

**Middle East Notes**  
**Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns**  
**October 15, 2015**



*Please note: Opinions expressed in the following articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.*

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The principal articles of this issue of Middle East Notes focus on the possible beginnings of another intifada, increasing Palestinian and Israeli violence in Jerusalem and other parts of Israel, Palestinian frustration on the continuing occupation, a call on the United Nations to put the Palestine territory occupied by Israel in 1967 under the international protection of the United Nations the non-implementation of the Oslo Accords, the possible resignation of Mamoud Abbas, and other issues.

**Commentary:** *The violence and stabbings in Jerusalem and the West Bank are the present manifestation of total frustration at the lack of movement for a just and lasting peace between the Israelis and Palestinians. Military repression by the Israel Defense Forces, retaliatory actions by settlers, individual Israeli and Palestinian acts of violence, have drained hope for a peaceful reconciliation between these two peoples in the same land. Israeli political leadership has fostered increasing oppression. In the face of this ever-increasing oppression and repression, Palestinian leadership has been unable to secure any signs of progress in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza in the formation of an autonomous State.*

*The daily stabbings in Jerusalem are especially a sign that another intifada is beginning or has already begun. Increasing visits by Jewish groups to the al-Aqsa Mosque area are seen as eroding Muslim control of the compound. The Oslo Accords have only supported the separation of these two peoples, not into two autonomous States but into a non-sustainable "status quo" of chaos, confusion and increasing conflict. It is becoming clear that both peoples are now incapable or unwilling to resolve this on-going conflict without outside intervention by the UN, US and the EU.*

- Ami Ayalon, Gilead Sher, Orni Petruschka in an Op Ed in Ynet News write that had Netanyahu instilled hope and initiated, instead of the dangerous foot-dragging which has been characterizing his years in power, he would have secured Israel's position as a Jewish-democratic state, safe within its borders, for generations.
- Marwan Barghouti states in The Guardian that the Palestinians have tried to be patient, but the international community has failed them. Freedom for Palestinian people is long overdue.
- Gideon Levy asks in Haaretz how the injustice being done to the Palestinians can continue and perhaps go on for many more years. He answers: because Israel is stronger than ever and the West is letting it run wild.
- Jonathan Cook writes in Al-Jazeera that he believes 'Israel is a terrorist state as unrest grows among Palestinian citizens of Israel, outraged by restrictions on access to al-Aqsa and casualties in the occupied territories.
- Matthew Duss in Slate reflects on Mahmoud Abbas' statement at the UN that the Palestinians will no longer abide by the Oslo Accord, saying that Netanyahu must be thrilled. A link to the statement is provided.
- Uri Savir writes in Al Monitor that the end of the Mahmoud Abbas era is near and that it will be followed by uncertainty and chaos before a new regime and a new reality take shape.

1) [Israelis will have security when Palestinians have hope](#)  
**Ami Ayalon, Gilead Sher, Orni Petruschka Ynet News , October 9, 2015**

...“The violence, which has reached a murderous high in recent weeks in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, should not surprise anyone. The Israeli security organizations warned of it, journalists familiar with the situation on the ground wrote about it, and diplomats around the world warned that it may erupt because of the stalemate in the peace talks. But the prime minister and his government were apparently blind to it. Whether intentionally, in an oversight or by negligence.

Israel's Declaration of Independence says: The United Nations' recognition of the right of the Jewish people to establish their state is irrevocable. This right is the natural right of the Jewish people in their own sovereign State. This Zionist vision cannot be fulfilled unless a border exists between the Jewish people's democratic and safe state and a demilitarized and durable nation state of the Palestinian people.

Had Netanyahu seen himself as responsible to work to defend this vision, he would have called for negotiations on two states for the two people, with an acceptable border based on the 1967 lines with land swaps. Had he been brave and creative, he would have declared that in order to secure Israel's future as the Jewish people's nation state, Israel would have no sovereign demands east of the security barrier, and that he planned to pass a law for the evacuation, compensation and absorption of our settler brothers in Judea and Samaria.” ...

2) [There will be no peace until Israel's occupation of Palestine ends](#)  
**Marwan Barghouti, The Guardian, October 11, 2015**

“The current escalation in violence did not start with the killing of two Israeli settlers, it started a long while ago and has been going on for years. Every day Palestinians are killed, wounded, arrested. Every day colonialism advances, the siege on our people in Gaza continues, oppression persists. As many today want us to be overwhelmed by the potential consequences of a new spiral of violence, I will plead, as I did in 2002, to deal with its root causes: the denial of Palestinian freedom.

