



Cite this article as: Sharbaf, J. (2025). Israeli Obstnacy: A Major Hurdle in Palestine Peace Talks. *Journal of World Sociopolitical Studies*, 9(2), 227-256. <https://doi.org/10.22059/wsp.2025.387648.1490>

# Israeli Obstnacy: A Major Hurdle in Palestine Peace Talks\*

Javad Sharbaf<sup>1</sup>

1. Assistant Professor of West Asian & North African Studies, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran (sharbaf@ut.ac.ir)  0000-0002-0776-4949

(Received: Aug. 26, 2024 Revised: Nov. 30, 2024 Accepted: Dec. 02, 2024)

## Abstract

The conflict between Palestinians and the Jews has been ongoing for seven decades. Despite numerous proposed solutions from the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and various countries involved in the issue, the crisis persists. The past three decades of right-wing leadership in Israel have shown that supported by major European powers and the US, meaningful negotiations are not anticipated from Israel. Meaningful talks would involve agreements on recognizing Palestine, affirming Palestinian sovereignty, establishing an independent Palestinian state, allowing for the return of displaced populations and determining the status of Jerusalem as the capital. The ascension of the extreme right in Israel has clouded the prospects for peace, augmenting the Israeli demands for more privilege, while sidelining those of the other side. This article posits that Israel's negotiation approach under the right-wing is built on a zero-sum mentality, with minimal concessions offered to the Palestinians. Moreover, its various political, security and economic pressures on Palestinians, along with sustained US and EU sanctions and its military superiority, render any peace model unattainable. This uncompromising approach, intended to impose unilateral conditions and prolong talks to thwart the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, accounts for the recurrent failure of negotiations. Israel's aim in these talks appears to demoralize the Palestinians and prevent the realization of their aspirations by imposing “the real”.

**Keywords:** Course of Compromise, Futile Negotiations, Israel, Palestine, Peace Plans

---

\* The author has no affiliation with any organization with a direct or indirect financial interest in the subject matter discussed in this manuscript.

Journal of **World Sociopolitical Studies** | Vol. 9 | No. 2 | Spring 2025 | pp. 227-256

Web Page: <https://wsp.ut.ac.ir/> Email: [wsp@ut.ac.ir](mailto:wsp@ut.ac.ir)

eISSN: 2588-3127

PrintISSN: 2588-3119

This is an open access work published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-SA 4.0), which allows reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format, so long as attribution is given to the creator. The license allows for commercial use (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)



## 1. Introduction

The Middle East is one of the most critical regions in the world. Throughout history, this region has been marred by war, bloodshed, looting, and mass killings, as well as conflicts of interests and beliefs. Although brief periods of peace have allowed civilizations to flourish, the norm remains one of unrelenting turmoil. The region is righteously described as a "boiling point" in world politics, constantly simmering with tension that not only disrupts its own peace, but also impacts global politics. It is undeniable that events in this region have a profound influence on the world stage.

The Middle East has been marked by numerous unresolved problems that have led to the current crisis. Some experts attribute the roots of the crisis to the discovery of oil, which profoundly influenced the future development of Western societies; hence, their efforts to dominate the region (Alnasrawi, 1987). Others point to religious conflicts, plurality of religions, ideological conflicts, and religious intolerance as the main causes of conflict (Knutzen, 2020). Some researchers focus on frequent droughts and disputes over water resources as the primary source of conflicts (Ward & Ruckstuhl, 2017). Additionally, some attribute the continuation of the crisis to national/religious conflicts and the revival of national identity against Islamic identity (Bendebka, 2020).

The formation of different territories and their evolution into national identities, alongside the delineation and staunch defense of these otherizing identities, has piqued the interest of various researchers (Kumaraswamy, 2006). Some scholars have posited that the existence of autocratic governments and the long history of autocratic dynasties underpin conflicts (Jebnoun et al., 2013). Moreover, other researchers have highlighted the role of the interventions of major powers in various periods, aimed at

colonizing and exploiting the region's abundant resources as the source of the region's ongoing conflicts (Liu, 2013). Further emphasis has been placed on the historical legacy of divisions in the Old Testament, with the persistence of these conflicts and their evolution into other spheres of interest. This points to the enduring disagreements of the past and their persistence in form of current disputes (Dessi, 2017). Additionally, some researchers have focused on the temperaments of colonizable nations. They have looked at the internal differences and conflicting views towards modernity and tradition as the root of these conflicts (Lewis, 2002). Others have considered the ways in which borders and political divisions, as well as the competition for resources, have contributed to the start and spread of conflicts (Turan, 2017).

It is important to acknowledge that there are several key factors to consider in understanding the history and dynamics of the region. Far from a one-dimensional outlook, all factors should be given due weight for a thorough understanding of the situation. These factors include the involvement of various individuals and interest groups, foreign interventions, industrial growth and development, as well as personal profit-seeking, prioritizing individual interests over collective and national interests, and the long-term conflict between tradition and modernity. The failure to consider the various layers at which every factor is placed would render our efforts ineffective. A narrow perspective on the root causes of the problem leads to incomplete knowledge and misunderstandings. In such cases, any recommendations made, lack a solid basis for implementation and may even exacerbate the crisis. This deepens the problem and perpetuates its complexity.

