



**The Palestinian Issue:
The One-State Solution, Freedom, Equality and the Challenge of Settler Colonialism**

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Abstract:

The Palestine-Israel conflict has traditionally been approached through the framework of the two-state solution; however, the continued expansion of Israeli settlements, demographic transformation, and territorial fragmentation have increasingly challenged its practical viability. This study examines whether the democratic one-state solution offers a more sustainable alternative when analyzed through the lens of settler colonial theory. Employing a qualitative and analytical research design based on documentary analysis of academic literature, historical records, international legal instruments, and reports of human rights organizations, this study evaluates the historical evolution of the conflict from the Ottoman land code to contemporary Israeli settlement policies. This analysis argues that settler colonial structures have progressively undermined the territorial, political and demographic foundations necessary for a viable Palestinian state. At the same time, the paper critically examines the opportunities and challenges associated with a one-state solution, including demographic realities, competing national identities, refugee return, Jewish settlements, and positions of major Palestinian actors. The study concludes that while a democratic one-state framework offers a normative vision grounded in equality, citizenship, and universal rights, its implementation faces significant political, institutional, and demographic obstacles. Sustainable peace therefore requires addressing these structural constraints rather than relying solely on increasingly unworkable territorial partition.

Keywords: Palestine, the Ottoman Land Code, the one-state solution, settler colonialism, human rights, decolonization

INTRODUCTION

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains one of the most protracted and contested disputes in modern international politics. Rooted in competing historical narratives, historical claims, and national identities, the conflict has evolved through successive wars, occupation, displacement, and failed peace initiatives, producing profound humanitarian, political, and legal consequences for both Palestinian and Israeli (Shaw, 1977; Khalidi, 1997; Masalha, 2012). For decades, the

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international community has supported the two-state solution as a preferred framework for resolving the conflict. Settler colonialism theory considers the project in Palestine to be more than just about land acquisition, but rather a continuous structural process that excludes or confines local people to provide space for new settlers (Wolfe, 2006; Veracini, 2010). This project had its roots in the Nakba of 1948, which led to the displacement of millions of Palestinians and the erosion of the community's foundations. The Israeli occupation and expansion of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, which began after the 1967 Six-Day War, further entrenched settler colonial structures and restricted Palestinian citizens' movement and access to basic services and their right to live in the territories (B'Tselem, 2021; UN OCHA, 2020).

Today, the expansion of Israeli settlements and forced evictions further illustrate the fact that the "two-state solution" is merely a mask that perpetuates Palestinian subjugation and that the current political and social structures are increasingly limiting Palestinian national self-determination and rights to the land. Against this backdrop, Palestinian youth, civil society, and international solidarity movements are leaning towards a one-state model in which a future based on democratic equality, secularism, and equal rights for all citizens can be built (Abunimah, 2006; Barghouti, 2006; Khalidi, 2020).

Moreover, Palestinian resistance movements and political parties are not only active against the Israeli occupation, but they are also striving for the establishment of a secular and democratic state that provides equal rights for all Palestinians and Israeli citizens to lay the foundation for long-term peace and justice. From this perspective, the Palestinian issue is a historical and structural conflict whose causes and solutions must be understood in the light of the theory of settler colonialism.

Much of the existing literature examines the conflict through the lens of international law, nationalism, security, or diplomacy. While these perspectives have generated valuable insights, they often treat Israeli occupation and settlement as political developments rather than manifestations of a broader colonial structure. Settler-colonial theory offers an alternative analytical framework by conceptualizing colonization as an ongoing structural process that aims to replace indigenous populations through territorial control, demographic transformation, and institutional domination, rather than as a temporary historical event (Veracini, 2010; Wolfe, 2006). This perspective provides a useful basis for examining why repeated diplomatic initiatives have failed to produce a sustainable political settlement.

Despite extensive scholarship on the Palestinian question, comparatively limited attention has been devoted to critically evaluating whether the structural realities created by prolonged occupation and settlement expansion have fundamentally undermined the assumptions upon which the two-state solution was originally based (Wolfe, 2006; Veracini, 2010; Pappé, 2006). Moreover, increasing academic and political discussions surrounding a democratic one-state framework require further examination of both its normative foundation and its practical challenges. These include demographic realities, competing national identities, the future of Israeli settlements, the refugees' return, and the position of Palestinian actors.

