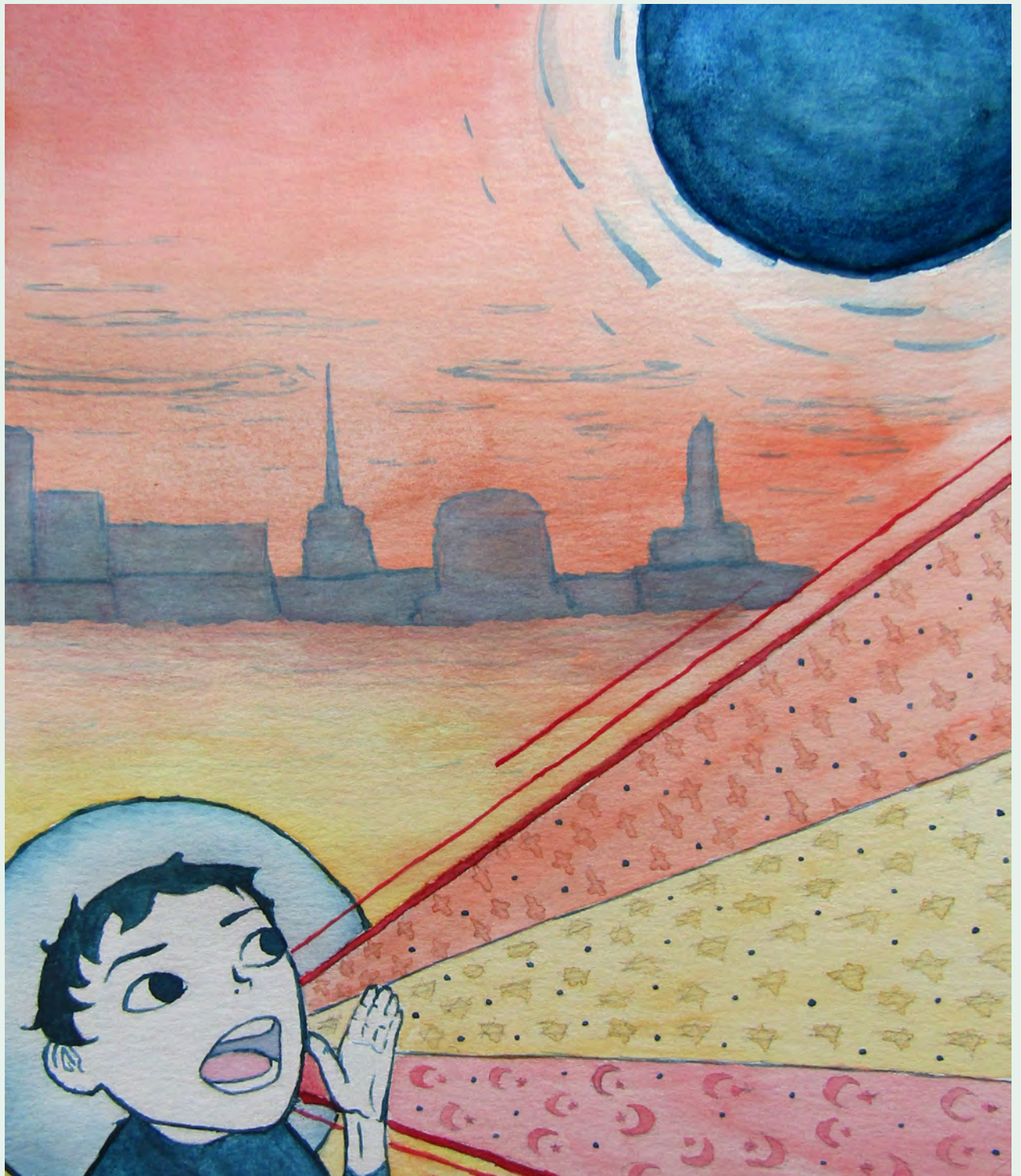


# THE FOUR FRAMEWORKS OF THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT REVISITED

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This article critically examines the four frameworks commonly utilized to interpret the Israel-Palestine conflict: Israeli self-defense, apartheid, genocide, and sociocide/ethnic cleansing/settler colonialism. The article follows a pattern of presenting the political, legal, physical, economic, and social realities in Israel/Palestine that support each framework followed by a discussion of the realities that delegitimize the suitability of each framework for describing the ongoing conflict. The article concludes with a description of the fourth framework, the sociocide framework, arguing that this framework is the most suitable of the four for describing the present situation in Israel/Palestine since it acknowledges the importance of allowing the Palestinians to name their own experience.



## Israeli Self-Defense

Israel's fundamental position for self-defense relies on the emotional argument that since the Holocaust happened, everything and anything Jewish individuals feel they must do in order to be safe should be justifiable and permitted. The Israelis undeniably face real security threats that are both concerning and unpredictable, evidenced by the fact that " Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Gaza have fired thousands of rockets deliberately or indiscriminately at civilian areas in Israel."<sup>1</sup> The Israeli government fails to connect the real risks they face with their actions; thus, their actions appear to contradict and delegitimize their claims of self-defense.

The Israeli government is in the process of constructing a Separation Barrier, 85% of which runs through Palestinian territory, in order to segregate Palestinians from Israelis, despite the fact that "in 2004, at the request of the General Assembly, the International Court of Justice in the Hague ruled that Israel's construction of wall inside Palestinian territory is 'contrary to international law' and must be dismantled."<sup>2</sup> Instead of abiding by international law, the Israeli government has chosen to continue along with construction of the barrier, claiming that the barrier is necessary in order to protect Israeli civilians from potential