### 1. 1. Why Lasting So Long?

One of the most significant issues in the Middle East is the Palestinian crisis, its prolongation, and the failure to solve this problem properly and fairly. The seed of this crisis was sown the day after the fulfillment of the Sykes-Picot Treaty and the issuance of the Balfour Declaration. The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the abolition of the Caliphate –occurring with the support of the West and partly blamed on Jewish nationalism– led to the exacerbation of this crisis (Benbassa, 1990). Following England's inability to control the areas under trusteeship and the escalation of conflict between Jewish and English factions, London unilaterally withdrew from Palestine and referred the matter to the fledgling United Nations, creating the space for the establishment of a government promised in Balfour (Hejazi, 1387 [2008 A.D.]). Immigrant and armed Jews, who saw an opportunity to fulfill their aspirations, took advantage of the miscalculation of the Arabs who had attacked them. Following the expulsion of British forces from the region in mid-May 1948, the Jewish state named Israel was announced. Ben-Gurion celebrated the Arab attack, especially those by Egypt and Jordan, as the best gift for the security forces, a foundation for the formation of the Jewish state, and an excuse to securitize the issue (Segev, 2019, p. 437).

The Palestinian and Arab problem was not solved, due to the presence of Jews and external support from the West and East, along with continuous interventions of beneficiary countries. This issue continued for more than three decades of war and armed peace, eventually leading to a ceasefire. However, the truce did not end the hostilities, but rather served as a prelude to further conflicts. Almost all neighboring countries and the global security environment have been directly or indirectly affected by this crisis.

As noted by French Foreign Minister de Villepin, who referred to Palestine as "the mother of all crises", this crisis has had far-reaching implications (Power, 2013). The evidence suggests that there is currently no prospect for peace or conflict resolution in the short term. Additionally, with the policies adopted by the Jewish state, prospects for future resolution remain unlikely.

It is crucial to adopt a multifaceted approach to the issue. From Israel's standpoint, progress is being made towards unifying the country, addressing the crisis, and eliminating the causes. Recent developments show a growing demand for security as manifested in the celebration of the right in Israel (Zalloua, 2024). Meanwhile, the Palestinian groups' divisions have weakened them significantly. None of the peace plans have yielded the desired results, having created limited, temporary impetus for peace and security. The extreme right has gained power thanks to the strong and explicit support from the United States (regardless of which party is in power), as seen in the symbolic transfer of the embassy to Jerusalem, the consolidation of Judaism as the formal religion, the recognition of Israel's control over Golan heights, and the firm backing of the government of Netanyahu after the October 7 have all deepened and expanded the crisis (Orhan, 2024).

The Abraham Accords, established during the Trump administration between certain Arab countries and Israel, was perceived by some as capable of bringing an end to the current crisis; but even its creators express skepticism about its potential effectiveness (Abdullayev, 2024). Despite the optimism surrounding peace plans, certain realities including the persistent determination of the cohesive Jewish minority, alignment of interests among major external actors, and fending off the financial and military support for the Palestinians have all contributed to the

uncertainty about a fair and just plan and whether such a plan, if any, can truly bring about lasting peace. The ineffectiveness of these plans, despite their internal value, does not paint a compelling future for this crisis. As a result, there is concern about whether the region can expect security, peace, and elimination of violence, given the influence of the extreme right and their adoption of radical policies to suppress the Palestinians in the absence of minimum concessions. This situation predicts challenging and bitter conditions for the future of the region.

### **1. 2. Problem, Question, Hypothesis**

The article discusses the reasons for which the current Palestinian crisis has not been resolved despite significant international intervention, efforts, and expenses. It questions whether delaying the crisis has made it more complex and difficult to solve. It also raises concerns about whether interventions from influential countries have prolonged the crisis and if one-sided mediation from the US and comprehensive support for Israel from Europe have contributed to delaying negotiations. The article also examines the negotiation style, behavior, and goals of active parties, suggesting that these factors have led to the continuation of the crisis. It highlights Israel's negotiation style, particularly its reluctance to make concessions to the Palestinian side and insistence on levying "the real", as a significant factor in prolonging the crisis. The article argues that Israel sees negotiations as a means to impose its demands, which has set a challenging precedent for the Palestinian side (Elgindy, 2010).

As per the topics mentioned above, the hypothesis of this article can be summarized as follows: Since the beginning of the crisis, the

Palestinians have shown a strong desire to resolve the conflict and have sought the help of various mediators. However, the uncompromising stance of the other party (Israel), especially after the rise of the extreme right, has led to the neglect of Palestinian demands, resulting in a deadlock in peace negotiations. Israel's negotiation style seems to be influenced by its perception of unfavorable environments for reaching a settlement within its long-term goals. Consequently, it engages in tactics such as feigned negotiations, deliberate delays, rendering previous negotiations futile, disrupting the process, and making frequent excuses and demands, to ultimately discourage the other party from continuing negotiations. For example, one round of negotiations was stalled for several months over the exact definition of "township and settlement" by the parties (Mansour, 2011). It is evident that Israel has exploited these tactics to divert negotiations towards the Judaization of Jerusalem, suppressing the growing Intifada, expanding settlements, and gaining complete security control over the West Bank and Gaza by confronting the growth of Hamas and PLO, while diplomatically seeking to dissuade countries from supporting Palestine or legitimizing their relations with Israel (Gallo & Marzano, 2009).