Against this background, the study addresses the following research question: To what extent has settler colonialism contributed to the failure of the two-state solution, and can a democratic one-state framework provide a theoretically and politically viable alternative for resolving the

Palestinian-Israeli conflict? Employing settler colonial theory as its analytical framework, the study critically examines the historical evolution of the conflict and evaluates the strengths and limitations of competing political solutions. Rather than advocating a predetermined outcome, it assesses the one-state model against the structural realities that continue to shape the conflict and discusses the principal, political, demographic, and institutional challenges affecting its practical implementation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SETTLER COLONIALISM

Understanding the theory of settler colonialism is key to examining the structural causes of the Palestinian problem. According to Patrick Wolfe (2006), settler colonialism is not a temporary event but an ongoing “structural process” that constrains local populations politically, socially, and economically, as well as provides legal and institutional justification for the occupation of their land and resources. The central assumptions of settler colonial theory are that settler colonialism is a continuing structural process rather than a single historical event; that it seeks a permanent acquisition of territory through the displacement or marginalization of indigenous populations; and that legal, political, and institutional mechanisms are employed to consolidate the settler’s dominance (Wolfe, 2006; Veracini, 2010). Unlike conventional colonialism, which primarily aims to exploit indigenous labour and resources.

The settler colonial project is not limited to land acquisition or settlement expansion, but is based on the elimination of local communities and the creation of space for new settlers (Veracini, 2010; Wolfe, 2006; Sayegh, 1965). Classical colonialism generally refers to the European colonial experiences of the 16th to 20th centuries, in which colonial powers established control over land, resources, and local peoples to achieve economic gain and political dominance. In this, the local community continued to exist but was limited to a sphere of economic and political exploitation. Classical colonialism involved the acquisition of land and resources, the exploitation of labour, the establishment of political and legal structures, and cultural control, but the elimination or replacement of the local population was not the primary goal (Veracini, 2011; Yiftachel, 2006; Wolfe, 2006). In contrast, settler colonialism creates land, social, and political space for new settlers by limiting, displacing, or eliminating the local community (Veracini, 2011; Yiftachel, 2006).

Zionist settler colonialism in Palestine began in the 1880s as a result of increasing anti-Semitic policies in Europe, when the Zionists chose Palestine as a refuge. Initially, the Zionist settlers were few in number and lived in relative harmony with the local Palestinians. However, as the settlement process expanded, the occupation of Palestinian lands and the incidents of eviction increased, which are the hallmarks of settler colonialism. In the context of this theory, the Israeli state's policies of forced evictions in the British Mandate, as well as the Israeli state's current policies of occupation, forced evictions, and policies that seek to destroy the local population and consolidate the Israeli settlements and settlers (Shaw, 1977; Khalidi, 1997; B'Tselem, 2021) can be viewed as a continuum.

Settler colonialism involves having a settler community, displacing the indigenous group, and creating racist legislation and political frameworks that detract from the rights of the indigenous people and benefit the settlers. It is very clearly manifested in Palestine. The support to the establishment of the “national home” of the Zionists in 1917 with the Balfour Declaration, the

systematic expulsion of some 7 million Palestinians during the Nakba in the year 1948 and the Israeli Military Occupation and expansion of Jewish settlements on the present-day Palestinian territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are examples of the occupation of Palestinian lands and curtailment of community by the Israelis (Pappé, 2006; Masalha, 2012; UN OCHA, 2020). Moreover, settler colonialism does not only manifest itself as an occupation of land and politics, but also in the Palestinian community's culture, education, social institutions, political rights, and more, with a view to undermining its identity and its right to autonomy (Yiftachel, 2006; HRW, 2021; Amnesty International, 2022). Not just the Nakba and the occupation in 1967, but the ongoing settlements, land confiscations, and movement restrictions, are part of this theory and seen as a coherent and continuous process that is a fundamental obstacle to Palestinian freedom and equality.

