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Peace in the name of Allah: Egypt's quest to attain Islamic legitimacy for its treaty with Israel

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The year 2019 marked the 40th anniversary of Israel's peace agreement with Egypt. Although the agreement has not matured into a 'warm' peace between the two nations, it has survived challenges and vicissitudes to become a core component of strategic importance in the Middle East. This success is especially impressive given that until the peace treaty was signed – and, to a certain extent, even afterwards – the idea of peace with Israel was considered illegitimate in the prevailing discourse in Egypt and broader Arab and Muslim worlds. Since 1961, al-Azhar University in Cairo has served as an official organ of the Egyptian regime, and in March 1964, al-Azhar's Islamic Research Academy declared that one of its primary missions was to warn of the danger Israel posed to Islam and Muslims around the world.¹ In March 1970, al-Azhar's Fatwa Committee determined that 'Muslims are prohibited from signing an agreement with Jews' and 'from allowing Jews to remain as a state in the heart of holy land of Muslim lands'.² These are examples of obstacles – some of which were religious – the Egyptian regime had to confront as it asked its people to support the political pivot from conflict to peace with Israel, a country that, until then, was regarded in Egypt as a sworn enemy.

For full article:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/33RRQ2N9CNSCWGEC2WU5/full?target=10.1080/00263206.2020.1821665>