The combination of reliance on superior military power and receiving unwavering support from the West, particularly the United States, has enabled Israel to establish "the reality" of its presence in the eyes of the Palestinians. This involvement of various other parties and their diverse interests allows Israel to pursue its main objective of delaying the negotiation process (Mesquita, 1990). As a result, Israel, regardless of the circumstances, is not willing to engage in any compromise and negotiations. This includes issues such as the return of refugees,

defining borders, recognizing the non-Jewish national identity of the inhabitants of the occupied territories, releasing prisoners, dismantling settlements, granting the right to self-determination, determining the status of Jerusalem and its role as the capital, and rejecting the establishment of a Palestinian quasi-state (Lehrs, 2016). The central question of this article revolves around why this policy was adopted and aims to explore and analyze its underlying causes. It is proposed that there has been a significant shift from attempting to "solve" the problem to "managing" the issue in accordance with Israel's desired direction (Muala, 2019, p. 55).

### 1. 3. Review of Literature

There is a significant amount of literature available on negotiation, conversational etiquette, interaction strategies, reaching agreements, negotiation styles, overcoming obstacles, resolving deadlocks, and problem-solving techniques. Many books and articles have been written on topics such as goals, tools, ends, principles, time frames, psychology, success elements, barriers to failure, and levels of negotiation. There are also resources specifically dedicated to the negotiation deadlocks in Palestine.

One of the most valuable sources in this field is the significant work of Eisenberg and Caplan titled "Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: Patterns, Problems, Possibilities" (Eisenberg & Caplan, 2010). In this important book, the authors extensively describe the Palestinian-Israeli bilateral negotiations. Drawing from their access to the text of many negotiations and discussions with the parties, they analyze the patterns, capacities, issues, ambiguities, and problems negotiated between the parties over two decades (beginning in the 1990s until the time of writing the book). By carefully analyzing Israeli and Palestinian negotiation methods, the

authors identify the "ruling patterns" of this type of negotiation. A key point highlighted in the book is that for the Israeli side, the primary goal is not to negotiate and reach a satisfactory outcome for both parties, but rather to prioritize Israel's national security needs under the guise of continuing peace negotiations. The same cause is mentioned in the subsequent decade by the Israeli author to still rule the negotiations (Goldenberg, 2015). Based on this perspective, any effort made by the Palestinian side to attain peace, resolve the conflict, or make concessions, is perceived as a weakness by the Israeli side. This perception becomes the basis for initiating new rounds of negotiations to revoke the previous concessions. Reading this book is enough to grasp the futile nature of approximately five decades of negotiations.

In her book, *How Israelis and Palestinians Negotiate*, Wittes (2005) analyzes the negotiation methods and patterns during the Madrid and particularly the secret Oslo negotiations from the perspectives of various authors. Having attended several American and Israeli academic institutions for her studies, Wittes (2005) explores the issue of different cultures and negotiation discourses between Israelis and Palestinians. She highlights the religious differences and cultural characteristics that shape the negotiation discourses of each side, and discusses the economic orientation of the Jewish side's negotiation pattern, emphasizing their historical emphasis on commercial dealings. Wittes argues that the Israeli side focuses on maximizing its gains in the "deal", aiming to outdo the Palestinians economically, rather than seeking mutual benefit. This leads to a one-sided approach, where one party attempts to overpower the other, making negotiation a zero-sum game. Understanding this cultural perspective is essential for comprehending the negotiation dynamics (Wittes, 2005, p. 111).

Numerous books and articles have been produced and published on this topic, which cannot all be mentioned here. Many academic and authoritative articles have been published, with some of the most important ones listed. One of these articles discusses the failed Israeli-Palestinian negotiations from the perspective of Israel, depicting Tel Aviv's reluctance to continue negotiations (Cohen-Almagor, 2012). Another significant article is by the author of Turkish descent, Bayraktar, which focuses on the psychological element of trust in negotiations and its lack on the Israeli side, which ends in repeated breaching of agreements and the ultimate failure of peace talks (Bayraktar, 2014).

An article by Schwartz and Gilboa (2022) focuses on the mental concepts and psychological willingness of both sides to solve the crisis. Schwartz analyzes the reasons for the repeated failures of the peace negotiations, highlighting the insistence on meeting all demands and not crossing the red lines by both sides. Two other authors Herfroy-Mischler and Friedman (2020) point out that, besides the inability to meet the demands, the blame game after negotiations contributes significantly to the failure of reaching an understanding. They emphasize that this tone and language do not mark a suitable negotiation, and the parties' tendency to blame each other creates a vicious circle that has led to deadlocked negotiations for more than three decades (Herfroy-Mischler & Friedman, 2020). Sher, an Israeli expert, believes that the ultimate goal of negotiations is to end the world's longest crisis through a two-state solution. He advises Jewish authorities to avoid totalitarianism and suggests that pacifying the radical opposition inside Israel and ensuring that the superior party fulfills its obligations are crucial for implementing crisis solutions (Kurz, 2015).

#### 1. 4. Theoretical Framework

Negotiation has been a longstanding method of interaction and coexistence among humans. Throughout history, political entities have engaged in dialogue and interaction to resolve their problems and conflicts. The practice of negotiation and interaction can be traced back to the very beginning of human existence and the development of language, which served as a means of communication between parties. Diplomacy is central to politics, with its primary objective being the establishment of peace, security, and the facilitation of mutual benefits through dialogue and negotiation. Negotiation is guided by a philosophy aimed at ensuring that all parties derive at least minimal benefits (Maddux, 1988, p. 13). If we were to summarize all the topics within this area into a general model, we would find that the general form of negotiation is centered on these three modes, within a framework of rational and logical limits:

A: *Win/win negotiations*: in this type of negotiation, both parties aim to achieve the best possible level of profit and desired benefits. They discuss and agree on providing specific, tangible, and accessible benefits to reach a mutually beneficial outcome. Evaluating the percentage of benefits obtained by each party strengthens the negotiation and helps achieve the desired goal. Ultimately, both parties are happy to secure some of their interests and are open to further cooperation and benefit sharing. In this model, the parties aim to achieve a minimum benefit based on their principles and foundations, without taking the results and outputs as slight (Fells & Sheer, 2020, p. 37).

