

# Since 1979, Iran Has Championed the Cause of Palestinian Self-determination

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*After the Palestinian resistance, it was the Islamic Republic of Iran, which drove this slow but steady tide against the racist state. Lebanese Sunni scholar, Sheikh Ahmed al-Zein, pointed out that it was Iran's leader Imam Khomeini who 'moved the focus onto Palestine, not out of hatred of Judaism but to safeguard human dignity, to safeguard justice, and in rejection of aggression, racism and extremism'. Since 1979, the Islamic Republic consistently elevated and championed the cause of Palestinian self-determination.*

Despite decades of brutalizing assaults, Palestinian resistance to apartheid Israel has not disappeared. Indeed, in the middle of an apparently desperate situation, there are some rays of hope. One of those is Gaza.

In 2005 the Zionist state dismantled its colonies and withdrew from the Gaza strip. Ariel Sharon, a brutal Zionist leader who had led repeated attacks on Gaza, said the reason for Israeli withdrawal was 'to grant Israeli citizens the maximum level of security'. The underlying reason was the unceasing resistance by the brave people of Gaza, ever since the late 1940s.

Since 2005 the crowded Palestinian territory has been subject to a prison-like blockade and repeated collective punishment assaults. The apartheid state, in several operations, slaughtered thousands. But the retreat from Gaza marked one boundary to the ethnic cleansing project of a 'Greater Israel'.

The following year, encouraged by Washington's imperious project of a 'New Middle East', Israel again invaded south Lebanon, attempting to disarm the Shia-Muslim party Hezbollah. That party was created precisely because of earlier Israeli invasions. Although Zionist forces were able to kill many, they also suffered serious losses and were forced to withdraw, failing to meet any of their objectives. So, the defeat of the 2006 invasion was a second ray of hope, imposing another limit on Zionist expansion.



[According](#) to the founding father of Zionism Theodore Herzl, “the area of the Jewish State stretches: “From the Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates.” According to Rabbi Fischmann, “The Promised Land extends from the River of Egypt up to the Euphrates, it includes parts of Syria and Lebanon.”

In the subsequent decade, although some Lebanese territory is still annexed, Tel Aviv has been wary of adventurism on the Lebanese border. Unlike many western supporters of Israel, the Zionist state’s military leaders listen to and, in their own, way, respect the Hezbollah Secretary General, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah. They also know that Hezbollah is now better prepared and better armed than in 2006. Were it not for Hezbollah, south Lebanon would likely have joined the West Bank and the Golan Heights as yet another occupied territory.

We cannot ignore these achievements. Iran’s leader Ayatollah Khamenei pointed out that, since the 1980s, ‘the Zionist regime has not been able to transgress against new lands, it has also begun to retreat’. The Palestinian resistance has played the ‘major and determining role’ in these retreats, Ayatollah Khamenei says.

The role of Iran in leading a regional alliance that provides real support to the Palestinian resistance is a third ray of hope for the future of Palestine. The rise of Iran and the victories in Syria and Iraq against NATO-Saudi-Israeli terrorist proxies has strengthened this alliance.

Israeli leaders fear the defeat of DAESH, al Nusra and the other sectarian groups, at the hands of Syrian-Iraqi-Iranian forces. They know that this will lead to an empowered, Iran-led coalition on the border of occupied Palestine and occupied Syria. They fear, in particular, the liberation of the occupied Golan Heights, an operation for which Syria and its allies would have the full support of international law.

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The large nation has paid money to Palestinian families of fallen resistance fighters, after they had their houses demolished in Israel's collective punishment rampages. It has supported with training and weapons almost all the Palestinian militia, which resist the apartheid state; even including those groups linked to the anti-Shia Muslim Brotherhood. This is no 'Shia Crescent', as Palestinians are mainly Sunni Muslims.

Some Palestinians were recruited into sectarian project encouraged by Washington, Riyadh and Tel Aviv. However, the small group of Palestinian leaders who were misled into taking Qatari and Saudi money to join the war against Syria are now either in disgrace or are turning back to Iran.

The 'Axis of Resistance', a West Asian Alliance, brings together the Palestinian Resistance, Iran, Syria and Hezbollah, the main real opposition to the apartheid state. They are what Israel fears. When that alliance is well consolidated, it will be a force capable of forcing Tel Aviv to the negotiating table. Washington and Tel Aviv know this; that is why they persist in attempts to divide and destabilize the region.

There are a substantial number of opportunists who claim to support the Palestinian people, yet oppose their strongest allies. They criticize Israel, seemingly in the name of a nicer, kinder apartheid state. They pretend to support the Palestinians, but only as passive victims. They deny their right to resist; and they ferociously attack Iran, Hezbollah and Syria. Many of us have come to call the western versions of these people 'left-Zionists'.

These 'left-Zionists' spread their own corrosive myths about the Resistance. For example, during the Zionist attacks on Gaza they tried to make a moral equivalence between Israeli crimes and alleged 'indiscriminate' Palestinian rocket attacks on Israel. In fact, we know from independent evidence (the UN and Israel itself, against its interest) that, during the 2014 assault on Gaza, more than 75% of the 1,088 Palestinians killed were civilians; while only 6% of the 51 deaths inside Occupied territories were of civilians. There is no moral equivalence, either in character or in 'collateral damage' terms, between the Zionist state's ethnic cleansing and punitive assaults, and the resistance of the Palestinian people. Moral clarity on that issue deserves repetition.

The regional alliance in support of the Palestinian Resistance is one critical factor for the nation's future; the other is the unity of the Palestinian people. In this respect, the unity talks between the different factions are crucial. It is well known from polls that Palestinians have low levels of confidence in the factions and their leaders, yet continue to express strong support for their national institutions. Divisions fuel that low morale. Iran's leader Ayatollah Khamenei says that the differences between groups was 'natural and understandable', but that 'increasing cooperation and depth' was necessary. Greater unity would build popular confidence, assist in focus and organization and allow new steps forward.

The future of Palestine is clouded with divisions, great pain and sacrifice, and fear of formidable enemies. Nevertheless, it is far from hopeless. There have been real gains in

recent years. The Resistance has imposed limits on expansion of the colonial project, both in the north and the south. Attempts to smash and divide the 'Axis of Resistance' have failed and there are signs of an emerging and strengthened West Asian Alliance. Finally, the unity talks amongst Palestinian factions could breathe fresh resolve into a battered but brave and resilient people.

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