Some have suggested the reason why a peace deal could not be reached was President Yasser Arafat's unwillingness or President Mahmoud Abbas's inability, but both of them were ready and able to sign a peace agreement. The real problem is that Israel has chosen occupation over peace, and used negotiations as a smokescreen to advance its colonial project. Every government across the globe knows this simple fact and yet so many of them pretend that returning to the failed recipes of the past could achieve freedom and peace. Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” ...

3) [Even Gandhi Would Understand the Palestinians' Violence](#)  
**Gideon Levy, Haaretz, October 9, 2015**

“Through the haze of self-righteousness, media propaganda, incitement, distraction, brainwashing and victimhood of the past few days, the simple question returns in full force: Who's right?

There are no justified arguments left in Israel's arsenal, the kind a decent person could accept. Even Mahatma Gandhi would understand the reasons for this outburst of Palestinian violence. Even those who recoil from violence, who see it as immoral and useless, can't help but understand how it breaks out periodically. The question is why it doesn't break out more often.

From the question of who started it to the question of who's to blame, the finger is rightfully pointed at Israel, at Israel alone. It's not that the Palestinians are blameless, but the main blame lies on Israel's shoulders. As long as Israel doesn't shake off this blame, it has no basis for making even a scrap of a demand from the Palestinians. Everything else is false propaganda.

As veteran Palestinian activist Hanan Ashrawi wrote recently, the Palestinians are the only people on earth required to guarantee the security of the occupier, while Israel is the only country that demands protection from its victims. And how can we respond?” ...

4) ['Israel is a terrorist state'](#)  
**Jonathan Cook, Al-Jazeera, October 12, 2015**

"The violence rocking the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and now Gaza is on the verge of spilling into Israel, Palestinian leaders in Israel warned. A wave of unrest has swept Palestinian towns in Israel over recent days, with repeated clashes with Israeli police in Nazareth, Jaffa, Lod, Ramle, Taibeh, Sakhnin, Rahat, Kfar Qassem and elsewhere. Dozens of protesters have been arrested.

On Thursday, Palestinians declared a day of rage, police fired tear gas and stun grenades and led baton charges against several hundred protesters in Nazareth, the largest Palestinian city in Israel. Sixteen demonstrators, five of them minors, were arrested.

Concerns about aggressive policing have been underscored by a government decision to relax live-fire regulations in Israel and Jerusalem against demonstrators, including children, who throw stones. Palestinian leaders in Israel fear that police violence could quickly lead to a repeat of events in October 2000, at the start of the second intifada. Then, security forces killed 13 unarmed Palestinian citizens across the Galilee and injured hundreds more in a few days of confrontations. Relations between the two populations have not recovered since.

"There is a hyper-militarised culture of incitement and belligerence in Israel," Mohammed Zeidan, director of the Human Rights Association in Nazareth, told Al Jazeera. "We are still viewed by the state and much of the Israeli public as enemy combatants rather than citizens."...

5) [Abbas' Bold, Empty, Self-Defeating Move](#)  
**Matthew Duss, Slate, September 30, 2015**

"In the days leading up to his speech Wednesday\* to the United Nations General Assembly, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas had promised something big—a "bombshell," he told reporters. He did not exactly disappoint: Abbas used the speech to announce that the Palestinians would no longer be bound by the Oslo Accords, the historic 1993 agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization that created the Palestinian Authority. The agreement contained a set of interim arrangements, giving the Palestinians a small measure of autonomy in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, and was supposed to last five years, at which point a final peace treaty would be signed between Israel and Palestine.

Twenty-two years after Oslo was signed in Washington, and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin famously shook hands on the White House lawn in front of a beaming President Bill Clinton, the Palestinians haven't moved appreciably closer to their goal of national self-determination."...

\*Full speech is available [here](#)

6) [The end of Abbas, the end of moderation](#)  
**Uri Savir, Al Monitor, October 7, 2015**

"It is still uncertain when (and whether) Abbas will resign. Before Abbas' Sept. 30 UN General Assembly speech, a close confidant of his, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Al-Monitor that Abbas despairs of the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state by peaceful means. He stated, "Abbas objects to violence and is a true believer in Palestinian diplomacy.

