

End of the Independent Palestinian State Project

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Featured image: Demonstrators shout slogans and hold Palestinian flags during a protest against the US President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, on 7 December 2017 in Gaza City, Gaza (Source: Mustafa Hassona/Anadolu Agency)

They do not want to recognise the truth. The project of an independent Palestinian state has ended forever, and any talk about a "Palestinian state" today remains a dead letter that does not go along with its meaning. This is what the Americans, Europeans, Israelis and the Palestinian Authority itself know. There is no possibility for an independent and sovereign state through negotiations based on the current balances.

The project, which was launched by the International Quartet, the US, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations during the George W. Bush era, was concluded with a Road Map for Peace that was supposed to lead to a "viable Palestinian state living in peace and security along with Israel", as promised. Over time, it has become clear that the project was not about an independent sovereign state, but rather a protectorate curbed with security obligations to the Israeli occupation and restricted with the conditions of grantors who control the daily living of Palestinians who would have to bow to external dictates.

If established, this "state" will today be a dependable non-independent project unable to protect its people and will not enjoy geographical contact between its territories that are fragmented by the occupation. It will be a "state" subjected to the occupation that dominates it, and it will have to fight month after month to receive the crumbs the international funders throw in order to pay the salaries of its employees and security forces.

The expected Palestinian state is basically required to be a security authority to protect the Israeli occupation from the anger of the Palestinian generations who aspire to claim their freedom, independence and their right to return to their land and houses from which they were forcibly displaced. It is obvious that this authority has so far performed its "duties" best under the pretext of "security coordination" even during political tensions between Ramallah and the Netanyahu government.

It seems clear that the Palestinian Authority is in trouble, which explains the current rigorous tone in its speech, especially with the approach of the infamous Trump project called the "Deal of the Century." The fundamental promises it has made to its people since it was founded in 1994 have not been realised, despite the slogans it has raised about successive "achievements". People may have forgotten that this power was basically just a transitional phase to an independent state before the end of the last century. However, the temporary situation has become permanent, and there is no glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel.

To compensate for this sovereign stalemate, the Authority held on to some formal independence symbols, such as raising flags and rolling out the red carpet. It has rather remained a mere self-governance administration under the occupation, although it has denied this fact. Israeli forces are still storming Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank and carrying out daily arrests, expanding illegal settlement, and controlling Palestinian movement at crossings and military checkpoints. Several governments have been formed and sovereign positions have been taken under the Palestinian Authority. However, all of its officials remain enchained by occupation restrictions. President Mahmoud Abbas himself has repeatedly stated that he cannot leave his Ramallah headquarters without Israeli approval. Successive complaints from Palestinian prime ministers have been raised over the years from being harshly treated by Israeli soldiers who are the age of their grandchildren. If this is the case with officials holding VIP cards, what does the suffering of Palestinians who are stuck caught between walls, military barriers and settlements look like?

It is not surprising that prominent Palestinian official Saeb Erekat, who has lived the negotiations for a quarter of a century, has announced that the [real ruler of Palestine](#) is not Mahmoud Abbas, it is rather the arrogant politician Avigdor Lieberman, the Israeli defence minister.

It should be admitted that any “Palestinian state” that will be declared under this deplorable reality will not be a truly independent state, even if the Palestinian leadership will be forced once again to celebrate void achievements with raising more flags and welcoming delegations who will congratulate it.

The fact is that a difficult stage for the Palestinian people has started since the rule of Trump, who seems to seek to impose his forced project to end the Palestinian cause at any price. This time, too, no one has asked the Palestinian people for their opinion and position on this project; neither the US administration nor the Israeli government of course, and not even the Palestinian Authority itself.

The White House master might not notice that the Palestinian cause did not emerge yesterday. It is risky that he and his administration assume that the Palestinian people will bow today and announce the end of history, even if the Palestinian leadership seems weaker and more helpless than ever before.

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