Palestinian attacks. In addition to the creation of a physical separation, the Israeli government has decided to continue to invest massive sums of money towards increasing their military capacities, despite the fact that their military capacities are already *vastly* superior to those of all of the Palestinian armed groups combined. In 2009 the Israelis had around 3,800 tanks and over 2,000 artillery units, while the Palestinians had zero tanks and only a few mobile Qassam and Grad rocket launchers.<sup>3</sup> Though the Israeli government's military capabilities are already powerful enough to obliterate the entire Palestinian population, the government continues to spend a significant sum of money on military expenditures. In 2016 alone, the Israeli government spent 5.6% of their total GDP on military expenditures and signed a deal with the United States that ensures that the United States will give Israel \$38 billion in military aid before 2026.<sup>4,5</sup>

The Israeli action of further expanding the Jewish settlement enterprise onto Palestinian lands discredits the Israeli self-defense argument. While the Israeli government deems it necessary to create a physical separation between Palestinians and Israelis through the building of the Separation Barrier, the government simultaneously continues to subsidize the construction of Jewish settlements and allow for the establishment of Jewish outposts on Palestinian lands, thereby violating international law.<sup>6</sup> Despite the Israeli government's claim that safety is of utmost concern to them, the government incentivizes Jewish settlers' movement to settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory (hereinafter referred to as "OPT"), which deliberately puts the settlers at risk. Today, there are over 670,000 Jewish set-

The United States has promised

**\$38B**

in military aid before 2026

The infographic consists of a blue rectangular background. At the top, the text "The United States has promised" is written in white. In the center, there is a green rectangular box with a black border containing the text "\$38B" in large, bold, black font. At the bottom, the text "in military aid before 2026" is written in white.

Israelis	Palestinians
3,800 tanks	0 tanks
2,000 artillery units	Very few artillery units

tlers living in illegal settlements and outposts on Palestinian land.<sup>7</sup> The Israeli government’s continuous expansion of the settler enterprise begs the question: if the Palestinians are so “dangerous” that the Israeli government feels that a Separation Barrier must be created in order to separate Israel from the OPT, then why would the Israeli government decide to incentivize Jewish settlement in the OPT?