He has completely given up on Israeli willingness to end the occupation and on [President Barack] Obama's readiness to intervene with [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu. He believes Israel never intended to implement the Oslo Accord. He spoke to us of his wish to resign before the next elections, which he would like to be held in the near future, and possibly to declare the entire West Bank and East Jerusalem a state under occupation. In any case, security cooperation with Israel will depend on full compliance by Israel with the Oslo Accord, including a timeline for statehood."...

**Other articles of interest:**

[‘US won’t veto UN vote on settlement if Israel builds anew’ Ilan Ben Zion, Raphael Ahren, Oct 6, 2015](#)  
*Should West Bank construction resume in response to terrorism, Washington won’t block resolution branding settlements illegal, report says.*

[Palestinians No Longer Bound by Oslo Accords, CMEP Bulletin - October 1, 2015](#)

*During his speech to the United Nations General Assembly Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas declared to the international community “that as long as Israel refuses to commit to the agreements signed with us, Palestinians “cannot continue to be bound by” are the Oslo Peace Accords*

[Abbas and Netanyahu Attempt to Calm Escalating Violence, CMEP Bulletin, October 9, 2015](#)

*As violent clashes between Israelis and Palestinians continued to escalate journalists debated whether or not the violence indicated the beginning of a third intifada*

[Who killed the Oslo Accords? Yezid Sayigh and Saeb Erekat, Aljazeera, October 1, 2015](#)

*Failure of Palestinian leadership to read political realities and Israel's culture of impunity ended Oslo long ago.*

[A Top Israeli Diplomat Publicly Admits What Netanyahu Won’t, Mitchell Plitnick, TPM, October 2, 2015](#)

*Israel’s Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, openly declared that Israel has no intention of handing any of the West Bank over to Palestinian control.*

[Palestinians Want 1967 Lands Under UN Protection, Samer B. Jaber, Ma'an News Agency, Oct 11, 2015](#)

*A group of professional and trade union figures, intellectuals, and political activists, appeal to the Palestinian leadership to call on the United Nations to put the Palestine territory occupied by Israel in 1967 under the international protection of the United Nations.*

[Escalating Violence In Israel, West Bank Is Result Of Failed Peace Process, Mitchell Plitnick, Oct 5, 2015](#)

*In what has almost become an annual ritual, an upsurge in violence has again put Jerusalem on edge. Originally centered on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount area in Jerusalem’s Old City, the clashes have now spread beyond, into the West Bank*

[Oslo has become a tool for Israeli expansionism — it's time to let go, Nathan Hersh, +972, Oct 3, 2015](#)

*The Oslo Accords have been manipulated for the unspoken goal of Jewish annexation of West Bank land. So long as both governments adhere to this failed system, they will be unable to pursue a real peace agreement.*

[A Conservative Estimate of Total U.S. Direct Aid to Israel: Almost \\$138 Billion, Shirl McArthur, Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, October 2015, pp. 28-30](#)

*The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs’ current estimate of cumulative total U.S. direct aid to Israel is \$137.638 billion, updating the estimate in the magazine’s Oct./Nov. 2013 issue. It is an estimate because arriving at an exact amount is not possible, since parts of U.S. aid to Israel are buried in the budgets of various U.S. agencies or in a form not easily quantified.*

[Intifada: The writing was on the wall, Gideon Levy, MiddleEastEye, October 5, 2015](#)

*Anyone claiming to be surprised that a third uprising is imminent has been burying their head in the sand for the last decade*

[Palestinian Health Minister: Five killed; 750 Injured during protests this past week, IMEMC News, October 8, 2015](#)

*Israeli attacks during the past week targeting Palestinian protesters in the West Bank have left five killed civilians including a child and more than 750 others.*

[Palestinians Are Fighting for Their Lives; Israel Is Fighting for the Occupation, Amira Hass, Haaretz, October 7, 2015](#)

*That we notice there's a war on only when Jews are murdered does not cancel out the fact that Palestinians are being killed all the time.*

[Why a 'new antisemitism' was invented, Antony Lerman, \(Open Democracy\), Jews for Justice for Palestinians, September 29, 2015](#)

*The acceptance of 'new antisemitism' thinking means that antisemitism has been fundamentally redefined, so that a discourse about Israel and Zionism can be labelled anti-Semitic.*

[Israel attempts to redefine terrorism, but is its definition too broad?, Daoud Kuttab, Al-Monitor, September 24, 2015](#)

*The proposed law substantially strengthens and widens the powers of the police and the General Security Services to suppress any legitimate protest activities against Israeli policies*