In this study, the settler colonial theory serves as a principal analytical framework for examining the historical evolution of Israeli settlement policies, demographic transformation, and territorial expansion; rather than treating these developments as isolated events, the theory enables an assessment of how they collectively shape the structural conditions influencing the viability of the two competing solutions. Consequently, the current conflict in Palestine is not just about land or political control but about the survival, culture and security of the basic rights of the people of Palestine. It is for this reason that the demand for a one-state solution is increasingly being made, as otherwise Palestinians would not get full rights and equality (Abunimah, 2006; Barghouti, 2006). Nevertheless, the theory is not without criticism. Some scholars argue that an exclusive reliance on settler colonialism may understate the security, geopolitical, and ideological dimensions of conflict by interpreting development primarily through a colonial lens. Despite criticism, the framework remains valuable for analyzing long-term structural transformation in Palestine and its implications for contemporary political solution.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design based on documentary and textual analysis. It critically examines academic literature, historical records, international legal instruments, and reports from reputable international organizations and human rights institutions to analyze the historical evolution of the conflict through the lens of settler-colonial theory. The study adopts an analytical rather than empirical approach, synthesizing secondary sources to evaluate the structural limitations of the two-state solution and the prospects and challenges of the democratic one-state solution.

THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Building on the theoretical explanation given above, the following historical overview examines the major political developments that shaped the Palestinian-Israeli conflict over the decades. It focuses on the historical process through which territorial dispossession, settlement expansion, and institutional control contributed to the erosion of conditions necessary for a viable solution. It is important to consider the historical and class background to understand the structural complexity of the Palestinian issue.

The UN Partition Plan (1947)

In 1947, the UN proposed a partition plan for Palestine that allocated disproportionate land to Zionist settlers compared to the local Palestinian farmers and working class (Finkelstein, 1995). This measure severely undermined the political, economic, and social rights of the local community and laid the foundation for future conflicts (Masalha, 2012). The partition can be seen in the light of historical analysis as a colonial project that undermined the basic rights of the local Palestinian community and their right to land ownership (Pappé, 2006).

The partition plan favoured the Zionists in terms of land, population and resources, while ignoring the basic rights of the local Palestinian community. It made it clear that the problem was not simply one of ethnic or religious differences, but an ongoing colonial and capitalist occupation aimed at undermining the self-determination of the local working and peasant classes and providing land and resources for Zionist settlement (Masalha, 2012).

Furthermore, the partition reinforced class and social inequalities within the Palestinian local community. Land and political power resources were transferred to the hands of a capitalist colonial project that undermined the self-determination and social stability of the local community (Abunimah, 2006). In this context, the partition project can be seen as a historical and structural process that paved the way for the continued exploitation and dispossession of the Palestinian working and peasant classes (Veracini, 2010).

The Nakba: Systematic Ethnic Cleansing and Palestinian Tragedy

The establishment of Israel in 1948 resulted in the Nakba, or “the first Palestinian catastrophe,” during which approximately seven million Palestinians were displaced from their homes, lands, assets, and livelihoods (Pappé, 2006). This displacement was a systematic act of ethnic cleansing and genocide that not only weakened the geographical presence of the Palestinian community but also disrupted its socio-economic structures (Morris, 2004). The systematic displacement resulted in the confiscation of Palestinian families’ lands, agricultural production, and their economic resources, resulting in millions of refugees living in squalid conditions in makeshift camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere (Masalha, 2012; Khalidi, 1997). This process was not limited to geographical occupation but also caused widespread social and cultural destruction. Palestinian identity, traditions and social relations were damaged, and the foundations of economic and political loss were laid for an entire generation (Pappé, 2015).

The Nakba deprived Palestinian youth, women, and the working class of opportunities for their development. It affected their educational and professional development and created a long-term refugee crisis (Abunimah, 2006). Furthermore, the Nakba process is a manifestation of the fact that the Palestinian tragedy was not just a military or political event but a continuation of Zionist settler colonial policies that continued to restrict the rights of the Palestinian community through the seizure of local land, society and political power (Veracini, 2010). In the same context, this process also affected the socio-cultural structures of local Palestinians, leading to a continuous decline in their political and human rights (Yiftachel, 2006). This incident was not only recognized as a serious violation of human rights at the global level, but the United Nations recognized the right of return of Palestinian refugees through several resolutions (UN General Assembly Resolution 194, 1948). But this has not been fully implemented in practice to this day.