The Israeli self-defense position often argues that while Israelis have been seeking to make peace with the Palestinians, the Palestinians have continuously denied any Israeli attempts at peace negotiations. The Israeli self-defense argument often excludes the fact that there is a peace offer that has been suggested by the Arab League at every meeting they have held since 2002. The peace offer would provide Israel with the opportunity to reconcile with each one of their neighbors, which is precisely what the Israelis insist they want. After fifteen years of being offered the peace negotiation, Israel continues to ignore it, often times claiming that they do not trust that the Arab countries will hold true to their promise of peace.<sup>8</sup>

**Apartheid**

Article II of the *International Convention for the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime*

*of Apartheid* defines apartheid as “similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination as practiced in southern Africa,” which serve “the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, apartheid as a political system deliberately separates members of the population into either the privileged group or the disadvantaged group based on their racial identity. Apartheid as a political system relies on racism in order to function. Thus, the Apartheid Convention is inherently connected to the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*. In Article I, the convention defines racial discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”<sup>10</sup> This definition of racial discrimination recognizes that race is socially constructed and can be based on multiple intersections of an individual’s identity.

The apartheid position emphasizes the fact that Israelis have purposely implemented segregationist policies in order to ensure Palestinians have access to only small, non-contiguous areas of land in less than 30% of the West Bank and in 70% of Gaza, while Israel maintains control over the rest of the land that constitutes Israel/Palestine.<sup>11</sup> In the OPT, Israeli settlements are connected to major cities via settler-only roads, while Palestinians who live in the OPT must travel on much longer roads along which they are forced to stop at checkpoints and random blockades in order for Israeli military officers to check their identification and often times subject them to random searches.<sup>12</sup> The Israeli government is using the Separation Barrier as a means of appropriating more land from the Palestinians against their will, forcing further displacement of Palestinian individuals since the barrier intrudes on internationally recognized Palestinian land. One of the discriminatory laws in place that serves to further expel the Palestinians from their land is the 1950 Absentee Property Law, which “allows the state to acquire the lands of Palestinians displaced during the Nakba,” since the displaced

Palestinians are labeled “absentees” by the Israeli government. The Israeli government is able to claim the land that belonged to the displaced Palestinians, denying the Palestinians their right to the land. The government refers to the land as “abandoned land” that is now state land. Another law that works to appropriate the land of the Palestinians is the 1965 Planning and Building Law which “re-zoned communities and areas where building and construction is permitted and rendered illegal any building or habitations outside these zones, and therefore subject to demolition.” As a result of this law, homes in the areas that exist outside of these zones are subject to the will of the Israeli government. Thus, if the government decides they would like to take control of these areas, they are able to demolish the Palestinians’ homes without their consent. The Israeli government forces the residents of the demolished homes to “relocate to one of seven planned ‘concentration towns’ which are “the equivalent of reservations.”<sup>13</sup>

The discriminatory legal system in Israel extends beyond housing rights to political and civil rights. Palestinian citizens of Israel are granted an inferior set of rights in comparison to Jewish citizens of Israel, who are able to gain national status in addition to their citizen status. Palestinian citizens of Israel are denied the ability to purchase land through the Jewish Agency, since the Jewish Agency is only allowed to sell land to Jewish Israelis. Furthermore, Palestinians are denied the right to family unification; if they are married to a Palestinian from the OPT, their partner is prohibited from gaining residency or citizenship in Israel. Palestinian refugees living in the OPT live with an even more restrictive

**670,000**  
**# of Jewish settlers living  
in illegal settlements and  
outposts on Palestinian  
land**

Palestinians have access to only small, non-contiguous areas of land in **less than 30%** of the West Bank and in **70%** of Gaza, while Israel maintains control over the rest of the land that constitutes Israel/Palestine.

