

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

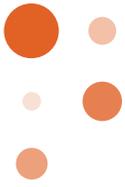
- Mr. Brog begins the video by stating, “If Israel just allowed the Palestinians to have a state of their own, there would be peace in the Middle East – right? That’s what you hear from UN Ambassadors, European Diplomats and most college professors.” From where do you think these people get this idea? Why do you think that so many people of prominence espouse this premise?
- Mr. Brog addresses this premise by pointing out that, “...Israel has already offered the Palestinians a state of their own - and not just once, but on five separate occasions.” Considering this truth, why do you think that so many people still accuse Israel of oppressing Palestinians and of not ‘letting’ the Palestinians have their own territory? Why do you think that the Palestinians reject the offer each time?
- Later, when sharing with us some history of the problem of Arab violence in the region, Mr. Brog explains that the Peel Commission’s conclusion was, “...to create two independent states, one for the Jews and one for the Arabs – a two state solution... [and that] the Jews voted to accept this offer. But the Arabs rejected it and resumed their violent rebellion.” Do you think that a two-state solution is the best solution? Why or why not? Even if the Palestinians were to have their own officially recognized country, do you think that they would stop attacking Israel and be peaceful? Explain.
- Mr. Brog also shares with us that, “In between these last two Israeli offers, Israel unilaterally left Gaza, giving the Palestinians complete control there. Instead of developing this territory, the Palestinians turned Gaza into a terrorist base from which they have fired thousands of rockets into Israel. Each time Israel has agreed to a Palestinian state, the Palestinians have rejected the offer, often violently.” Do you think that the Palestinians even want their own state? Why or why not? Why do you think that the Palestinians respond to offers of their own territory with violence each time?
- At the end of the video, Mr. Brog contends that, “...if you’re interested in peace in the Middle East, maybe the answer is not to pressure Israel to make yet another offer of a state to the Palestinians. Maybe the answer is to pressure the Palestinians to finally accept the existence of a Jewish State.” Do you agree with Mr. Brog’s suggestion? Why or why not? Do you think that the Palestinians will ever accept Israel as a state? Explain.

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Gaza

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Does Israel actually occupy the Gaza Strip?” then answer the questions that follow.

- What did Israel do in 2005 in regards to Gaza? What did the Palestinians do in 2006 after having been given control of the territory of Gaza?
- Considering that since the Palestinians were given the territory of Gaza they have continually fired rockets at and attacked Israel, do you think that Israel is justified in it's control of imports and exports from Gaza? Why or why not? Why do you think that some people characterize Israel as 'the bad guy' and Palestinians as 'victims,' when it was the Palestinians who elected a terrorist group for a government and it is the Palestinians who fire rockets at Israelis? Considering that the people living in Gaza have the choice to be violent towards Israel or not, why do you think that the international Pro-Palestine community ignores the fact that Palestinians are so violent towards Israel and exclusively chooses to admonish Israel for controlling the border?
- Do you think the Palestinians will ever want peace with Israel? Explain. What do you think Palestinians value, and how is their value system holding their people back? What would your solution to the Middle East problem be?



QUIZ

WHY ISN'T THERE A PALESTINIAN STATE?

- 1. How many times has Israel offered Palestinians a state of their own?**
 - a. Never
 - b. Once
 - c. Three
 - d. Five

- 2. What was the conclusion of the Peel Commission?**
 - a. Give the Jews 100 percent of the disputed land in the Middle East.
 - b. Create two independent states - one for the Jews, and one for the Arabs.
 - c. Split the land equally between the Jews and the Arabs.
 - d. There was no solution to the situation.

- 3. What was the conclusion of the UN in 1947?**
 - a. Give the Jews 100 percent of the disputed land in the Middle East.
 - b. Create two independent states - one for the Jews, and one for the Arabs.
 - c. Split the land equally between the Jews and the Arabs.
 - d. There was no solution to offer to the situation.

- 4. Each time Israel has agreed to a Palestinian state, the Palestinians have rejected the offer, often violently.**
 - a. True
 - b. False

- 5. If you're interested in peace in the Middle East, what might the answer be?**
 - a. Pressure Israel to make yet another offer of a state to the Palestinians.
 - b. Realize that there will never be an answer for peace in the Middle East.
 - c. Pressure the Palestinians to finally accept the existence of a Jewish State.
 - d. More intervention by the United Nations.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/07/02/does-israel-actually-occupy-the-gaza-strip/?utm_term=.af0f4dc7e971

Does Israel actually occupy the Gaza Strip?