The 1967 Arab-Israeli War and Occupation

The Six-Day War in 1967 took place between Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Israel, as a result of which Israel changed the geopolitical and political landscape of the Middle East. After this war, Israel seized more Arab lands, including the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria, which provided new opportunities for strengthening the Zionist settler colonial structures (Shlaim, 2000). This occupation was carried out in important areas of historically Palestinian land, including the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Israeli control over these areas has crushed the Palestinian community's land, resources and political self-determination (B'Tselem, 2021).

Human and Social Impacts of the Occupation

The immediate effects of the occupation have included severe restrictions on Palestinian movement, limited access to land and natural resources, and severe hardships in daily life. The occupation has affected the local economy, disrupted the education and health systems, and restricted access to public services (UNOCHA, 2020). The social and cultural foundations of the Palestinians have also been affected, further increasing the economic and political vulnerability of the local working and peasant classes (Masalha, 2012). International human rights organizations emphasize the persistence of the occupation and restrictions on the fundamental human rights of Palestinians (HRW, 2021).

The Persistence of Settler Colonial Structures

After the occupation, Israeli settlements and colonial structures began to increasingly restrict the political, social, and economic rights of Palestinians. The administrative and legal structures of the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were designed to maintain Israeli control over Palestinian movement, land ownership, and economic resources (Yiftachel, 2006). This continuity showed the confiscation of Palestinian lands, occupation, and demographic engineering. It involved the forced or legal expulsion of Palestinians, the construction of Jewish settlements, and the suppression of the Palestinian population by restricting citizenship/residence rights. This is not a natural process but a systematic political and administrative strategy aimed at consolidating geopolitical control in the region, and access to limited resources is part of a systematic and continuous Zionist colonial project that undermines Palestinian self-determination (Pappé, 2015).

The Failure of the Two-State Solution and the Restoration of Palestinian Rights

The 1967 occupation and subsequent actions made it clear that the two-state solution was inadequate to help fully restore Palestinian rights and equality. The occupation and settlement expansion restricted Palestinian land, movement and economic autonomy, while restrictions on daily life, education, health and basic human rights remain a constant obstacle (Abunimah, 2006). These factors are fundamental obstacles to the restoration of Palestinian rights, equality and self-determination, demonstrating that the failure of the two-state solution is a continuing historical reality of Palestinian national existence and independence (Barghouti, 2006).

The One-State Model and Palestinian Political Organizations

The one-state model has been advocated by several groups and movements in Palestinian politics and thought. For instance, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), founded in

1969 by Nayef Hawatmeh, advocates equal citizenship and secular nationalism (Hawatmeh, 1969). Abnaa el-Balad (Sons of the Land), founded in 1972 among Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, has always called for the return of refugees and a secular democratic state (Abnaa el-Balad, 1972). The Palestinian National Initiative, founded in 2002 under the leadership of Mustafa Barghouti, based its struggle on principles of democracy, social justice, and a transparent political process (Barghouti, 2002). The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), founded in 1967 by George Habash, advocates for an egalitarian and secular state, along with resistance to imperialism and apartheid (Habash, 1967). The Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies, established in 1998, also advances the one-state model academically in the context of human rights and secularism (RCHRS, 1998).

All these organizations agree that the one-state model is the only practical and moral path that can ensure genuine equality, freedom, and the right of return for the Palestinian people. This model would provide equal rights to all citizens, regardless of race, religion, or nationality, which would not only enable political and social justice but would also promote social solidarity and civic responsibility. Furthermore, this concept challenges the Israeli occupation and colonial structures and provides a sustainable, transparent, and humane solution to the failure of the two-state solution and the effects of further entrenching Israeli rule. Thus, the one-state model is not only important as an ideological and political principle, but also offers a realistic alternative in practice for the Palestinian people to realize their right to self-determination and build a future (Halper 2025; Ismail & Yaacob 2023).

One-State Solution: Principles and Possibilities

The One-State Solution is an alternative model for the Palestine-Israel conflict that has become increasingly prominent after the failure of the two-state solution. According to this concept, a common, democratic and secular state should be established in which all residents, whether Palestinian or Israeli, are granted citizenship based on equality, regardless of colour, race, religion or nationality. In this way, the identity of the state would be based on democratic equality and human rights, rather than on any one religion or ethnicity.

