

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The central trend evident in the past decade within the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is a consistent and accelerated drift toward a one-state reality characterized by either Jewish supremacy or defined as binational, whether in principle or in practice, or a state for all its citizens. As this trend progresses and the complexity and intermingling between the Israeli and Palestinian populations expand, increased friction is expected between the two peoples vying for control over the same piece of land west of the Jordan River. This will pose significant challenges in establishing conditions for a political settlement based on separation into two distinct and separate political entities. Some argue that the two nations can coexist, but this assumption contradicts the historical narrative of the two nations, political logic, and common sense, following decades of a bloody national and religious conflict culminating on October 7, 2023.

The emerging reality endangers the Zionist vision of a Jewish, democratic, secure, and prosperous state. The political echelon in Israel disregards the long-term implications of its decisions and actions, which are generally made based on tactical considerations. Currently, these decisions are also influenced by an ideological-messianic approach.

Over the years, the gap has increasingly widened between Palestinian society's ability to function as a state with a leadership that is responsible for the fate of its residents and the concept of resistance focused on the elimination of the State of Israel rather than on building a Palestinian state. Meanwhile, a de facto situation of dominance by non-state actors such as Hamas and other armed factions has developed. Therefore, the prevailing opinion has strengthened that any future scenario will necessitate addressing hostile elements that will not reconcile with the existence of the State of Israel and do not adhere to the authority of a central leadership on the Palestinian side.

The Hamas attack on the western Negev communities on October 7, 2023, which resulted in the death of over 1,200 Israeli civilians and the abduction of 251 individuals, most of whom were civilians, marked a historic turning point in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Following the attack, Israel launched a large-scale military operation in the Gaza Strip, referred to as the Swords of Iron War, which led to the destabilization of existing frameworks within both the Israeli and Palestinian systems. The Hamas attack caused collective trauma within Israeli society. This process accelerated the strengthening of hawkish positions, an increase in support for unilateral actions, the encouragement of Palestinian emigration from the Gaza Strip as well as from Judea and Samaria, and the erosion of public trust in agreed-upon political solutions. The majority of the Israeli public exhibits fatigue regarding the conflict with the Palestinians, does not believe there is an available, stable, and sustainable solution, and especially after October 7, 2023, views the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria as an existential threat to the State of Israel, since it is perceived to likely behave as a terrorist entity—similar to the Gaza Strip under Hamas’s control. While the Israeli government adheres to its overarching goal of eradicating Hamas in the Gaza Strip, the public is not exerting pressure on it regarding its policy, effectively allowing it to advance the creeping annexation of areas in Judea and Samaria. This is despite the broad understanding that a one-state reality poses an existential threat to the future, character, and security of the State of Israel.

Subsequently, the model of a single inegalitarian state with Jewish supremacy has transitioned from a slippery slope to a distinct reality, disregarding the implications and consequences for the future of the State of Israel, as well as the unprecedented response anticipated from Arab nations and the international community.

Simultaneously, there has been a slowdown and even a halt in the normalization process between Israel and the moderate Arab states, led by Saudi Arabia. In the broader world, comparisons have openly and boldly

begun to be made between Israel's policies in the Palestinian territories and an apartheid regime, accompanied by calls for conducting international criminal investigations against it and imposing political and economic sanctions on it.

The current reality, with its emerging and apparent implications, necessitates deliberate political action to prevent the creation of a one-state reality. It is challenging to depict how tangible the risk of this reality is or to pinpoint the point of no return that would confirm that this situation can no longer be reversed or evaded. To illustrate the direction and intensity of risk trends, several key vectors leading to this reality were selected.

To evaluate them, an assessment method (using a digital platform) was developed based on "expert knowledge." This compiles insights and evaluations from experts in various fields (including security, economics, society, international relations, and Middle Eastern studies) regarding the impact of events, actions, and decisions relevant to the Palestinian arena on the vectors leading to a one-state reality.

The vectors that were examined were as follows:

- **Escalation or de-escalation in terrorism and violence.** The security dimension is central in Israel due to the cost in human lives, as well as the ongoing cost of living in the presence of terrorism and under an atmosphere of security threats. The security requirements restrict the Israeli government in making decisions due to concerns over exacerbating the security situation, relinquishing freedom of action in all areas of the Palestinian Authority, or reducing full Israeli control over the security barrier in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A key lesson for Israel following the attacks of October 7, 2023 is that it is essential that enforcement of security arrangements remain under Israeli control, certainly not in the hands of the Palestinians nor under an international or pan-Arab force. The Israeli security requirements have constituted, and will increasingly constitute, an obstacle to being able to reach agreements with the Palestinian side. There is a significant impact of Israeli security activities on the civilian and economic aspects of Judea

and Samaria settlements, and also, inevitably, on the fabric of life of the Palestinians in the region.