B: *Win/lose negotiations*: In this model of negotiation, one side holds more power and can impose its opinions on the other side.

This results in a clear winner and loser, with the losing party accepting defeat due to a lack of necessary tools, capacities, and grounds to secure its interests. An example of this can be seen in the situation in Iraq after the coalition attack.

*C: Lose/lose negotiations:* in this model of negotiation, the involved parties fail to achieve their interests due to various reasons such as the other party's obstinacy, distant goals, perceived interests, or the significance of the issue. In this scenario, the crisis persists, and the parties may resort to strengthening their positions through various means like sanctions and war. An example of unsuccessful negotiations occurred between Iraq and Kuwait in the early 90s.

### **1. 5. Research Method**

The author uses historical research as the method to answer the article's main question. According to Johnson & Christensen (2003, 2007, in Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 158), historical research "seeks to offer theoretical explanations for various historical events". It provides a perspective to understand and explain social life in the historical context of the present. It is the study of "the relationships among issues that have influenced the past, continue to influence the present, and will certainly affect the future" (Glass, 1989, in Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 159). According to Lune & Berg, (2017), beside the collection of information, the major point in historical research is to have an interpretation of data. The assumption is that one can learn about the present from the past. The data in this method could be gathered both from primary and secondary sources including confidential reports, public records, government documents, newspaper editorials and stories, essays,

songs, poetry, folklore, films, photos, diaries, letters, artifacts, and even interviews or questionnaires, books of facts and knowledge trivia, indexes, abstracts and annotated bibliographies.

## **2. Findings**

The Palestinians have repeatedly sought help from various groups, parties, organizations, and governments to end the crisis and guarantee their goals. They have been open to mediation and have not rejected any neutral side's intervention. The Palestinian side of the conflict, thus, has always embraced fair suggestions by international mediators. This should be deeply considered, mainly from the perspective of the Palestinian leaders' political psychology and their efforts to resolve the problem. Despite their efforts, the other side has ignored their needs and not engaged in effective negotiations. Many negotiations have resulted in increased demands from the Israeli side and repeated concessions from the Palestinian side. Some researchers suggest that Tel Aviv entered negotiations only under international pressure and aiming to buy time (Muala, 2019, p. 54). The failure of negotiations has led Palestinians to resort to military conflict and legitimate resistance.

### **2. 1. The Background of Peace Plans**

The specialist readers of this article may find it repetitive to revisit the background of the peace negotiations and events after the establishment of the Jewish state. Therefore, in this summary, the creation of the Jewish state and its background will not be discussed. Additionally, the role of the United Nations in its establishment and the involvement of major and regional powers

will not be touched upon either. At the beginning of the crisis, the involvement of various governments and the United Nations to resolve the issue in a fair manner could have been a suitable solution. However, due to the inflexibility of the Jewish side and the support it received from Western powers, a tragedy arose, which persists to this day. Much has been written about the inadequacies of the United Nations, its ineffectiveness, and the injustice of displacing Palestinians and granting land to the Jews (Rights, 1992). This summary will review the titles of the proposed peace plans that have been proposed to this day. Although various institutions, organizations, and political entities have presented potentially effective and useful crisis-solving plans, none have been implemented due to the Israeli government's obstinacy and prioritization of its greater strategic objectives. It should also be noted that from the outset, the mediating role of the United States, fully committed to Israel's interests, has been significant (Stein et al., 1991). Stagy negotiations or pre-negotiation activities, precondition setting, groundwork preparation, and capacity realization serve no purpose other than advancing the broader agenda of the Jewish state (Stein, 2013). Apart from the resolutions issued by the General Assembly and the United Nations Security Council, this summary will mention the most significant peace plans offered by different countries:

- The Treaty of Paris 1951 (Return of refugees, border determination, payment of compensation)
- Dulles Peace Plan, 1955 (return of refugees, border determination, international guarantee)
- Bourguiba's Proposal, 1965 (gradual peace with Israel, opposed by the Arabs)

- Rogers Peace Plan, 1970 (acceptance of Resolution 242, ceasefire and dialogue)
- King Hussein's Peace Plan, 1972 (uniting both sides of the Jordan River, opposed by the Arabs)
- Carter Plan, 1977 (land vs. peace, annexation of Palestine to Jordan)
- Camp David Accords, 1978 (peace and limited autonomy in Gaza and the West Bank)
- The Venice Declaration of the European Economic Community, 1980 (the initiation of negotiations and the participation of the PLO)
- Brezhnev Plan, 1981 (establishment of Palestine and determination of borders)
- Fahd Plan, 1981 (formation of the Palestinian state in the lands of 1967)
- Reagan's Plan, 1982 (joining Jordan and forming two governments with limited autonomy)
- Fez Plan, 1982 (acceptance of the principle of two states, UN guarantee, acceptance of PLO leadership)
- Madrid Conference, 1991 (land vs. American Peace)
- Oslo Conference and Jericho Gaza Agreement, 1993 (bilateral dialogue and zoning)
- Maryland Peace Agreement (Wye River 1), 1994
- Sharm al-Sheikh 2 (Wye River 2), 1999
- Camp David 2, Summer 2000

In addition to this list, there are numerous other limited or large-scale peace initiatives and projects that have been proposed by states, institutions, international organizations, political entities, and even prominent figures. However, despite the significant resources and expertise invested in these peace plans, they have not

been realized due to the inflexibility of the right-wing Jewish government of Israel. None of these plans have yielded a beneficial outcome that would ensure peace and security in the region or address the minimum needs of Palestinians. The outcome of the endless negotiations for the Palestinian side is almost zero, and polls conducted among Palestinians reflect a pervasive sense of despair and frustration. Perhaps one of the main reasons for the crisis and the Palestinians' resistance, even in the most challenging conditions following the Al-Aqsa crisis, is this entrenched attitude (PSR, 2024).

