

MAIN ACTORS AND OFFICIAL POSITIONS ON THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION



Palestine:

Stances on the two-state solution have shown varying levels of support and opposition within Palestinian leadership and society influenced by political dynamics and events. In principle, Palestinians still perceive the two-state solution as a powerful legal and diplomatic tool in their struggle against Israeli occupation, annexation and apartheid, as it enjoys a broad international consensus. However, in recent years, support for it has declined, especially among the younger generation.

Today, the PLO emphasizes the relevance of Resolution 242 as it is the only internationally acknowledged legal instrument which calls for negotiations based on the 1967 borders. Palestinian factions are still divided on the issue. Leftist factions have historically advocated for armed struggle against Israel, but their positions have evolved over time, reflecting changing political realities.

Hamas has not officially endorsed the two-state solution, but there have been nuanced shifts and considerations in their rhetoric and actions, reflecting a complex mix of ideological principles, pragmatic calculations, and external pressures. Hamas was founded on the principles of armed resistance and the rejection of Israel's existence, but seems to have acknowledged the current realities on the ground and communicated "pragmatic" willingness to consider a long-term truce or ceasefire with Israel, although there are still hardliners representing the rejectionist stance.

Likewise, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) has historically opposed the two-state solution and advocated for a single Palestinian state but they remained vocal in their opposition to any agreements or negotiations that recognize Israel and accept a two-state solution.

Israel:

Although Israel formally accepted UN Security Council Resolution 242, its policies on the ground have consistently contradicted its spirit and obstructed implementation. While some Israeli voices historically called for withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territories and dismantling settlements in pursuit of peace, these positions steadily weakened.

Since the early 2000s, Israel has increasingly replaced the two-state paradigm with an Israeli-controlled regime across the territory, producing what many describe as an apartheid-like reality. This shift was reinforced by the 2014 "Referendum Law," requiring a public vote on any agreement involving territorial concessions. Israeli politics has since moved sharply rightward, with ultranationalist ideas becoming mainstream. In 2017, Prime Minister Netanyahu declared that Jewish communities would never be uprooted and that Israel would remain permanently on the land.

The current Netanyahu government openly rejects a sovereign Palestinian state and the two-state solution. Its December 2022 guiding principles assert an exclusive Jewish right to the entire Land of Israel, pledge settlement expansion across all regions, and call for extending Israeli sovereignty throughout the occupied West Bank, amounting to de facto annexation.

Within Israeli society, most Jewish Israelis have grown accustomed to the status quo of occupation. The once-significant "land for peace" camp has largely eroded, though a small peace camp still supports two states as the only viable way to end occupation.

Hardline Zionists, including most settlers, reject both Palestinian statehood and a binational state, preferring indefinite Israeli control and conflict management, while postponing meaningful political resolution for all involved.

International Community:

Hard-liner Zionists, including most settlers, see the two-state solution as a concession that would contradict Israel's national interests. They advocate an expansionist agenda, not a compromising one, and argue that any kind of Palestinian state (which they totally reject) would be hostile towards Israel. Also ruling out a binational state for demographic reasons, they cling to the status quo of Israel's control over the entire territory and "managing" the conflict.

Palestinian citizens of Israel tend to favor the binational state option and vision of a shared state which reflects their unity with the Palestinians under occupation and their sense of belonging to the Palestinian people as a whole.

United States

The US sees the two-state solution, negotiated on the basis of UN Resolutions 242 and 338, as the basis of the path to peace and has repeatedly called for an end to the occupation and a viable Palestinian State. While US mediators were involved in various peace initiatives, they are seen by Palestinians (and Arabs) as too biased towards Israel to be an honest broker. In 2024, in the wake of the Gaza War, then US President Joe Biden has called for the eventual implementation of the two-state solution, possibly with a demilitarized Palestinian state. President Trump publicly endorsed a two-state solution as the preferred model back in 2018, but his broader actions and policy shifts – embassy relocation, Golan recognition, peace plan conditionality, and proposals to displace Palestinian residents – have effectively weakened meaningful prospects for such an outcome.

Europe(an Union):

The EU has been the leading advocate of the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem as the only possible solution to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but has lacked the willingness to push Israel in that direction. The early discourse focused on Palestinian rights, the need for a Palestinian homeland, and the illegality of Israeli settlements. The 1980 Venice Declaration called for the “recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people” and “a comprehensive solution to the ‘Palestinian problem’”, but it was not until the 1990s, that the EU started to promote a negotiated two-state solution.

In the 1999 Berlin Declaration, it explicitly endorsed a Palestinian state for the first time, saying that “the creation of a democratic, viable and peaceful sovereign Palestinian State on the basis of existing agreements and through negotiations would be the best guarantee of Israel's security and Israel's acceptance as an equal partner in the region”. Currently, 11 EU member states have recognized the State of Palestine (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia before joining the EU, Sweden in 2014, and Ireland, Slovenia and Spain in 2024).

United Nations

UN Resolutions 242 (1967), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008), 2334 (2016) represent critical guidelines that have unlined the international community's stance on the imperative of a two-state solution and the need to achieve this through negotiations. So far, however, living up to the principles of these resolutions has failed the test of history, and this, although 139 of the 194 members of the UN had already recognized the state of Palestine even prior to 7 October 2023. As of January 2025, 147 of the 193 UN members states have recognized the State of Palestine.

Arab and Islamic States:

More moderate Arab countries (such as Saudi Arabia and those that have diplomatic relations with Israel, including Egypt, Jordan, the UAE, and Bahrain) see the two-state solution as being the basis of the path to peace, while others, such as Iran and, until the fall of the Assad regime, Syria, do not acknowledge Israel's right to exist.

In 2002/2003, Saudi Arabia presented a peace plan for the Middle East, later endorsed by the Arab League, which called, inter alia, for the creation of a Palestinian state in exchange for "natural relations" with Israel. Israel rejected the plan, but it is still not off the shelves. Most recently, the Saudis have made it clear that they would not pursue further talks on joining the Abraham Accords without a ceasefire in Gaza and the establishment of a Palestinian state.