By Ruth Eglash July 2, 2015



Palestinians in Gaza City's seaport wave their national flag as they ride boats during a June 28 rally in support of activists aboard a ship aimed at defying Israel's blockade of Gaza. Israeli naval commandos later intercepted the ship and diverted it toward a port in Israel. (Mahmud Hams/AFP via Getty Images)

JERUSALEM — It's often described as a war of narratives. And few things highlight the intractability of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict more than discussions over the status of the Gaza Strip.

One of the main points of contention: Is the coastal Palestinian territory occupied by Israel?

We asked two Israelis and two Palestinians to lay out their views on that question. Their responses, below, have been edited for length and clarity.

First, a little background:

Most Palestinians see Gaza as part of the territories occupied by Israel. They also say the coastal enclave is under "siege," with Israel controlling who and what goes in and out. The United Nations also calls Gaza occupied territory, most recently in a report commissioned by the U.N. Human Rights Council that concluded that both Israel and armed Palestinian factions in Gaza may have committed war crimes. The United Nations says it does not matter that Israeli soldiers are not based inside the strip; they have "effective control."

Israelis, however, argue that their withdrawal from Gaza 10 years ago means that the enclave is not occupied — unlike the West Bank.

In 2005, Israel dismantled 21 Jewish settlements and pulled troops out of the strip. Then-Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said the "disengagement" was intended to increase security for residents of Israel, relieve pressure on the Israeli army and reduce friction between Israelis and Palestinians.

Israel handed the area over to the Palestinian Authority. Then, after the militant Palestinian faction Hamas won a majority of seats in Palestinian elections held in 2006, it took over Gaza by ousting its rivals by force in 2007.

Today, Israel maintains a complete air and sea blockade of Gaza and a partial blockade of goods and people through two land crossings. Israel also greatly restricts the ability of Gazans to enter Israel.

Israel says that tight border control is essential because of threats from Hamas, which is seen as a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States and the European Union. Egypt also tightly controls its border with Gaza.

Late last month, international pro-Palestinian activists attempted to sail into Israeli-controlled waters off the Mediterranean coast to protest what they called Israel's "illegal siege against occupied Gaza." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wrote them a letter asserting that "there is no blockade."

Here is what people on each side have to say:

1) Raji Sourani, human rights lawyer for the Palestinian Center for Human Rights in Gaza.

Q: Does Israel still occupy Gaza?

A: Gaza is definitely still occupied, and Israel is still the belligerent occupying force, and they have no right to enforce this illegal, inhuman collective punishment. It is entirely against the Geneva Convention.

The people who came on the flotilla are the creme de la creme of international civil society who want to challenge eight years of a criminal siege that has suffocated the people of Gaza. They are trying to highlight the gravity of the situation [in Gaza], where 65 percent of the people are unemployed, 90 percent live under the poverty line, 85 percent depend on [the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East], and we are facing the biggest man-made disaster, which is the occupation.

Q: Israel says it withdrew from Gaza, so how can you say it's still occupied?

A: This is a very well-known trick. Whenever they want to, they can occupy Gaza again. The siege means they control what we eat, what medicines we receive. This claim is ridiculous.

Gaza has not been rebuilt since the [Israel-Gaza war] of 2008/09, and it is not rebuilt after three wars because Israel does not want to do that.

I cannot travel to the International Criminal Court in Geneva because I am not allowed to leave. Fishermen cannot go and fish because of the buffer zone. Because of the Israelis, we cannot bring the goods we want in and out. This is part of the Israeli occupation and is part of our lives.

Israel can decide to kill anyone anywhere in Gaza. They can do what they want in Gaza they are the secret power.

If there is no occupation power, then why is there a siege on Gaza?

2) Israel Ziv, former commander of the Israel Defense Forces' Gaza Division, who headed the army's Operations Directorate during the disengagement from Gaza.

Q: Does Israel still occupy Gaza?