## **2. 2. The Roots of Deadlock**

It has been more than seven decades since bilateral and multilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians began. Over this time, numerous peace plans and conflict resolution methods have been proposed through the mediation of international parties, but none have resulted in the desired outcome that would benefit the Palestinian side even minimally (Golan, 2008). A comprehensive and impartial investigation should take into account the conditions of both parties, their willingness or unwillingness to negotiate, and each side's obstructive behavior. There is no blame on the Palestinian side, which has demonstrated readiness to resolve the conflict in every possible way for decades. Their seriousness in seeking a solution, especially during the leadership of Arafat and the PLO, as well as their extensive preparations and various plans, indicate their commitment to negotiation (Mansour, 2011). Despite effective objections from some within the Palestinian people, the past seven decades have shown that the Palestinian political leadership has consistently been willing to engage in dialogue and negotiation in pursuit of meeting their minimum demands.

As many leaders in the Palestinian Authority and the PLO are still interested in negotiations (Shikaki, 2004), the current situation of the Palestinians is understood to be the result of frequent deadlocks and interruptions in negotiations caused by the Jewish government's inflexibility. Israel's failure to adhere to commitments is a significant concern. The following headlines highlight the reasons for Israel's avoidance of effective negotiations and its reluctance to reach a specific outcome:

- The right to the absolute occupation of the land based on historical foundations
- Founding the occupation on religious grounds and emphasizing the original allotment of Israel to the Jews
- Pretension of religious practicing, obedience to the Sharia, and honoring Jerusalem after the return
- Promoting the idea of the promised land as the source of unity and cohesion of the dispersed Jewish community
- Emphasis on apocalyptic ideas and the war between right and wrong in the promised land
- Blackmailing the West on historical accounts like the Holocaust and their settlement
- Instrumental promotion of views shared by Zionist Christians
- Incorporating the West ideologically by presenting a shared destiny
- Demonizing the common enemy (Islam, fundamentalism, Iranophobia, etc.) to make alignments
- Regional supremacism and military absolutism against the Palestinians
- The rise of the extreme right in the last two decades and the deliberate interruption of negotiations

- The Israeli-style negotiation aimed at zero-sum output under the guise of negotiation
- Reliance on the support of Westerners and in particular the US in international forums to appeal for impunity
- Buying time to prolong the process and endure international pressure for the sake of territorial expansion
- The unanimous provision for the security of the occupied lands through repression and coercion
- The suppression of the left-wing that has favored peace negotiations in the last two decades
- Holding the upper hand in narrative-building and manipulating public opinion
- The collapse of the Soviet Union and the elimination of a balancing power against the Western block
- Magnifying the threat of Iran and offering a security umbrella for pro-Palestine Arabs
- The gradual transformation of the pro-Palestinian powers (Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Sudan, etc.)
- Withdrawal from international rules for negotiation and conflict resolution and ending occupation and iron immunity
- Division in the Palestinian society and many internal conflicts ( Hamas and Jihad vs. Fatah)

### **2. 3. The Downward Course of Peace Plans: Case of PLO Area**

The Israeli governments in power have all shared a common goal: to avoid making concessions to the Palestinian side by prolonging negotiations. The hope is that the Palestinians will grow tired of the lengthy process and stop making further demands (Valensi, 2016). As a result, Palestinians have been left with no choice but to resist. There is no surprise that the complex issue of Palestine and its

occupation, with numerous parties involved and multi-layered dimensions cannot be attributed to a single cause and has not been solved for seven decades. This prolonged crisis requires a comprehensive understanding from all angles. The author has attempted to examine the situation from the perspectives of both Palestinians and Israelis, drawing from various sources to list the numerous reasons and excuses for prolonging the crisis and avoiding a resolution. The Jewish state prioritizes maintaining the current situation and asserting this "reality" in the long term, leaving no other option as crucial.

According to some, the strategy of prolonging negotiations as much as possible, aims to gain more land and concessions from the Palestinians. They seek to achieve what they could not attain through force and pressure in previous wars. Settlement construction has continued unabated during negotiations. The issue of refugees and their return (discussed for as low as 80 to 100 thousand people) remains unresolved; giving not even a single Palestinian the right to return. Border discussions, national sovereignty recognition, settlement expansion, and the destruction of ports and airports perpetuate the imbalance. Moreover, water and energy resources remain underutilized, and there is no indication of progress on national currency and army. Israel rejects all international interpretations of disputed and occupied territories, which some may describe as a "betrayal of peace" (General Authority for Information, 2001).

In the case of determining the areas and territories under the control of the Palestinians, right-wing governments have relied on lip service since the mid-nineties and have not accepted any of its requirements. According to the 1947 Partition Plan for Palestine, 12,300 square kilometers of the entire Palestine should be

possessed by the Palestinians and 14,700 square kilometers by Israelis. In other words, about 45% belongs to Palestine and 55% belongs to Israel. However, no Israeli government has accepted such a point and basically, they do not recognize Palestinian sovereignty over these lands.

