

The Law of Force Must be Replaced with the Force of Law.

Israel was created by an action of the United Nations in 1947 as a haven for Jews leaving Europe during and after World War II. The United Nations has set the basic principles for a negotiated peaceful settlement with the Palestinians who had lived there prior to 1947, known as the “land for peace” formula by its resolutions 242 in 1967, and 338 in 1973.

Starting as a sliver of its current territory, Israel fought neighboring countries and secured control over a much larger territory - from the Jordanian border to the Mediterranean. Israel occupied Gaza that was originally part of Egypt, and the Golan Heights, part of Syria.

Currently the Israeli government controls every aspect of economic life, communication, and commerce in both the Jewish and Palestinian areas. It controls public welfare in Palestinian territories through direct and indirect policies such as transit and trade privileges. The State of Israel has exclusive authority for international security policy, and a nuclear arsenal.

Territory retained by Palestinians to the east, bordered by the West Bank of the Jordan River, has been traversed and divided by roads to communities built and settled by Jewish Israelis. The creeping annexation of the Palestinian territories in the West Bank has gone far enough that a practical “two state” solution is no longer possible and a lack of representation of the Palestinian population in Israel breeds ongoing resentment. Many Palestinians refuse to accept Israeli citizenship even when offered, in solidarity with others displaced. Until this trajectory is interrupted, Israel will continue to annex the West Bank bit by bit. Periodic revolts by Palestinians are inevitable. An apartheid state relegating a minority to subordinate status will never be peaceful.

Settlements Deemed War Crime

UN Human Rights Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk has asked the nations of the world to classify the Israeli government practice of sponsoring Israeli squatters on Palestinian-owned land on the Occupied Palestinian West Bank as a “a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.”

Lynk explained, “For Israel, the settlements serve two related purposes. One is to guarantee that the occupied territory will remain under Israeli control in perpetuity. The second purpose is to ensure that there will never be a genuine Palestinian state. These are exactly the reasons why the international community agreed to prohibit the practice of settler implantation when it created the Fourth Geneva Convention in 1949 and the Rome Statute in 1998.” He called the Israeli squatters “the engine of Israel’s 54-year-old occupation, the longest in the modern world”.

The UN High Commission on Human Rights notes: “There are now close to 300 settlements in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank, with more than 680,000 Israeli settlers.”

Lynk pointed out that the illegality of the Israeli squatter-settlements is the most settled issue in international law. The UNHCR concurs that “Their illegality has been confirmed by the United Nations Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the International Court of Justice, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention,” among many other local and international governing bodies. Actually, you could just have listed the UN Security Council, since its decisions have the force of law internationally. The UNSC has branded Israeli squatter-settlements illegal in a host of resolutions.

The Israeli government is alone in disputing this international consensus

At this juncture, the international community, through the UN Security Council is called upon to intervene in order to change the hopeless dynamic currently in play. It is past time for the United Nations to recommit to the establishment of Israel as a multicultural and multi-ethnic democracy for peace in the region.

A new approach grounded in international law is the only path to a just end to this perpetual occupation. It need not be a binary choice between one state and two. Some Israelis and Palestinians talk of a confederation that would split the difference.



Both communities could fulfill their national aspirations, but with shared institutions and a porous border. Both Mr Abbas and Reuven Rivlin, the outgoing Israeli president, have expressed openness to such an arrangement.

In the 1907 Hague Regulations, the occupier is forbidden to introduce substantial changes into the economy and ways of life of an occupied people. During World War II the Axis aggressors militarily occupied countries and in some instances they attempted to colonize the vanquished with their own population. Germany invaded and occupied Poland in 1939. The National Socialists really did not want there to be a Poland, and they had no intention of ever withdrawing. So they started throwing Poles out of their own country and replacing them with ethnic Germans. If they could have, they would just have erased Poland and made it far eastern Germany. Mussolini did not just occupy France’s city of Nice and its environs, he annexed it to Italy and intended never to relinquish it.

