

Middle East Notes
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
April-May 2019



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The seven featured articles in this issue of the Middle East Notes focus on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent reelection and the influence of the right-wing in the new government; the need for the Palestinian Authority and the U.S. Congress to put pressure on Israeli Jews to fight to end the Occupation; the Palestinian PLO's consideration of breaking ties with Israel and rejecting the U.S.'s peace plan; one father's feelings of helplessness when Israeli airstrikes fall on his Gazan neighborhood; the UN envoy to the Mideast warning of potential for war between Israel and Hamas; the importance of Muslim and Jewish civil society groups forming positive connections; and the link to the latest CMEP bulletin.

- Jonathan Cook analyzes the outcome of Netanyahu's reelection as Prime Minister in [Middle East Eye](#) on April 10, concluding that the ruling right-wing religious government has effectively crushed the left-wing and will likely move forward with annexation of the West Bank.
- Israel will not end the occupation of Palestine until Israeli Jews are made to feel uncomfortable, and it is up to the Palestinian Authority and U.S. Congress to exert that pressure, according to Peter Beinart in [Forward](#), on April 10.
- Khaled Abu Toameh reports in [Jerusalem Post](#) on April 22 that Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas is considering ending all ties with Israel, rescinding official recognition of Israel as a state, and calling on the international community to reject the Trump Administration's upcoming peace plan.
- Yael Marom interviews a Palestinian in [+972 Magazine](#) on May 9 who describes the helplessness of trying to protect his children in Gaza during recent Israeli airstrikes.
- The UN envoy to the Mideast warns of impending war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza unless conditions improve, according to Toi Staff on May 13 in [Times of Israel](#).
- Emily Hilton writes in [Independent](#) on May 9 that in order to combat the violence and oppression of the Occupation of Palestine, Muslim and Jewish civil society groups must focus their energy on strengthening positive ties between their communities.
- [Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Bulletin May 2019](#)

1) Netanyahu Reigns Supreme, and the Left is Crushed, Middle East Eye, Jonathan Cook, April 10, 2019

...“Netanyahu is now set this summer to become Israel's longest-serving prime minister, beating the record set by Israel's founding father, David Ben Gurion.” ...

... “And Netanyahu's own voters have demonstrated that they care not a whit whether he is corrupt, as long as he continues to promote a Jewish supremacist agenda.” ...

2) [Netanyahu's Victory: Israel Will Not Change Without Pressure](#), Forward, Peter Beinart, April 10, 2019

"The lesson of Benjamin Netanyahu's apparent reelection victory is simple, and old. Frederick Douglass articulated it 162 years ago: 'Power concedes nothing without a demand.'

"For a decade now, commentators have bemoaned the demise of the Israeli left. They've attributed the left's decline to a rising Orthodox population. They've attributed it to the legacy of the second intifada, which traumatized and embittered Israeli Jews. But there's a more basic explanation: The left wants Israel to fundamentally change course. It wants to create a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which would require uprooting perhaps a hundred thousand settlers. For Israel, which has been steadily tightening its grip on the West Bank for more than fifty years, that would constitute wrenching change."

3) [PLO to Discuss Revoking Israel Recognition, Ending Security Coordination](#), The Jerusalem Post, Khaled Abu Toameh, April 22, 2019

"The PLO Central Council (PCC) will convene in Ramallah on May 15 to discuss suspending all relations with Israel, including security coordination between Palestinian Authority security forces and the IDF in the West Bank." ...

"Abbas will also seek worldwide support for Palestinian opposition to Trump's upcoming plan, a senior PA official told The Jerusalem Post. On the eve of the PCC meeting, Abbas will also hold meetings with several Palestinian officials to discuss future steps by the Palestinian leadership, the official added." ...

4) ['My kids think I'm a hero. They have no idea I'm also afraid'](#), +972 Magazine, Yael Marom, May 9, 2019

"When the bombs fall on Gaza, Abu Ali and his family, like two million other residents of Gaza, have nowhere to run. This is what it's like to live under Israeli airstrikes." ...

"'We don't have a bomb shelter, so when there is a bombing we are together, holding our children's hands trying to calm them,' he said over the phone on Sunday afternoon, just as hostilities were reaching a peak. 'Unfortunately, my sons think that I'm a hero. They think their father can prevent the missiles from hitting our home. They believe in their father, so they feel safe when they see me. Even if they hear the bombing, they feel okay because 'our father the hero is here, and he can stop the missiles from entering our home.'" ...

5) [UN Envoy Says 'Last Chance' to Prevent All-Out War in Gaza](#), Times of Israel, Toi Staff, May 13, 2019

"The UN envoy to the Mideast warned Monday that it was the 'last chance' to prevent an all-out conflict between Israel and armed terrorist groups in the Gaza Strip." ...

"Mladenov told reporters 'the next escalation is going to be probably the last one' before the sides descend into a full-fledged war, referring to a series of increasingly violent rounds of fighting that have broken out on the Gaza frontier in the last year.

"On May 4 and 5, Hamas and Islamic Jihad launched nearly 700 rockets at southern Israel from Gaza, saying they were frustrated by the slow implementation of a previous ceasefire deal." ...

6) [As the Gaza crisis continues, Jewish-Palestinian solidarity is growing. Netanyahu must be terrified,](#)
Independent, Emily Hilton, May 5, 2019

“When we think about how to bring peace and justice to this land, we must focus our attention and energy on obstructing efforts to divide us, by demonstrating that we will not stand for an endless cycle of pain, oppression and violence.” ...

“In the shadow of the growing violence in Gaza and the unforgiving nature of the current Israeli government, we must take hope and courage from these joint acts of solidarity.” ...

7) **Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)** [May Bulletin](#)