set of rights, since they are subject to Israeli military law instead of Israeli civil law.<sup>14</sup> Israeli military law allows for Israeli military officers to subject Palestinians to dehumanizing treatment, subjecting them to arbitrary arrest, and holding them in “pre-trial, pre-charge administrative detention of six months, renewable endlessly.”<sup>15,16</sup> Furthermore, Palestinian refugees, who are defined as either individuals or descendants of individuals “whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict,” are denied the right to return to Israel; meanwhile, the 1950 Law of Return grants to any Jew in the world who wishes to move to Israel the right to return, even if they and/or their family members have never lived in Israel before.<sup>17,18</sup>

The most inconvenient fact that de-legitimizes the apartheid argument is that the apartheid framework fails to account for the difference in intentions between the Israeli government and the South African government.<sup>19</sup> The intention of the Israeli government has been to create living conditions for the Palestinians that become unbearable and uninhabitable enough for the Palestinians to decide to leave Israel/Palestine. The Israeli goal has clearly been to exclude Palestinians from

the economy by denying them job opportunities and ensuring that farmers are unable to sell their crops in order to destroy their means of providing for their families.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, in South Africa, the government’s goal had been to exploit black labor due to the fact that less than 15% of the population was white, and over 85% of the population was black.<sup>21</sup> In Israel/Palestine, “50% of the population under Israeli political control is Jewish,” thus, Israel is able to exclude Palestinians from the job market and give preference to “Jewish labor.”<sup>22</sup>

### **Genocide**

Article II of the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, defines genocide as one or more of the following physical acts “(a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” committed with the “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, the presence of both the physical element and mental element (intention) is necessary in

order for an act to be considered genocide.<sup>24</sup>

The genocide position often emphasizes the living conditions of Palestinians in Gaza as potential evidence of genocide, since Palestinians struggle to obtain adequate healthcare and schooling, and they are often unable to access adequate amounts of food, water, and electricity. A United Nations report released in 2012 suggested that without “sustained and effective remedial action and an enabling political environment...the daily lives of Gazans in 2020 will be worse than they are now. There will be virtually no reliable access to sources of safe drinking water, standards of healthcare and education will have continued to decline, and the vision of affordable and reliable electricity for all will have become a distant memory for most.”<sup>25</sup> Perhaps in the future, the declining health care and lack of access to adequate food in Gaza might be labeled as an attempt at genocide, but it is currently not deemed as such. The current living conditions in Gaza work to further advance the Israeli goal of expelling all Palestinians from Israel/Palestine, since Gazans might be forced to leave as living conditions reach an uninhabitable level.

The genocide position also cites the death ratio of Palestinians to Israelis during the various Israeli-led operations as evidence pointing towards genocide. The death ratio that is arguably the most cited is from Operation Protective Edge in 2014, where the ratio was 30:1, with over 2,100 Palestinians and 72 Israelis killed.<sup>26</sup> In each of the Israeli-led massacres, a disproportionate number of Palestinians have been killed. Furthermore, during Operation Cast Lead, the Israel Defense Force’s (IDF) decision to violate international law and “explode white phosphorous munitions in the air over



populated areas, killing and injuring civilians, and damaging civilian structures” has been viewed as an action that aimed to kill an excessive number of Palestinian civilians.<sup>27</sup> Although the disproportionate number of Palestinian deaths might suggest that Israel’s intention is to kill as many Palestinians as possible, there are also inconvenient facts that result in the de-legitimization of the genocide argument.

