



## **Without sanctions against Israel, the “two-state solution” is dead**

**The “two-state solution” is dead unless serious and sustained economic sanctions are applied to Israel by the international community to force it to withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territories so that a Palestinian state can be established. It is a fantasy to believe that Israel can be persuaded to withdraw from these territories it occupies by negotiations alone, as the EU (and the Irish Government) appear to believe.**

On 25 October 2015, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu told the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee of the Knesset:

“At this time we need to control all of the territory for the foreseeable future.” [\[1\]](#)

By “all of the territory”, he meant all of the West Bank including East Jerusalem. In other words, Israel intends to continue its occupation of this Palestinian territory “for the foreseeable future”, thereby making the establishment of a Palestinian state unrealisable.

At the same time, Netanyahu has been telling the world that he is prepared to negotiate with Palestinians without preconditions. For example, he told the UN General Assembly on 1 October 2015:

“I am prepared to immediately, immediately, resume direct peace negotiations with the Palestinian Authority without any preconditions whatsoever.” [\[2\]](#)

In reality, Netanyahu has one critical precondition: that negotiations must not lead to the end of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the creation of a Palestinian state.

### **Netanyahu: If I'm elected, there will be no Palestinian state**

It is no surprise that Netanyahu has once again ruled out the creation of a Palestinian state. That was part of the platform on which he stood for election on 17 March this year, when the Likud party he leads was returned as the largest party in the Knesset (with 30 seats out of 120).

See, for example, the Haaretz report *Netanyahu: If I'm elected, there will be no Palestinian state* [\[3\]](#) of 16 March 2015, where he went so far as to assert that any move in that direction would be a threat to Israel's security:

“I think that anyone who moves to establish a Palestinian state and evacuate territory gives territory away to radical Islamist attacks against Israel.”

When asked if that meant a Palestinian state would not be established if he is elected, he replied: “Indeed.” [\[4\]](#)

It is inconceivable that Netanyahu is going to break this fundamental promise to his electors and move to establish a Palestinian state, which he says would lead to “radical Islamist attacks against Israel”.

### Coalition government would fall

If he did move to establish a Palestinian state, the coalition government which he leads would fall and he would be out of office. He is in coalition with four other parties – Bayit Yehudi (Jewish Home) (8 seats) and two ultra-Orthodox parties, United Torah Judaism and Shas (6 and 7 respectively) and the centrist Kulanu (10). The coalition has a bare majority of 61 seats in the Knesset. With the possible exception of Kulanu, none of Likud’s coalition partners are in favour of a Palestinian state (see, for example, Jerusalem Post article *How the parties stand on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process* [\[5\]](#)).

It is doubtful if any of the 30 Likud Knesset members (MKs) support the creation of a Palestinian state. Tzipi Hotovely, whom Netanyahu appointed as Deputy Foreign Minister (he acts as his own Foreign Minister), certainly doesn’t. She wants a Greater Israel encompassing the present Israel plus the West Bank [\[6\]](#). On 22 May 2015 just after her appointment, she delivered a speech to Israeli diplomats, justifying this on the grounds that God had promised the land of Israel to the Jews and asserting:

“This land is ours. All of it is ours. We did not come here to apologise for that.” [\[7\]](#)

She is far from being alone amongst Likud and other coalition MKs in holding this view.

### EU’s impossible dream

On 17 March 2015, Netanyahu was re-elected on a clear mandate to ensure that a Palestinian state doesn’t come into existence on his watch. This should have convinced everybody that another bout of negotiations, of itself, hasn’t the remotest chance of bringing about a Palestinian state.

Yet in her message of congratulations to Netanyahu on 18 March 2015, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, looked forward to the “re-launch of the peace process” [\[8\]](#). And on 17 May 2015, she announced the EU’s willingness to “play a major role in a re-launching of this process on the basis of the two-state solution” [\[9\]](#). One could be forgiven for thinking that she was unaware that Netanyahu has an electoral mandate to prevent the creation of a Palestinian state, without which a “two-state solution” is unrealisable.

The EU Council Conclusions of 7 July 2015 reaffirmed the EU’s commitment, with Ireland’s wholehearted support, to the impossible dream of a “negotiated two-state solution” [\[10\]](#). And, speaking to the European Parliament on 28 October 2015, Mogherini declared:

“It is now up to the Israeli and the Palestinian leadership to demonstrate with acts that their commitment to the two-state solution is real, and not just fake, not just a slogan.” [\[11\]](#)

You would never guess that, in line with his electoral mandate, Netanyahu had declared a few days earlier that “we need to control all of the territory for the foreseeable future”, thereby demonstrating a commitment to prevent “the two-state solution”. Mogherini seems to be to be unaware that, unlike Israel, the Palestinian leadership has had a “real” and unwavering commitment to “the two-state solution” for 27 years.

