



LETTER | End occupation of Palestine, conflict will be resolved

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LETTER | The mother of all the problems and tragedies faced by the Palestinians is the occupation of their territories by Israel. For over six decades, Palestine is under the occupation of Israel that has continuously caused displacements, death and destructions to Palestinians, taking away their freedom and making them face a heartbreaking plight.

Something must be done to end the occupation of Palestinian territories, to honour their right to self-determination, put an end to their suffering and enable them to lead a peaceful life that would be good to both the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories is the result of the Balfour Declaration whereby the British government in 1917 promised a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, then an Ottoman region with a tiny minority Jewish population.

Since then 'Zionism' helped Jews across the world to migrate to Palestine to be settled in the homes of Palestinians who were forced to live as refugees in other countries. Consequently, the demography of Palestine changed - Jews became the majority.

Subsequently, on May 14, 1948, the Jewish People's Council declared the establishment of the state of Israel which was first recognised by the US and later, on May 11, 1949, the UN admitted Israel as a member even though it came into existence through violence and the violations of the laws; which the UN calls to be observed.

Now the question is how to end this complex and well-planned occupation that has the backing of powerful countries, some of whom are the veto-wielding members of the UN Security Council?

The League of Nations' attempt failed and its successor, the UN, has tried but so far to no avail because of lack of political will on the part of Israel. A UN-appointed mediator to Palestine, Folke Bernadotte, was

shot dead in 1948 by a Zionist extremist group just because he suggested the two-state solution, one Palestine and the other Israel.

The two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict envisions an independent state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel. The boundary between the two states is contentious. Negotiations to determine it has so far borne no fruit because Israel adamantly refuses to recognise the "1967 borders".

It cunningly declares Jerusalem as its "eternal and united capital". To Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, the Palestinian state "will be demilitarised" and that its "skies will be under Israel's control". All these signify Israel's *mala fide* intention.

There is yet another type of solution on the table, i.e., the "one-state solution" to the Israeli—Palestinian conflict. This solution would merge Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip into one big country. There are two versions of the "one-state solution".

The first one would create a single democratic country that would enable Arabs and Muslims to outnumber Jews and end Israel as a Jewish state. Some Palestinians favour this solution.

The second version would involve Israel annexing the West Bank and either forcing Palestinians out or denying them the right to vote. This version is favoured by some Israelis but rejected almost universally because it violates the human rights of the Palestinian people.

Any proposed solutions capable of ending the occupation of Palestine during which Palestinians' human rights are regularly violated should be seriously pursued. What is happening right now in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is heartbreaking.

It hurts the conscience of humanity. Violence has to be stopped for it causes death and destructions. Let the occupation end along with the suffering it has caused. Let Palestinians determine their own destiny, which is feasible only when they are no longer under foreign occupation.

Any conflict is capable of a peaceful resolution, provided there is political will on the part of the parties to end the conflict. Both Israelis and Palestinians should stop their violence and enter into a meaningful negotiation that aims to end the occupation of the Palestinian territories.

External bodies, like the UN Security Council, as an international body for the maintenance of peace and security of the world, may extend a helping hand to pressure Israel to negotiate in good faith with the Palestinians to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Israel must be made to understand that violence and bloodshed are not the way forward because violence creates more violence and the evil circle will continue. The only way to resolve the conflict is through peaceful means, provided there is a political will on the part of Israel to end their illegal occupation.

It does not matter if the parties agree on a "two-state solution" or a "one-state solution"; the important thing is that the solution chosen is fair and is capable of ending the occupation.

Ending the occupation will mean the end of the conflict.

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