The genocide argument is complicated by two facts: first, the Israeli military is capable of killing all of the Palestinians if their intention was to do so, and second, it is quite difficult to prove the intention to commit genocide. The Israeli military has the means to completely destroy the entire Palestinian population if they so desire, though the choice of killing the entire population would undoubtedly warrant severe political repercussions. If the Israeli government’s true intention was to annihilate the entire Palestinian population, then they could have taken a much larger number of Palestinian lives during the various massacres. The genocide argument

fails to take into account the fact that the Israeli government's true goal is to create conditions for the Palestinians under which they feel their best option is to leave, which does not necessarily imply killing the Palestinians if they choose to stay. The other dilemma presented by the genocide argument is that it is practically impossible to prove genocide without access to a clear and explicit admission of intent. If intent is not expressed either verbally or in a written form, then it is not possible to determine that genocide was committed – both the physical act and the mental aspect of intent are key to determining genocide.<sup>28</sup>

### **Sociocide / Ethnic Cleansing / Settler Colonialism**

Zionism as a political project dates back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century when European Jews who were fleeing anti-Semitism and persecution recognized their shared interest in establishing a safe Jewish homeland free from the oppressive societies they had fled.<sup>29,30</sup> The Zionist settlers agreed to begin constructing colonies in the land of Palestine, a land that was already populated by the Palestinians.<sup>31</sup> After they had constructed their initial settlements, the Zionist settlers realized that the native Palestinian population posed a problem for them, since the Palestinians were not Jewish and therefore did not fit with the Zionist goal of creating an ethno-religiously exclusive, democratic state.<sup>32</sup> The pressing challenge for the Zionists became creating a Jewish homeland in a land that was already occupied by a majority of non-Jewish individuals. The solution they developed was to expel the native Palestinian population to make room for Jewish settlers. They aimed to accomplish their goal by creat-

ing living conditions for the Palestinians' that were intolerable to the extent that the Palestinians felt they had no other choice but to leave, thereby giving up the land to the Zionists.<sup>33</sup>

In order to gain support for their political project, the Zionists decided that they would need to portray their initial settlement in Palestine as justified and ensure that it would not be perceived by the public as an infringement on the human rights of the Palestinians. The Zionists began to develop three key tropes that would enable them to advance the goals of their project: the trope of the empty land, the trope of the flowering of the desert upon their arrival, and the trope of the Palestinians as separate individuals lacking any sense of a collective identity. The trope of the empty land represents the settler colonial mentality that the land was unoccupied before the European Zionist settlers arrived---an argument that is clearly false. It is illogical that the same land that is referred to as the Christian Holy Land, the Muslim waqf and the Jewish Promised Land – a piece of land that was geographically situated in between Asia, Europe and Africa during a time period when travel was either by foot or on animal – had been completely evacuated somehow without any historical record. The argument that the land was empty is either recognized as a lie or can only be read as a purely racist statement that suggests that since the people on the land were not European in appearance, they were not considered to be of any importance.<sup>34</sup>

An extension of this trope is that the land was “abandoned land” or “absentee land” that apparently did not belong to anyone. This argument is based on Western cultural imperialism that essentially conveys the message that



if the Palestinians did not define land ownership in the same way that Europeans define land ownership through documentation and legal proceedings, then their ownership of the land is not valid. The Zionist settlers used their rationale based on cultural imperialism to reach the decision that they were allowed to continue encroaching further onto Palestinian lands, extending their settlements to include the new European settler arrivals. The Palestinians, however, never gave consent to the taking of their land by the newly arrived settlers and they never agreed to the “Judaization’ of a land that had been overwhelmingly Arab and Muslim for a millennium and a half.”<sup>35</sup>

The next trope developed by the Zionists as a justification for their settlement on Palestinian land was that they were making better use of the land than the Palestinians had been able to. The Zionists used this to justify their ever-increasing settlements on Palestinian land, believing that since they came from a more refined society than the society of the Palestinians, they were more capable of taking care of the land. They stated that they had been able to “make the desert bloom” with their agricultural methods that they argued were far superior to those of the Palestinians. Their perception that the Palestinians were lower quality farmers was due to the fact that the Palestinians used less modern tools than the Zionists was culturally imperialist in nature. The Palestinians rejected the Zionist argument that the land should be transferred to the Zionists, which would strip the Palestinians of their rights to the land.<sup>36</sup>