- According to Resolution No. 244, the entire West Bank and the Gaza Strip along with the areas occupied in the 1967 war –about 6000 kilometers– should be returned to the Palestinians;
- At the Madrid conference in 1991, the US and Israel promised to return 100% of the lands of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the leaders of PLO and Yasser Arafat, but nothing was done as of yet;
- In the Oslo conference in 1993, the Gaza-Jericho agreement reduced this from 100% to 90%;
- In the Wye River, Maryland 1 Memorandum, 1997, the figure decreased again to 40%;
- In the Sharm el-Shaykh and Wye River 2, Memorandum 1997, the figure dwindled to 18% (1018 square kilometers);
- At the Camp David summit, summer of 2000, the figure still decreased lower to 13.5%;
- In the Oslo conference, the establishment of an independent Palestinian government was reduced to limited autonomy;
- After zoning the region into A, B, and C and preoccupying the public opinions with their boundaries, no such subjects are seen in negotiations between the parties since the beginning of this century and especially after the 2006 elections in Gaza.

We can observe a similar downward trend in the status of the return of refugees, borders, ports, airports, reconstruction, traffic, national currency, etc. The situation of Jerusalem is specifically discussed above as an example of the declining trajectory of these discussions based on numerous sources and documents.

### **3. Discussion**

The right time to locate the reasons for the deadlock in negotiations and resolving the current problems between the parties is not the establishment of the Jewish state. It is possible that some of the reasons for the negotiations' not reaching a conclusion were due to character and cultural differences (Fells & Sheer, 2020, p. 149). Before the creation of Israel, there was a crisis between the parties, and numerous negotiations, including those with British intervention during trusteeship, did not yield the desired result. Both sides were in a lose-lose negotiation situation before referring the matter to the United Nations. The establishment of Israel made it clear that these negotiations had not been successful, and the sound of bullets and trenches replaced words and negotiation tables. However, what followed the creation of Israel was a perfect example of win-lose negotiations entirely in favor of the Jewish state and to the detriment of the Palestinian side (Cohn-Sherbok & El-Alami, 2001, p. 140). Negotiations with the Arab and Palestinian sides continued after the establishment of the Jewish state, but they were continuous and steep, with the Israeli side winning and the Arab and Palestinian sides losing. These negotiations continued until the first intifada, unilaterally in favor of Israel. The important point is that following those negotiations, and because the Palestinian side did not tend to accept absolute

defeat, the negotiations remained unfinished, the Palestinian side used its legitimate right to resist as before, and the "liberation organization" returned to its original function. The behavior of the Jewish side was annoying to the point that sometimes even the President of the United States raised a voice to protest (Steinberg & Rubinovitz, 2019, p. 78).

The failure of the Palestinians to achieve their desired results led to a shift in the ongoing conflicts with the eruption of the first intifada. The international atmosphere in the late 1980s, along with international pressure to address the Palestinian issue, created a conducive environment for more serious negotiations involving multiple parties. Despite the participation of various parties in the Madrid talks and global hopes to resolve the longest global conflict, the inflexibility of the Israeli side prevented the fulfillment of the promises made during the negotiations (Antonius, 2003). The far-right discourse in Israel, committed to its long-term plans for the comprehensive control of the occupied territories, refused to make even the slightest concessions. Despite the formal agreements made by Sharon's government throughout the 1990s, they ultimately proved futile. Occasional American interventions and pressure from Washington restarted the negotiations. While both sides played the blame game behind the failure of the talks, it is evident that the interests of the Israeli side outweighed those of the divided Palestinians (Kurds, 2015).

The prevailing Israeli foreign policy and the stance of the Jewish state was not to offer the Palestinians anything other than accepting "the reality" of difficult living conditions in Gaza and the West Bank or leaving the region. Therefore, all the negotiations were aimed at applying pressure to achieve the ultimate goal of complete territorial occupation, challenging the international community and

Palestinians to accept this "reality", or in the more precise words of Aronson (1987), "creating the real". It is evident that Israel was unwilling to make even the smallest concession to the other party, and indeed did not make any. Arafat, the undisputed leader of the Palestinians, had repeatedly expressed deep frustration and hopelessness over the minimal results of the negotiations (Korobkin & Zasloff, 2005). Over the two decades of negotiations, it has become clear that what the Israeli side gained significantly outweighs what has been achieved for the Palestinians. The Palestinians' desperation and frustration in achieving tangible and acceptable results inevitably led to legitimate resistance against the enemy.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the author emphasizes that negotiation is the most appropriate, acceptable, reasonable, low-cost, and effective solution for almost all global crises. In comparison to other problem-solving methods, negotiation is considered the cheapest, most appropriate, and most important method. Ignoring the basis of negotiation in the interaction between governments could lead to chaos, as realists believe. This atmosphere would lead to the superior power dictating the rights of others. The seven decades of conflict in the region cannot be resolved without meeting the needs of the other side. Giving in to fruitless negotiations without clear results has not led to the complete defeat of the Palestinian side, and the historical experience over the past seven decades indicates that the Palestinians are still fighting hard to make use of all legitimate tools, including the right of resistance, in their confrontation with the Zionist regime.