The two-state formula cannot eliminate Israeli occupation and inequality against Palestinians. Only a secular, democratic and multi-ethnic state can provide a framework where all citizens can live with equal rights (Said, 2000). Ali Abu Nima writes in his book *One Country* that the one-state solution is not only a moral and humanitarian necessity but also a practical political model. According to him, the plan to divide Israel and Palestine into separate nation-states has failed because it does not provide real equality and justice. On the contrary, a common secular and democratic state is the only way to guarantee equality, freedom and a peaceful future for both peoples (Abunimah, 2006). Israel has made the two-state solution impossible through its colonial settlements and the continuous expansion of borders, so the one-state solution remains the only sustainable alternative (Tilley, 2005). Israel's policies have permanently marginalized the Palestinians, and the only just solution to this situation is a common state that grants equal status to all citizens (Pappé, 2014).

The freedom and right of return of the Palestinian people are only possible when a democratic single state is established that can break the Zionist colonial structure (Masalha, 2012).

Basic Principles of the One-State Solution

The one-state solution is based on the following basic principles.

Democratic Equality

All citizens of the state have equal political, social and legal rights. This includes the right to vote, education, health and employment. According to Edward Said, this is the only way that true equality between Palestinians and Israelis can be achieved (Said, 2000). Ali Abu Nimah also emphasizes that only a common state can provide equality and justice for all (Abunimah, 2006).

Secular System

The current discriminatory and racist structures should be eliminated, and a system should be established in which no one is given priority based on religion or ethnicity. Amnesty International clarified in its 2022 report that the current structure of Israel is based on racism, and an equal state is not possible without its elimination (Amnesty International, 2022). Human Rights Watch also took the same position in its 2021 report and called it an “apartheid system” (HRW, 2021).

Right of Return

Palestinians displaced in and after 1948 and their descendants should be granted the right to return to their homeland and acquire citizenship in accordance with UN Resolution 194. Nour Masalha has shown in her research that the right of return is a fundamental part of Palestinian national identity (Masalha, 2012). According to Ilan Pappé, any political solution without the right of return will be incomplete because it is linked to historical justice (Pappé, 2015).

The One-State Model and Palestinian Political Organizations

While several civil society organizations and intellectual movements have increasingly advocated a democratic one-state solution based on equal citizenship and human rights, the position of the major Palestinian political factions remains more diverse. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) led primarily by Fatah, has historically endorsed the two-state solution through the Oslo Peace Process and subsequent diplomatic initiatives. However, growing concerns regarding settlement expansion and the diminishing territorial viability of a Palestinian state have generated increasing debate within Palestinian political circles regarding an alternative political framework (Khalidi, 202; Shlaim, 2000). Consequently, the official Palestinian position continues to support statehood based on 1967 borders, despite acknowledging the practical challenges confronting its realization.

Similarly, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad traditionally rejected the Oslo framework and opposed a permanent two-state settlement based on ideological and political considerations. While Hamas at different times, indicated a willingness to accept a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders as an interim political arrangement, without the recognition of Israeli statehood.

All these organizations agree that the one-state model is the only practical and moral path that can ensure genuine equality, freedom, and the right of return for the Palestinian people. This model would provide equal rights to all citizens, regardless of race, religion, or nationality, which would not only enable political and social justice but would also promote social solidarity and civic responsibility. Furthermore, this concept challenges the Israeli occupation and colonial structures

and provides a sustainable, transparent, and humane solution to the failure of the two-state solution and the effects of further entrenching Israeli rule. Thus, the one-state model is not only important as an ideological and political principle, but also offers a realistic alternative in practice for the Palestinian people to realize their right to self-determination and build a future.

Contemporary Possibilities and Resistance

While Israeli settler-colonial structures have become strong and well organized, Palestinian resistance is continually seeking new possibilities and avenues. Youth movements, and civil society in particular are active, not just locally, but globally. These movements are not only raising political awareness but also socio-cultural awareness within the Palestinian community and enhancing the unity and Palestinian national self-determination of the Palestinian people. Internationally, BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) connects to the fight against apartheid and human rights globally, and is tied to the one-state solution. This is a movement that opposes Israel's economic, political and cultural interventions around the world and serves as a good instrument to safeguard Palestinian rights (Badir, 2018).