- **A decrease or increase in the effectiveness of the Palestinian Authority's functioning.** The degree of the Palestinian Authority's functioning and its ability to govern the Palestinian population and meet its needs are crucial for achieving political, geographical, and demographic separation from the Palestinians; for reducing the burden of responsibility for the Palestinian population from Israel; and as an answer to the question of whether there is an effective partner for political arrangements and their implementation. In an extreme scenario of the Palestinian Authority's dissolution, Israel would bear full responsibility for the population, consisting of 2.7 million Palestinians in Judea and Samaria and approximately two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.
- **Increase or decrease in Israel's international legitimacy:** Israel's international standing in the context of its conduct in the Palestinian arena pertains to the international interpretation, primarily by the United States, of the reality in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict: Is there still broad support for a comprehensive settlement based on the notion of a two-state solution, or is there a noticeable decline in support for the two-state idea due to the assessment that it is no longer feasible given the situation on the ground? Israel's aspiration to expand and deepen the Abraham Accords and normalization with moderate Arab countries, primarily Saudi Arabia, is contingent upon the ability to establish an independent Palestinian entity that is separate from Israel.
- **Moving closer or further away from the reality of a one-state solution:** This vector, which pertains to the direction and intensity of the drift toward a one-state reality, summarizes the other dimensions while simultaneously being influenced by processes and developments, such as how areas of Judea and Samaria are managed and controlled; the scope and distribution of

Israeli settlements and outposts in the territories; the level of intermixing and friction between the populations; the system of values and laws applicable in Judea and Samaria; and the degree of connection between the infrastructures and arteries serving both the settlements and the Palestinian population in Judea and Samaria, and their connection to Israeli territory.

The analysis of the data led to the conclusion that the State of Israel must change direction in order to prevent the drift into a one-state reality, and that it is not too late to do so. This clear conclusion remains valid even after October 7, 2023, and the subsequent developments in the conflict that occurred during the war that erupted on that bitter and fateful day.

The change in direction can be achieved by halting the creeping annexation, manifested in the expansion of settlements, the establishment of outposts and agricultural farms, and the takeover of every vacant hill in Judea and Samaria. Now **is the time to initiate and pursue political, geographical, and demographic separation from the Palestinians in order to ensure a solid Jewish majority in a democratic Israel**; to prevent open access of Palestinians, especially extremist Palestinian elements, to the heartland of the State of Israel; and to pave a new path in the Israeli–Palestinian and Israeli–Arab conflict. All this can be done without compromising security and while managing the process from a position of strength, ensuring that Israel’s security status will not deteriorate even if disruptions occur during the process. This change in direction will also support efforts toward normalization with Saudi Arabia, offering an opportunity for a diplomatic breakthrough and helping to reshape both the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the regional balance of power.

Although the feasibility of implementing a two-state solution seems to be diminishing, it is not yet too late, and it is crucial to immediately advance a separation framework that will help stop the drift toward a one-state reality and open up a range of options for future political arrangements. The framework focuses on separating from the Palestinians living in Judea and Samaria

and from the entire Gaza Strip, which, in the foreseeable future, constitutes a separate district that is unconnected to Judea and Samaria, for which we presented a policy paper “Strategic Alternatives for the Gaza Strip.”¹

The separation framework is based on four foundations:

- Understanding that there is no moderate Palestinian entity other than the Palestinian Authority, despite all its shortcomings, and that efforts should be made to promote transitional arrangements or at least cooperation through dialogue with it. Continuous dialogue with its representatives may expand the scope of agreements on various issues, from minor to major, including benefits for Palestinians in exchange for normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia and the immediate implementation of the agreements on the ground.
- Initiating steps toward separation, while demonstrating Israeli determination to shape a reality of two distinct and separate state entities. Simultaneously, efforts should be made to implement necessary reforms within the Palestinian Authority, strengthen governance, and improve the economic and infrastructural conditions within its jurisdiction.
- Retaining security control in the hands of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), continuing the IDF’s operational freedom of action throughout Judea and Samaria, as well as in the Gaza Strip, and maintaining control over the security perimeter, while cooperating with the Palestinian Authority’s security apparatuses.
- Recruiting Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Egypt, and Jordan for increased involvement aimed at improving the Palestinian Authority’s functioning and supporting it so that it can assume responsibility for the civil administration of the Gaza Strip. As the Palestinian Authority improves its capabilities and

1 Ofer Gutterman, “Strategic Alternatives for the Gaza Strip,” The Institute for National Security Studies, April 10, 2025, <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/gaza-strategic-alternatives/>

demonstrates a willingness to play a positive role in the process and in the relationship between Israel and the Palestinians, Arab states will be able to assist it in building the infrastructure for an independent and functional Palestinian entity.

- Moreover, Israel can still reorganize the territories of Judea and Samaria and change its approach toward Area C—from unilateral annexation to designating it as a space for potential agreements with the Palestinian Authority. It is proposed to allocate up to 35% of Area C for infrastructure development and economic projects to encourage the Palestinian economy, create transportation continuity, and transfer populated Palestinian areas that have expanded beyond the boundaries of Areas A and B into Area C for Palestinian control (more than 300,000 Palestinians live in Area C, and it is preferable for Israel that the Palestinian Authority controls more than 99% of the Palestinians living in the West Bank).