

World Middle East [Israeli-Palestinian conflict](#)

OPINION

For Palestinians, sovereignty is non-negotiable. We won't accept a two-state solution without it



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The two-state solution involves the formation of an independent Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel. [See all 5 stories.](#)



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Prior to October 7 and the ongoing war in Gaza, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was off the international agenda. Other issues from around the world, namely the Russian war on Ukraine, were front-of-mind, and the end of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, and establishment of a Palestinian state wasn't being widely discussed.

Even the countries which had sponsored the Middle East Peace Process, which started in the early 1990s, had no desire to return to the topic, in part because, for them, the two-state solution no longer looked possible.



The two-state solution was an international consensus accepted by Palestinians in 1988. PHOTO: KATE GERAGHTY; ARTWORK: MARIJA ERCEGOVAC

[The shock of October 7](#) didn't hit Israelis and the Palestinians only. It took the entire world by surprise, including the surrounding Arab countries.

Following the attack, as is the case of all crises, the pursuit for an opportunity began. In this crisis, the only available and viable opportunity is returning to the old paradigm that many had given up on: the two-state solution.

The two-state solution was not originally a Palestinian proposal, but rather an international consensus that was accepted by Palestinians in 1988. It became the targeted objective which all parties try to realise within the context of the Middle East Peace Process.

The Oslo Accords, which were signed almost 30 years ago, have failed to bring both sides to the end game. The failures in almost all areas – Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security – added to the deepening complexity for the two sides of the conflict, as well as for third-party countries, which played the role of the mediator in the past, and were supposed to assume the same role in the future.

Both sides should negotiate with the intention of achieving the ultimate goal: an end to Israeli occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian state next to Israel.

The hesitation to tackle the topic following the same old paradigm is high and the contours of any viable peace deal are well known.

The challenges and obstacles are also known. We know the scope of a real opportunity to achieve peace, where we need a facilitating third party for the negotiation process, and the limits and leverages of such a party.

Over time, the United States has had a monopoly on this issue. Given its historic involvement in the process, today, no other party can play this role but the [US administration](#), because the responsibility of the third party in achieving the goal of peace is no less valuable than the responsibility of both sides of the conflict.

As such, it should be known that the US administration is required to work towards ending the conflict, dealing with and eliminating all challenges and obstacles, and assisting both Israel and Palestine towards a vision that ultimately and genuinely ends violence, conflict and territory claims.

The global momentum created by the ongoing war in Gaza should constitute a catalyst for President Joe Biden and his administration to present fresh guidelines for ending the conflict.

To overcome time limitations, notably as the US approaches an [election in 2024](#), and to avoid further loss of life, the Biden administration must start working with both sides on preliminary steps imminently, while also preparing its peace plan for the region.

Now is the time for a solution. Both Palestine and Israel must be willing and well-prepared to meet in the middle when it comes to all issues – including [settlements](#) and Jerusalem – make hard compromises, but to also consider new solutions in order to overcome the obstacles of the past.

It will not be an easy process. What we couldn't achieve over the past 30 years might not be easily attainable today, not least because of the atrocities committed on October 7 and the war Israel has waged on Palestinians in Gaza in the months since.

Yet however difficult reaching an agreement may be, the prevailing conditions which emerged following October 7 constitute a growing drive for all parties to find a solution and reach an agreement that [protects Israeli and Palestinian lives](#). It has become crystal clear that this conflict can't be contained forever.

The desire to return to negotiations should emerge first from the two sides of the conflict. Spoilers on both sides should be neutralised in advance to limit their capability to sabotage any peace efforts. Above all, though, both sides should negotiate with the intention of achieving the ultimate goal: an end to Israeli occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian state next to Israel.

Though tensions are at an all-time high, the “two-state” remains the only formula which can be named as a solution compared to all other suggestions currently on the table.

After 56 years of the Israeli military occupation of the territories, Palestinians are unwilling to go for any proposals that do not assure them national independence and sovereignty over their own land, while Jews also want to live in a state of their own. No other proposal outside the two-state solution meets the requirements of both parties.

Nidal Foqaha is CEO of the Palestinian Peace Coalition and the Geneva Initiative, a non-profit organisation working to promote a peaceful settlement based on a two-state solution.

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