The one-state model is also being championed by independent websites—including Mondoweiss—as the subject of academic, analytical and political discourse. The platform explains the connection between Israel's colonial practices, the rights of the Palestinian people and the international human rights law, and it highlights the sustainability and the legitimacy of this model (Mondoweiss, 2015). Likewise, the one-state solution is encouraged as a realistic option under international human rights and anti-apartheid, as advocated on the Counter-fire platform. The site emphasizes the historical and colonial context of the Palestinian struggle and of Israeli occupation, and connects this solution to the principles of social justice and equality at the global level (Counterfire, 2024).

Findings and Discussion

The One-State Model is facing challenges to its viability in the face of structural realities and legal complicity.

The prior historical and theoretical discussion leads to a few salient points that must be discussed systemically. The outcomes of this research are not merely academic but contradict the central narrative of the international community regarding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and uncover the legal, structural and ideological devices that have been in use to subjugate Palestine. In this section, the evidence is summarized and implications for finding a viable one-state solution are discussed.

The Two-State Framework has been an Instrument of Accretive Colonization

The first big surprise is that, since the Oslo Accords (1993-1995), the two-state solution has not been a serious instrument for the establishment of a Palestinian state, but rather a diplomatic ploy to facilitate the continuation of settler colonial expansion. The number of settlers in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) has increased from around 110,000 in 1993 to more than 450,000 by 2020, as revealed by data from B'Tselem (2021) and UN OCHA (2020), which come from the decades when the two-state process was allegedly being pursued. The development was not an accident, but the result of Israeli state planning, legal immunity, and military protection for settlers. The message is simple: the two-state solution has been distorted and manipulated to create “faits” on the ground. One by one, all settlements built, bypass roads constructed, and Palestinian communities surrounded have helped to break up the geographic contiguity of a viable Palestinian State. This is the logic of elimination, as Wolfe (2006) would say, not one that happens on the spot,

but rather one that is “slow, legal and bureaucratic,” as the same source quotes, in eradicating Palestinian spatial existence. Hence, it is crucial to realize that “two states” call of today is a complicity in ongoing colonization without the slightest mention of this structural sabotage.

Settler Colonialism in Palestine Is Legally Embedded, Not Aberrational

The other discovery relates to the legal framework of the occupation. Many foreign observers see Israeli violations of international law, including the construction of settlements in contravention of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, land confiscation and collective punishment, as aberrations from a legitimate state project. But the evidence cited in this paper, especially that of HRW (2021) and Amnesty International (2022), indicates otherwise: the settler colonial project is enshrined in the legal fabric of the Israeli state system.

Israeli legislation discriminates systematically against Palestinian citizens (including Israeli citizens) as a group. Ethnic supremacy is legally entrenched by the Nation-State Law (2018), which states that Israel is a Jewish state and that Jews alone have the right to national self-determination there. Palestinian citizens are prohibited from leasing or owning a large share of land due to land management laws, including the Israel Lands Law (1960) and the bylaws of the Jewish National Fund. A separate military legal system applies to Palestinians (military orders, administrative detention, permit regimes), and Israeli settlers have Israeli civil law. The dual legal system (as defined in the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, 1973) is a textbook feature of apartheid.

The key point of discussion here is that if settler colonialism and apartheid are not incidental or hidden, but rather codified in the law, then patchwork solutions will lead to insufficient resolution of the issue. Any two-state option that is going to work in the future will not include a sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, no territorial contiguity, and no right of return for refugees. The one-state option, on the other hand, would necessitate the breakdown of this entire legal system and its replacement with one democratic legal system—a monumental and morally imperative challenge.

The One-State Solution is Already Practically Operational in Negative Form

Another overlooked fact is that there is already a one-state reality, albeit oppressive and unequal. The entire area between the Jordan and the Mediterranean is effectively under the control of one sovereign nation (Israel) – in land, borders, airspace, water resources and people. The difference is not between two states or one state, but between a democratic, equal one-state model and the one that exists today, in which the Jews are dominant. This discovery changes the whole discussion.

