

The World Must Force Peace on Israel

Sunday 18 February 2024, by [LEVY Gideon](#) (Date first published: 11 February 2024).

Now is the time for the United States, and in its wake the international community, to make a decision: Will the endless cycle of violence between Israel and the Palestinians continue, or are we going to try to put a stop to it? Will the United States continue to arm Israel and then bemoan the excessive use of these armaments, or is it finally prepared to take real steps, for the first time in its history, to change reality? And above all, will the cruelest Israeli attack on Gaza become the most pointless of all, or will the opportunity that came in its aftermath not be missed, for a change?

Palestinians inspect the rubble of a house struck by an Israeli airstrike in Rafah, Tuesday. Credit: Fatima Shbair/AP Photo

There is no point in appealing to Israel. The current government, and the one [that is likely to replace it](#), does not and never will have the intention, courage or ability to generate change. When the prime minister responds to American talks about establishing a Palestinian state with words indicating that he “objects to coerced moves,” or that “an agreement will only be reached through negotiations,” all one can do is both laugh and cry.

Laugh, because over the years Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has done all he can to foil negotiations; cry, because Israel is the one employing coercion – the nature of its policy toward the Palestinians is coercion carried out in one big unilateral, violent, aggressive and arrogant move. All of a sudden, Israel is against acts of coercion? Irony hides its head in shame.

It is therefore pointless to expect the current Israeli government to change its character. To expect a government led by Benny Gantz, Gadi Eisenkot or Yair Lapid to do so is also painfully futile. None of them believe in the existence of a Palestinian state that is equal in its sovereign status and rights to Israel. The three of them together and each one separately will at most, on a really good day, agree to the establishment of a Bantustan on part of the land. A genuine solution will not be found here. It's best to leave Israel to wallow in its refusal.

But the world cannot afford to let this opportunity pass. This is the world that will soon have to reconstruct, with its funds, the ruins of the Gaza Strip, until the next time Israel demolishes it. It is the world whose stability is undermined as long as the occupation persists, and is further undermined every time Israel embarks on another war. This is the world that agrees that the occupation is bad for it, but has never lifted a finger to bring it to an end. Now, an opportunity to do so has cropped up. Israel's weakness and dependence following this war must be exploited, for Israel's benefit as well.

Enough with words. Enough with the futile rounds of talks held by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the barbed words uttered by President Joe Biden. They lead nowhere. The last Zionist president, perhaps the last one to care about what is happening in the world, must take action. One could, as a prelude, learn something from the amazingly simple and true words of European Union

foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, who said: “Well, if you believe that too many people are being killed, maybe you should provide less arms [to Israel].”

However, the issue is not just ending the war, but mainly, [what will happen when it's over](#). If it depended on Israel, under any government, we would return to the warm bosom of apartheid and to living by the sword. The world cannot accept this any longer and cannot leave the choice to Israel. Israel has spoken: No. The time has come for a Dayton Accords-like solution. It was a forced and imperfect agreement reached in Bosnia-Herzegovina that put an end to one of the cruelest wars, and in contrast to all predictions, it has held for 29 years. The agreement was imposed by coercion.

A Palestinian state may no longer be a viable solution because of the hundreds of thousands of settlers who ruined the chances for establishing one. But a world determined to find a solution must pose a clear choice for Israel: sanctions, or an end to the occupation; territories or weapons; settlements or international support; a democratic state or a Jewish one; apartheid, or an end to Zionism. When the world stands firm, posing these options in such a manner, Israel will have to decide. Now is the time to force Israel to make the most fateful decision of its life.

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P.S.

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