## Another bout of negotiations?

It may be that Palestinians will be browbeaten by the US/EU into taking part in another bout of negotiations with Israel, like those sponsored by US Secretary of State John Kerry in 2013/14. In them, the establishment of a Palestinian state was never seriously discussed – according to Barak Ravid writing in Haaretz, Netanyahu “flatly refused to present a map [of what a Palestinian state might look like] or even to discuss the subject theoretically” and “throughout the nine months of the talks Netanyahu did not give the slightest hint about the scale of the territorial concessions he would be willing to make” [\[12\]](#)

The notion that in another bout of negotiations, this time sponsored by Mogherini for the EU, Netanyahu could be persuaded to do an about turn and agree to a Palestinian state is the stuff of Alice in Wonderland, particularly since he now has an explicit electoral mandate to prevent the creation of a Palestinian state.

The plain fact is that Israel is not going to withdraw from the occupied territories so that a Palestinian state be established unless serious and sustained economic sanctions are applied by the international community to force it to withdraw. Unless the EU is prepared to do that, it should cease pretending that it has an achievable policy for a settlement in Israel/Palestine. Without sanctions on Israel, the “two-state solution” is dead.

The EU is applying economic sanctions to Russia because of its takeover of Crimea, with the consent of the people of Crimea. It has no excuse for failing to apply economic sanctions to Israel because of its military occupation and colonisation of Palestinian land for nearly half a century against the unanimous opposition of the Palestinian population.

## Stifling and humiliating occupation

Jan Eliasson, UN Deputy Secretary-General, reported to the Security Council on the present situation in Israel/Palestine on 22 October 2015. Here is an extract from what he said:

“Let us be clear. There is never any justification whatsoever for murder. That should not stop us from asking why the situation has deteriorated. I suggest that this crisis would not have erupted if the Palestinian people had any perception of hope of a viable Palestinian State, if they had an economy that provided jobs and opportunities, or if they had more control over their security and the legal and administrative processes that define their daily existence — in short, if they did not still live under a stifling and humiliating occupation that has lasted almost half a century. Instead, they see the growth of illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank, which undermine the very possibility of a two-State solution and pose growing security risks to all. They see the emergence of a parallel de facto settler community, with better infrastructure, services and security than in Palestinian-populated areas. With every passing day, their dream of real statehood is becoming more elusive. Nowhere is the frustration and anger at the current situation more evident than among young people.” [\[13\]](#)

The EU proposal for another bout of negotiations without sanctions being applied to Israel will not change one whit the “stifling and humiliating occupation” that Palestinians have been forced to live under for nearly half a century. It will merely give Israel more time to transfer ever more of its citizens to the occupied Palestinian territories, which is a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

**David Morrison**  
**November 2015**

## References:

- [1] [www.haaretz.com/misc/article-print-page/.premium-1.682374](http://www.haaretz.com/misc/article-print-page/.premium-1.682374)
- [2] [www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/16/israel-election-netanyahu-losing-opinion-polls-as-voting-begins](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/16/israel-election-netanyahu-losing-opinion-polls-as-voting-begins)
- [3] [www.haaretz.com/news/israel-election-2015/1.647212](http://www.haaretz.com/news/israel-election-2015/1.647212)
- [4] [www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/16/israel-election-netanyahu-losing-opinion-polls-as-voting-begins](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/16/israel-election-netanyahu-losing-opinion-polls-as-voting-begins)
- [5] [www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/How-the-parties-stand-on-the-Israeli-Palestinian-peace-process-394028](http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/How-the-parties-stand-on-the-Israeli-Palestinian-peace-process-394028)
- [6] [www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Hotovely-laments-Likud-schizophrenia-on-two-states-324563](http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Hotovely-laments-Likud-schizophrenia-on-two-states-324563)
- [7] [www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Hotovely-laments-Likud-schizophrenia-on-two-states-324563](http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Hotovely-laments-Likud-schizophrenia-on-two-states-324563)
- [8] [eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150318\\_01\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150318_01_en.htm)
- [9] [uk.reuters.com/article/2015/05/18/uk-israel-palestinians-eu-idUKKBN0O31W120150518](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/05/18/uk-israel-palestinians-eu-idUKKBN0O31W120150518)
- [10] [www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/07/20-fac-mepp-conclusions/](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/07/20-fac-mepp-conclusions/)
- [11] [eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/151028\\_01\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/151028_01_en.htm)
- [12] [www.haaretz.com/misc/article-print-page/.premium-1.603028](http://www.haaretz.com/misc/article-print-page/.premium-1.603028)
- [13] [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.7540](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.7540)

*Sadaka supports a peaceful settlement in Palestine / Israel based on the principles of democracy and justice, be that in two states or in one state. We maintain an independent position on internal politics within Palestine, favouring neither Fatah, Hamas nor any other Palestinian political organisation.*