It is not the question of one state or two states, but what kind of one state will it be. What we have at present is a one-sided reality of occupation, annexation (de facto if not de jure) and apartheid. Often touted as the 'nucleus' of a future Palestinian state, the Palestinian Authority is, in fact, a subcontractor to Israeli security, while having no authority over its borders, its natural resources, or even the tax revenues that are collected.

However, despite Israel's 2005 withdrawal from Gaza, the territory is still cordoned off, its airspace, borders and sea ports are monitored by Israel, and it is effectively an open-air prison. So the one-state solution proposed by Abunimah (2006), Pappé (2014) and the political movements cited

above is not a radical departure from what is actually happening but a democratic reformation of an existing system of control. This is a key discussion point – shifting the one-state model from the utopian fantasy world to the politically viable world of political restructuring, like apartheid South Africa moving into a democratic South Africa.

Position of Palestinian Civil Society and Youth Movements

A second key finding is that despite the formal endorsement by the Palestinian leadership at the highest level (the Palestinian Authority) of the two-state solution, grassroots and civil society groups have been rejecting it. The Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) 2005 does not mention a two-state solution, but rather calls for a struggle in human rights terms – equality, return and an end to occupation.

In 2018, the Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies hosted a conference in Ramallah, which hundreds of Palestinian intellectuals, youth activists and political figures attended, calling for a single secular democratic state. Such a grassroots change is essential. It proves that the one-state solution is a political demand of the indigenous people and not an imposition from outside. For younger Palestinians who have never known a viable peace process, never had their problems solved, and who have seen their homes destroyed, their territory being overtaken, and their homes and future threatened by periodic military attacks on Gaza, the notion of the two-state solution is a cruel deception. They have developed a political vision that is shifting from a partition-based nationalism to a citizenship-based one.

The discovery of Palestinian support for a one-state solution when presented in terms of equal rights for all citizens challenges the widely believed Israeli and Western notion that Palestinians want an ethnically pure state, which has consistently been revealed by surveys as the very opposite of what they actually prefer.

Discussion: Obstacles and Counterarguments

There are two main objections to the one-state solution, which should also be mentioned. First, critics say, the establishment of one state would result in civil war or the emigration of the Jews. But the same predictions were applied to South Africa and Northern Ireland, both of which had difficult transitions but were ultimately more successful in creating stable democracies. Second, critics say that Israelis would not ever settle for being a minority. However, the one-state model is not a call for Jews to become a minority in a hostile state, but for all citizens, Jewish and Palestinian, to share power in a secular democracy. The Jewish cultural and religious life would not be based on state religion, but on civil rights law. Thirdly, critics say that the one-state concept is impractical as no Israeli government would accept it. This is the case in the present, but in the history of decolonization, colonial regimes are rarely keen to decolonize themselves. The one-state solution is not a negotiation proposal; it is an outline for political contestation, boycott, international legal challenges, and mass mobilizations – the means by which apartheid in South Africa was brought to an end.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that the Palestine-Israel conflict is a complex, historical, and colonial issue in which a two-state solution has not only historically failed, but has also reinforced

inequality, racial discrimination, and oppression against the Palestinian people. The current settler-colonial structure and Israeli policies have eroded the fundamental guarantees of Palestinian self-determination and human rights, further highlighting the urgent need for an alternative and viable solution.

The one-state solution offers an alternative to the Palestinian question that is based on the principles of democracy, secularism, and human rights. In this model, both Palestinian and Israeli communities would enjoy equal civil rights, the right of return, political participation, and freedom. Those who champion this solution are all scholars, political campaigners, and civil society groups that believe that it is the most viable, practical, and long-term peace solution, not just a moral and humanitarian one. Furthermore, this is being endorsed by current Palestinian resistance, youth groups, civil society groups and international bodies in parallel with the system of universal human rights and anti-apartheid policy. All these demonstrate that the one-state solution is not only ideologically and politically viable, but also a viable path toward equality, freedom and everlasting peace for the Palestinian people.

The only way to resolve the Palestinian problem is to discard the failed policies of the past and lay a path to the establishment of a multi-ethnic, secular and democratic state in which all citizens, regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds, will enjoy equal rights without discrimination. The one-state model is not just a necessary component of the restoration of the historical and human rights of the Palestinians; it will also provide a basis for a sustainable, moral and humane future in Israeli society.

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Date of Publication	May 30, 2026
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