As stated in various parts of the article, Israel views negotiations as part of a broader strategy. Essentially, Israel sees negotiations as a puzzle, with different pieces that need to be put in place to achieve its long-term goal of complete occupation of the Palestinian land. Therefore, engaging in negotiations is not just a goal in itself, but also a means to advance Israel's overarching objective. This perspective explains the reason for which Israel may agree to negotiate under pressure from international mediators or the leaders of the Jewish state. Tactics such as prolonged negotiations, repeated delays, early resort to warfare and various conflicts, shifting priorities, and seeking guarantees from Palestinian groups or international bodies all serve this broader concept. From the perspective of Israeli authorities, negotiations are about imposing demands on Palestinians and nothing more. Seeking international legitimacy provides a convenient cover for these unilateral goal-setting.

One of the main reasons Israel has agreed to negotiate is the pressure exerted by international mediators, organizations, and institutions. The United States can be considered the most important mediating government, as evidenced by the frequent visits of American officials from both the Republican and Democrat parties. However, due to US's unconditional support for Israel, it is unlikely that the Palestinian side will achieve meaningful results in the negotiations. Despite efforts from other parties, such as the European Union, the Non-Aligned Movement, Islamic countries, and the Arab League, the two sides of the conflict have not been able to play an effective role in resolving the crisis. The main problem lies in the fact that while the Palestinian side hopes to benefit from the negotiations, the Israeli side, relying on the Western support, is unwilling to make minimal concessions.

Therefore, considering Israel's ultimate goal, mediation will not lead to tangible results.

According to the provisions mentioned in the article, achieving peace and resolving conflicts in the Middle East, particularly regarding the Palestinian issue, seems practically impossible due to past experiences and the obstacles faced in peace negotiations. The Jewish state has effectively closed off all negotiation paths to peace. In this situation, Palestinians have two options: they can either accept the current situation and live under occupation, or they can choose to reject negotiations, strengthen their positions, and assert their right to resist the occupation. Both of these paths have representatives among the Palestinian community. The Palestinian Authority represents the negotiating faction, while Hamas and other resistance groups believe in the right to resist the occupation and have put effort into realizing it, feeling disillusioned with negotiations. History will determine which group is successful in reclaiming their rights from the Israeli enemy.

## References

- Abdullayev, H. P. (2024). Between Peace and Conflict: The Middle East After the Abraham Accords. *Vestnik RUDN International Relations*, 24(1), 40\_50. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-0660-2024-24-1-40-50>
- Alnasrawi, A. (1987). The Role of Oil in the Middle East. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 9(3), 327-336. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41857934>
- Antonius, R. (2003). The Relevance of Principles of International Law to the Israel-Palestine Conflict. [https://ieim.uqam.ca/IMG/pdf/Int\\_1\\_Law\\_and\\_the\\_Israeli-Pales.pdf](https://ieim.uqam.ca/IMG/pdf/Int_1_Law_and_the_Israeli-Pales.pdf)

- Aronson, G. (1987). *Creating Facts: Israel, Palestinians and the West Bank* (1<sup>st</sup> Ed.). Institute for Palestine Studies.
- Bayraktar, B. (2014). Israeli-Palestinian Talks: Distrust and Failure. *International Relations and Diplomacy*, 2(9), 565-582. [https://www.academia.edu/39796825/Israeli\\_Palestinian\\_Talks\\_Distrust\\_and\\_Failure](https://www.academia.edu/39796825/Israeli_Palestinian_Talks_Distrust_and_Failure)
- Benbassa, E. (1990). Zionism in the Ottoman Empire at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. *Studies in Zionism*, 11(2), 127-140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13531049008575969>
- Bendebka, R. (2020). Pitfalls of Nationalism in the Middle East and North Africa Region. *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(1), 73-86. <https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.12944/CRJSSH.3.1.07>
- Cohen-Almagor, R. (2012). The Failed Palestinian–Israeli Peace Process 1993–2011: An Israeli Perspective. *Israel Affairs*, 18(4), 563-576. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2012.717389>
- Cohn-Sherbok, D., & El-Alami, D. (2001). *The Palestine-Israeli Conflict: A Beginner's Guide*. Oneworld.
- Dessi, A. (2017). *Regional (Dis)order in the Middle East*. Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI).
- Eisenberg, L. Z., & Caplan, N. (2010). *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: Patterns, Problems, Possibilities*. Indiana University Press.
- Elgindy, K. (2010). *The Ghosts of Negotiations Past: How Palestinians Are Applying Past Lessons to the Current Peace Process*. The Brookings Institution. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/05\\_palestine\\_negotiations\\_elgindy.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/05_palestine_negotiations_elgindy.pdf)
- Fells, R., & Sheer, N. (2020). *Effective Negotiation: From Research to Results*. Cambridge University Press.

- Hejazi, A. (1387 [2008 A.D.]). Almo'amerat a(l)ttarixiya Balfor [The Historical Balfour Conspiracy]. *Arab-African Culture (Alkheartoum)*, 1(1), 70-74. <https://www.noormags.ir/view/en/articlepage/1896987/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%8C%D8%AE%DB%8C%D9%87-%D8%A8%D9%84%D9%81%D9%88%D8%B1>
- Herfroy-Mischler, A., & Friedman, E. (2020). The 'Blame Game Frame': Ethical Blame Patterns and Media Framing Upon Negotiations Failure in the Middle East. *Journalism*, 21(2), 1192-1211. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918791219>
- Gallo, G., & Marzano, A. (2009). The Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflicts: The Israeli-Palestinian Case. *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, 29, 33-49. <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/jcs29art03>
- General Authority for Information. (2001). *Assalām-ol maqdor: alravāyat-el felestiniyatel ehdās-e 'elmiyat-e salām va endelā'-el entefāzatel felestini alsāniyah* [Betrayed Peace: The Palestinian Narrative of The Peace Process and The Outbreak of The Second Intifada]. Ramallah: General Authority for Information.
- Golan, G. (2008). *Israel and Palestine: Peace Plans and Proposals from Oslo to Disengagement*. Markus Wiener Publishers.
- Goldenberg, I. (2015). *Lessons from the 2013–2014 Israeli-Palestinian*. Center for a New American Security.
- Korobkin, R., & Zasloff, J. (2005). Roadblocks to the Road Map: A Negotiation Theory Perspective on the Israeli - Palestinian Conflict After Yasser Arafat. *Journal of Scholarly Perspectives*, 1(01), 21-36. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1hf725zp>
- Knutsen, T. L. (2020). Rivalries and Chaos: The Religious Wars in the Middle East. *International Studies Review*, 22(4), 990-999. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viaa040>