A: No, of course Israel does not still occupy Gaza, at least no more than the Egyptians are occupying Gaza.

The issue here is that Israel does not have any involvement at all in the day-to-day running of Gaza. Unfortunately, until the ruling party there, Hamas, changes its policy of acting as both a government and a terror organization, Israel will insist on controlling everything that goes into or out of Gaza.

Q: So why do Palestinians, and many in the international community, continue saying Gaza is occupied?

A: Palestinians like to ride on that narrative because it is a very catchy narrative, and since part of this warfare is about the narrative and justification of the narrative, using that narrative — even though it is not what happens in the field — is still useful. And, unfortunately, many people in the world still like to buy this narrative.

Another narrative that is more correct is that Gaza is under blockade. This is partly true, but that is due to the fact that there is no other supervision arrangement, no satisfying international supervision that would allow Israel to open the gates for everything to flow into Gaza.

I would like to mention that although there is no formal arrangement, Israel opens the border every day, allowing the flow of raw materials, humanitarian aid, food and anything that cannot be used for military purposes. Other than materials that might be used for dual purposes, which are supervised, Israel does not have full control of how it will be used.

3) Ghassan Khatib, a Palestinian lecturer of political science at Birzeit University in Ramallah, West Bank, and a former Palestinian minister.

Q: Does Israel still occupy Gaza?

A: Yes, it does, and this is not only the view held by Palestinians. It is also seen this way by experts in international law, who confirm the Palestinian understanding that Israel did not withdraw from Gaza but merely redeployed from inside Gaza to around it.

The presence of the Israeli army inside Gaza was removed, but the Israeli military still controls the borders of Gaza, meaning the Gazans do not have control over their borders and, consequently, their movement and movement of goods going into and out of Gaza.

I am not a legal expert, but I would say that Israel's control over the borders is a continuity of the occupation.

Q: Israel says it has relaxed restrictions on goods and people going in and out of Gaza, and figures from international organizations show the numbers of both are up in 2015.

A: Israel increasing its restrictions or relaxing its constrictions confirms the idea that Israel is controlling the border. When it is in Israel's interest, they relax restrictions. This means that Gaza is under Israeli control.

Q: Israel says it controls the crossings because of Hamas rocket fire.

A: The Israeli restrictions, Hamas rockets and all other aspects of the conflict all take place within the framework of an illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories. We have resistance and rockets; sometimes it's legitimate and sometimes it's an illegitimate means of resistance, but it's all because of the occupation. Evacuating part of Palestinian territory, changing the form of control from inside to outside, does not mean the Palestinians should give up on their efforts to get complete freedom.

4) Dani Dayan, former chairman of the Yesha Council, the main advocacy group for settlements in the West Bank and, previously, in Gaza.

Q: Does Israel still occupy Gaza?

A: I am not going to refer to the legal perspective because I am not a lawyer, but in a common-sense perspective, Israel withdrew from every square inch of the Gaza strip in 2005. Israel ethnically cleansed the Jewish presence, both military and civilians, so common sense dictates that we are not occupying. I think if you ask Israelis, 95 percent of the people will be of that opinion.

In 2005, a Palestinian state was established in Gaza, and it became an independent state free to take any course that its leaders and its people chose. I think the Gazans were given a historical choice that is seldom given to a group of people, and they could have become a Middle Eastern Singapore or a Middle Eastern Somalia. They decided they did not want to be Singapore but wanted to be Somalia, because they want to continue the effort to exterminate Israel. That is what happened in 2005 and ever since.

Q: Is it possible that Gaza is under siege by Israel instead – a claim made by many Palestinians and their supporters?

A: We have to remember that Gaza has two borders, one with Israel and one with Egypt. I don't see any reason to single out Israel and not to mention Egypt. If it is just Israel, that is one thing. But the second thing, more important: The moment Gazans made a decision they want to continue war with Israel, Israel had no other choice than to take the necessary precautions on its border.

The border could be completely open for goods, financial tools and for cooperation. But, unfortunately, Gazans decided instead to make it for rockets, and Israel has to decide to defend itself. This is not an Israeli decision, this is a Gazan decision.

The minute the Gazans make a decision not to fire rockets into Israel, the border will be opened. They call the shots and make the rules, and Israel reacts.