is now Israel. On the other hand, the Israelis’ argument relies on what they claim as a divine right to this land and a history that goes back more than 2000 years in time to testify their existence on this land.

Optimism and dreams of a more prosperous future once dominate the atmosphere, with anticipation for a wind of change, as inevitability of a Palestinian State was in sight. At least that what the Palestinians thought at the time. Simultaneously, Palestinians believed that all Israeli impediments to peace would seize and retract the Israeli settlement construction, the dismantling of the outposts, the military bases, etc.

Contrary to all expectations, the years that followed the peace process (1993) represented a continuation of the Israeli systematic policy of settlement expansion that spirally escalated, particularly with dominating right wing parties and foremost supporters to the settlement program over the consecutive Israeli Governments since then.

Even more, Israel had and continued as is does to date violates and manipulate the Interim Agreement by creating de facto realities on the ground, which have severely fragmented the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This will not only affect the outcome of the final status negotiations, but will abort any possibility to create a viable and sustainable Palestinian state.

Today, more people on both sides are growing in skepticism to what good such negotiation could lead to, as people are more realistic and aware of what is happening on the ground. At one point of time, the Palestinians were eager to put the occupation behind them and move forward with their long stalled lives, but they seem that they are not able to do that, as such intention did not exist on the other side of the equation.

From the progression of events; the Israeli had another vision of peace; one that suits their aspirations and tailor the long anticipated Palestinian state and around their colonization plans.

Despite the conventional wisdom, the end of Israel's occupation of Palestine is not merely awaiting the resolution of issues. The countervailing Palestinian narrative reveals that it is the Israeli occupation of Palestine is what prevents fruitful peace negotiations. The facts on the ground show that far from being a "peace 'partner", Israel is actively seeking to annex some sizable chunks of the Palestinian land, which obliterate the notion of "two state" solution because Palestine would have no contiguous land area. In reality, a careful examination of historical facts shows that the Palestinian side has been a very willing peace partner. Most notably, President Abbas and the PLO have honored their role in the Road Map agenda for peace. Israel's refusal to acknowledge their efforts in the peace process seems more than shortsighted as it evidently inconceivable that Israel would find willing partners for peace. To some, shunning the PLO poses the real risk that the "Arab Spring" could come to Palestine and leave Israel with no partner at all.

The PLO, is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and is the one that accepted the Interim Agreement as an interim step towards a final peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinians. The Interim agreement stated "neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations".

Accordingly, Palestinians call upon President Biden to induce Israel to:

- Abide by the international law with regard to its occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory and to END its prolonged daily attacks and assaults on the Palestinian people,
- To the immediate release of all political prisoners and to stop all the attacks on the Palestinian institutions and residents and to abandon its policy of land confiscation and houses demolishing, uprooting trees and the coercive displacement of Palestinian Bedouins,
- Conform to the international humanitarian law and all international regulations and to respect the Palestinian human and basic rights to live freely with dignity,
- Submit to the right of the Palestinians to practice their religious freedom, freedom of movement, their right to live anywhere, all of which granted and sanctioned under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- Respect and concede the ICJ opinion of July 9, 2004, to stop the construction and dismantle the Segregation Wall being built illegally in the West Bank,
- Release all Palestinian political prisoners from Israeli jails; particularly minors and women, and stop all forms of torture and humiliation against Palestinian prisoners, also to release all members of the Palestinian Parliament taken in custody,
- Stop all forms of manipulation to alter the geographic and demographic status of occupied East Jerusalem in favor of the Israelis.

10 Impediments and Facts ABOUT THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

Fact # 1

During the 1948 war, the Israeli militias took over an excess area of 56.2% designated under the United Nations partition plan of 1947 of Mandate Palestine to establish the Israeli State and instead occupied 78% of the land.

Fact # 2

Since the Israeli occupation of West Bank and Gaza in the 1967 war, Israel established 199 settlements (accommodating to this date more than 913,000 Israeli settlers) that is doomed illegal under international law, a fact that was corroborated by the UNSC resolution 465 of 1980), which perceived Israel's actions detrimental to chances of ever realizing peace in the area.

"Determines that all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity and that Israel's policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in those territories constitute a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and also constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East."

Fact # 3

Since the Israeli occupation in 1967, the Israeli Army:

- Demolished more than 25,000 Palestinian houses
- Uprooted more than 3 million trees
- Revoked residency rights of more than 15000 Palestinians in Jerusalem (1967-2021)
- Imprisoned for various periods of time more than one million Palestinians
- Currently imprisoned in Israeli jails for political reasons, more than 5000 Palestinians.

Fact # 4

- Currently, Israel coercive militant control of more than 60%+ of the West Bank, including areas declared as: a) Closed Military areas, b) Firing zones, C) Nature Reserves areas and areas of Natural Resource wealth (water, gas, minerals, etc.),
- Israel built 23 industrial zones in the West Bank that includes more than 1500 different factories. The industrial zones exploit the land and destroys it by dumping the waste in the open Palestinian cultivated fields causing serious environmental damage to the land and the aquifers as they stand no accountability for their actions and the impairment for the biological/ ecological or any environmental damage to the land and nature,

Fact # 5

- The average water supply per capita in the Palestinian territory is 76 liter per day vs. 369 liter per day for the settlers in the settlements,

Fact # 6

- The under construction Israeli Segregation Wall in the West Bank, will ultimately cut off 12.5% of the West Bank territory including occupied East Jerusalem,
- The under construction Israeli Segregation Wall in the West Bank, will isolate more than 300,000 Palestinian living in 90 Palestinian communities from their natural inhabitant in the West Bank territory and from the main city centers where essential services are available.

Fact # 7

For some time now, the Palestinian faith in the international law has eroded with some 60+ UNSC resolutions against Israel's belligerent occupation of the Palestinian territory awaits implantation,

Fact # 8

- It's been 18 years since (July 9, 2004) the ICJ (International Court of Justice) opinion, which deemed the Israeli Segregation Wall along with all related Israeli activities (including settlements) in oPt as illegal and detrimental to chances of achieving peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The ICJ called upon Israel to dismantle the constructed parts of the Wall. Moreover, Israel has issued plans and tenders to build and construct more than 100 thousand illegal housing units in Israeli settlements in the next decade.

Fact # 9

- Since the Madrid peace conference in 1991 and through the lifetime of the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, Israel has managed to enlarge the settlements' built-up areas by 161% from 77 Km² in 1991 to 201.1 Km² in 2021. This makes the prospect of a viable, contiguous Palestinians State a challenging concept, as it nullifies the essence of the entire peace process and entrenches the presence of the Israeli Army in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
- Within the same period, the number of Israeli settlers has almost quadrupled since 1991 from just about 240,000 to more than 913,000 by the first quarter of 2022; an increase by 280%.

Fact # 10

- The ever-surging number in the Palestinian population stands to bring the Israeli military occupation in a harsh manner regardless of any or all the normalization treaties Israel signs with any of the Arab Countries,

ONLY an Independent, Sovereign, Geographically Unified Palestinian State will ever allow Israel a long and lasting peace and sound, merge integration of the Middle East.