It was to prevent this sort of behavior that the framers of the Fourth Geneva Convention forbade Occupiers from transferring their own populations into occupied territories. Even earlier, Occupation in the international law of war was recognized as legitimate only for a year or so, during hostilities. Israel’s occupation of the Palestinians, now over 50 years old, has become illegal. The language forbidding the transfer of population from the occupying state to occupied territory was adopted into Rome Statute, the charter of the International Criminal Court established in 2002 at the Hague, which has been signed by 139 countries and fully ratified as national law by 123. The International Criminal Court has begun an investigation of Israeli and Hamas war crimes in the Occupied Palestinian territories.

Given the current weak system of global governance that now exists, and the lack of oversight provided, only the United Nations Security Council can guarantee the rights of anyone to representation. The world needs a democratically governed united federation of nations with standards of democratic representation as well as the authority to make and enforce humanitarian world law and resolve disputes. It is the only way to end war and global violence, environmental devastation, widespread human rights abuses, and global health crises.

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THE DARK SIDE OF FULFILLMENT

An ITV News investigative report discovered an Amazon warehouse in Dunfermline (UK) (aka ‘fulfillment center’) destroys hundreds of thousands of stock items every week. Video footage obtained by an undercover reporter reveals hundreds of thousands of unsold items being earmarked for destruction. Some of the things are returned items that are still usable but many more are still in their original wrappers, removed directly from the stock shelves. The items range from unused covid masks to jewelry and television sets. The report revealed that this one center targets 130,000 items to be destroyed every week.

This practice is not limited to just this warehouse. Amazon has 110 ‘fulfillment centers’ in the US and another 185 worldwide where this is common practice.

Why would Amazon do this? These distribution centers are located strategically with 30% of the population within 10



miles of each center and 50% within 20 miles. Amazon charges fees to the manufacturer for housing their products this close to a huge majority of consumers so they can assure speedy delivery. The longer the product sits on the shelf, the more ‘rent’ the manufacturer pays. A business decision is made when the manufacturers’ sales aren’t paying for the Amazon stocking fees. If the manufacturer is overseas, it would cost them more to ship their stock back so the manufacturer just forfeits the stock. Amazon is fine with this because it wants to empty those shelves to make more space for the ‘hot commodity of the day’ (think toilet paper in the early days of the pandemic) and so they dump this stock in the landfills. All of nature that went into the cost of making this product is just tossed aside because it’s about profit, not about meeting human’s needs.

Consider the amount of waste created by products not needed or used just to increase profit. If we assume 130,000 items targeted to be destroyed at each ‘fulfillment center’, with 295 of these centers around the world, that would be over 38 million items destroyed every week.

The items end up in local landfills all over the world! These items are made from trees, from rare metals found deep under the earth from around the world, wrapped in plastics made from petroleum. People who work in these mines risk their lives just to have enough money to buy food while their work poisons them and their environment. People who cut

these trees put us all at risk by decreasing carbon sequestration which increases CO2 in the environment exacerbating climate change. The shipping of these products to these fulfillment centers from all over the world use up huge quantities of fuel. And, all of this consumption is then thrown in the landfill!

This practice of Amazon’s is the perfect example of capitalism’s motivations. The standard belief is that capitalism is the best model to meet society’s needs. If there is a need for something, the motive to make a profit will assure this need is met. But, the motive has nothing to do with meeting society’s needs, only the capitalist’s self-interest. The model is specifically designed to increase profits now and doesn’t consider the vast devastation in its wake. That’s someone else’s problem, to be more specific, that’s everyone else’s problem as they pile up cash, we drown in the waste.

What if society was structured with society’s needs determining what gets manufactured where and how? Would we allow such Amazon’s wasteful practice? We could easily dispose of the figure who just collects money out of the process and doesn’t produce any of these products if we collectively produced what we needed.

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