- Kumaraswamy. (2006). Who Am I? The Identity Crisis in the Middle East. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 10(1), 63-73. [https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/meria/meria\\_mar06/meria\\_10-1e.pdf](https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/meria/meria_mar06/meria_10-1e.pdf)
- Kurz, A. (2015). A Conflict within a Conflict: The Fatah-Hamas Strife and the Israeli-Palestinian Political Process. In G. Sher, & A. Kurz (Eds.), *Negotiating in Times of Conflict* (pp. 81-94). Institute for National Security Studies.
- Lewis, B. (2002). *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*. Oxford University Press.
- Lehrs, L. (2016). Jerusalem on the Negotiating Table: Analyzing the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Talks on Jerusalem (1993–2015). *Israel Studies*, 21(3), 179-205. <https://doi.org/10.2979/israelstudies.21.3.09>
- Liu, Y. (2013). On the Great Power Intervention in the Middle East Upheaval and Political Trend in the Middle East. *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (in Asia)*, 7(2), 1-34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19370679.2013.12023221>
- Lune, H., & Berg, B. L. (2017). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Pearson.
- Maddux, R. B. (1988). *Successful Negotiation: Effective "Win-Win" Strategies and Tactics (Fifty-Minute Series)*. Crisp.
- Mansour, C. (2011). Toward a New Palestinian Negotiation Paradigm. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 40(3), 38-58. [https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/journals/jps/v40i3/f\\_0022525\\_18538.pdf](https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/journals/jps/v40i3/f_0022525_18538.pdf)
- Mesquita, B. B. (1990). Multilateral Negotiations: A Spatial Analysis of the Arab-Israeli Dispute. *International Organization*, 44(3), 317-340. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300035311>

- Muala, A. (2019). *Unlocking the Palestinian-Israeli Negotiations: A Critical Review of Contemporary Literature and Methodologies*. Springer.
- Jebnoun, N., Kia, M., & Kirk, M. (2013). *Modern Middle East Authoritarianism: Roots, Ramifications, and Crisis*. Routledge.
- Orhan, E. B. (2024). The Us Approach to The October 7 Attacks and The Israel-Hamas Conflict in the Context of Antony Blinken's Discourses. *Akdeniz İİBF Dergisi*, 24(2), 49-58. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/3725535>
- Power, C. (2013, May. 25). Now, The Palestine Question. <https://www.newsweek.com/now-palestine-question-134619>
- Rights, D. F. (1992). *Question of Palestine: Legal Aspects*. United Nations.
- Schwartz, A., & Gilboa, E. (2022). The False Readiness Theory: Explaining Failures to Negotiate Israeli-Palestinian Peace. *International Negotiation*, 28(1), 126-154. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718069-bja10059>
- Segev, T. (2019). *A State at Any Cost: The Life of David Ben-Gurion* (H. Watzman, Trans.). Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Shikaki, K. (2004). *A Palestinian Perspective on the Failure of the Permanent Status Negotiations*. Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research.
- Stein, K. (2013). Pre-Negotiations and Political Realities Frame Israeli-Palestinian Talks. The Washington Institute. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/pre-negotiations-and-political-realities-frame-israeli-palestinian-talks>

- Stein, K. W., Lewis, S. W., & Brown, S. J. (1991). *Making Peace Among Arab and Israelis*. United States Institute of Peace.
- Steinberg, G. M., & Rubinovitz, Z. (2019). *Menachem Begin and the Israel-Egypt Peace Process: Between Ideology and Political Realism*. Indiana University Press.
- Turan, K. (2017). Sources of Conflict in the Middle East: Borders or Stratified Identifies. *Savunma Bilimleri Dergisi*, 16(1), 85-113. <https://doi.org/10.17134/khosbd.405246>
- Palestinian Center for POLICY and SURVEY RESEARCH (PSR). (2024, Mar. 20). *Public Opinion Poll No (91)*. Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR). <https://www.pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/Poll%2091%20English%20press%20release%2020%20March%202024.pdf>
- Valensi, C. (2016). The Evolution of the Palestinian Resistance. In B. Heuser, & E. Shamir (Eds.), *Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies National Styles and Strategic Cultures* (pp. 226-245). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316471364.011>
- Ward, C., & Ruckstuhl, S. (2017). *Water Scarcity, Climate Change and Conflict in the Middle East: Securing Livelihoods, Building Peace*. I.B. Tauris.
- Wittes, T. C. (2005). *How Israelis and Palestinians Negotiate: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Oslo Peace Process*. United States Inst of Peace Program.
- Zalloua, Z. (2024). Disavowal in Crisis: The Israeli Far Right and the End of Liberal Zionism. *Crisis and Critique*, 11(1), 211-235. <https://www.crisiscritique.org/storage/app/media/2024-07-16/zahizalloua.pdf>