

Middle East Notes
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
June 7, 2018

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The six featured articles and the related links in this issue of the Middle East Notes focus on the recent Forum on the Question of Palestine at the UN; the persistent memory of the Nakba; the effect of Donald Trump and Israeli policies on many American Jews; the request of the Palestinian government to the International Criminal Court to open an investigation of possible war crimes by Israel; the dangers of balanced, or neutral reporting on Palestine; links to CMEP Bulletins and other articles of interest.

Commentary: World criticism of the Israeli government's use of disproportionate military force against the Gaza protestors, Netanyahu's growing identification with Donald Trump and his republican party supporters, and growing alienation of younger US Jews: all are weakening "people support" for Israel. BDS in Europe and in the US continues to increase. Israel's military and economic strength depends ultimately on the good will of the US and European nations but this good will is showing clear signs of diminishment.

- The UN Forum brought together Palestinian, Israeli and international experts, representatives of the diplomatic community and civil society to highlight the need to substantively address issues related to the 1948 war and subsequent mass displacement and uprooting of Palestinians.
- Rashid Khalid writes in *The Nation* that seventy years after the Nakba, Israel has not succeeded in erasing Palestine—or the Palestinians.
- M.J. Rosenberg writes in *Haaretz* that US Jews like himself were always taught Israel would be our ultimate refuge from anti-Semitism. However he now believes that Netanyahu's Israel is proudly in bed with the very people who threaten our future.
- Yossi Klein notes in *Haaretz* that Israel is happy to exploit the world's Jews, but doesn't care that its actions put them at risk.
- Zena Tahhan writes in *Aljazeera* that for the first time Palestinian leadership has submitted referral to International Criminal Court to investigate 'Israeli crimes'.
- US Campaign for Palestinian Rights recommends a challenging TED talk given by Anna Baltzer on the danger of neutrality when speaking of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

1) [United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 17-18 May 2018](#)

"Overview: To mark the anniversary of the 1948 War and subsequent uprooting and mass displacement of Palestinians, known in Arabic as *Al-Nakba* (the Catastrophe), the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) convened the two-day Forum "70 Years after 1948 – Lessons to Achieve a Sustainable Peace" at the United Nations Headquarters in New York." ...

2) ['The Palestinians Have Not Forgotten, They Have Not Gone Away'](#), Rashid Khalid, *The Nation*, May 10, 2018

"With the replacement of Palestine by Israel and the expulsion of most of its Arab population in 1948, it appeared that the Zionist dream had become a reality. A Jewish state had arisen, and there was no competing Palestinian state; ethnic cleansing had produced a massive demographic transformation, and the land of all those "absent" Arabs could be appropriated. The Zionists' hope and expectation was that the refugees would simply disappear, and even the memory that this had been an Arab-majority country for more than a millennium could be effaced." ...

<https://maryknollogc.org/tag/middle-east-notes>

3) [For American Jews, Zionism Died When Israel's Government and People Embraced Donald Trump](#), M.J. Rosenberg , Haaretz, May 28, 2018

... “This would seem to be a good time for Israel to make the case that the only safe home for Jews is Israel itself. But it can’t and won’t.

“That is because the current Israeli government - and apparently, the Israeli people - are proudly in bed with Trump.

“In fact, Israel is among the very few countries in the world (along with Russia and Saudi Arabia) that has openly welcomed the Trump presidency since day one. The rest of the world may still be drying their tears over Obama’s departure - as most American Jews are - but not Netanyahu’s Israel which, for a host of reasons (some quite ugly), never could stand the first African American U.S. president.

“So, as the largest diaspora Jewish community in the world worries that Trump’s America is bad for our children and grandchildren, there is absolutely no way Israel can say “Come home to Israel,” because Israel is allied with our potential oppressors.” ...

See also: [Intoxicated by Trump and Netanyahu, Diaspora Jews are abandoning their conscience](#)

4) [Israel Uses Diaspora Jews as Human Shields](#), Yossi Klein, Haaretz, May 31, 2018.

“Israel is a danger to the world’s Jews. It calls itself their protector, but doesn’t care about the consequences for them of its actions. Jews abroad pay the price of hostility to Israel, yet the state insists on wrapping them around it like a suicide vest. You want to hurt me? Okay, but be aware that they’ll blow up first.

“The effects on overseas Jews aren’t part of Israel’s military calculations. It will do what it does even if it hurts them. But that won’t keep it from claiming to represent them, to speak in their name and to use them as hostages. They are the human shield. Your loyalty to your Judaism, it says, comes before your loyalty to your homeland.” ...

See also: [Zionism has Become an Existential Threat—to Jews](#), Mark LeVine

5) [Palestine submits ICC referral to open probe into 'Israel crimes'](#), Zena Tahhan, Aljazeera, May 22, 2018

“For the first time, the Palestinian government has submitted a referral to the International Criminal Court (ICC) calling on prosecutors to open an immediate investigation into what it called Israeli crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories.”

6) [“The Danger of Neutrality”](#) TEDx talk by Anna Baltzer, Director of Organizing and Advocacy, US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, November 17, 2017

“Next time someone tells you people shouldn't take sides on Palestine, or that you should be more fair, or balanced, or neutral, send them this TEDx talk by Anna Baltzer, USCPR Director of Organizing and Advocacy.”

7) Christians for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Bulletins

May 11, 2018 CMEP Bulletin: [As Iran Deal Fails, Escalation in the Golan](#)

May 18, 2018 CMEP Bulletin: [IDF Kills Dozens at Gaza Border Protests](#)

May 25, 2018 CMEP Bulletin: [The Evangelical Split on Israel](#)