The third trope often utilized by the Zionists was that since the Palestinians lacked a strong collective identity they did not need or

deserve to have a state of their own. Instead, the Zionist settlers who had a strong shared Jewish identity deserved to create their own state on the Palestinians’ land. The Zionist argument that the Palestinians lacked a collective identity prior to the settlers’ arrival is false. In fact, in 1834, before the first Zionist settlers arrived in Palestine, the first Palestinian resistance movement in the name of nationhood took place – the Peasants’ Revolt. Additionally, whether or not the Palestinians referred to themselves as Palestinians when the first Zionists arrived is irrelevant; regardless of what they called themselves, the people living in Palestine had “profound religious, historical, cultural and sentimental ties to a particular area of land known variously and for centuries as ‘Palestine’ and the Holy Land.”<sup>37</sup> The Palestinians rejected the Zionists’ rhetoric claiming Palestinians were seemingly “accidentally living on Jewish land” when in reality they had been living there for over a millennium and a half.

In 1901, the leaders of the Zionist political project sought to establish an organization that would legitimize the transferring of land from the Palestinians to the Zionist settlers.<sup>38</sup> The organization they created was the Jewish National Fund, an organization that worked to fundraise among Jews from the diaspora in order to be able to purchase land for Jewish settlers in Palestine.<sup>39</sup> After years of expanding Jewish settlement throughout Palestine through the efforts of the JNF, the Zionists remained steadfast in their mission to create an ethno-religiously exclusive democratic state on the Palestinians’ land.<sup>40</sup> Over the course of the Arab Revolt, which took place between 1936 and 1939, the British had

“completely destroyed the Palestinian leadership and defense capabilities,” ensuring that the Palestinians were no longer a source of fear among the Zionists.<sup>41</sup> The weakness of the Palestinians after the Arab Revolt placed the Zionist leaders in an ideal position to initiate their plan to expel the Palestinians from Palestine. During the Zionist leaders’ meeting in 1946, the Jewish Agency developed a map marking the land that the Zionist leaders would claim for themselves and the area that would be designated for the Palestinians.<sup>42</sup> As it turns out, the map had marked the same exact portion of land that the Zionists were able to acquire during the 1948-49 Nakba. At the Zionist leaders’ meeting that had taken

**Their perception that the Palestinians were lower quality farmers was due to the fact that the Palestinians used less modern tools than the Zionists was culturally imperialist in nature.**

place on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948 before the Nakba, the Zionist leaders created a detailed outline for their plan to rid Palestine of the Palestinians by forcing them to flee. The plan included the issuing of a specific “list of villages and neighborhoods” to each of the military units that ensured that every Palestinian would be accounted for during the expulsion.<sup>43</sup> The Zionists’ plan proved to be quite successful; at the end of the Nakba less than half of the Palestinians remained on the land that came under the control of Israel as a result of the war.<sup>44</sup>

In the years following the Nakba, the Zionists continued to pursue their goal of ridding Israel/Palestine of all of the Palestinians. In order to decrease the number of Palestinians living on the land, the Zionists conducted “rolling expulsions,” forcing the Palestinians to leave behind their homes and livelihood, and relocate to a different area.<sup>45</sup> In 1967, the Six Day War presented the Zionists with the opportunity they had been waiting for – the opportunity to conquer the remainder of the land that lies between the river and the sea. By the end of the war, the Israeli state had gained control of and implemented military rule over the OPT. After gaining control over all of Israel/Palestine, the Zionists developed a new plan to accomplish their political project of creating an ethno-religiously exclusive state. The Zionists’ new plan consisted of the implementation of a policy of sociocide, which would entail the creation of living standards for the Palestinians in Israel/Palestine that are intolerable to the extent that they force Palestinians to leave.<sup>46</sup> In Abdel-Jawad’s “War By Other Means,” he outlines the four main goals of the Israeli state’s policy of sociocide, which are: “Firstly, to destroy the Palestinian economy; secondly, to decimate Palestinian national spirit and identity; thirdly, to deprive Palestinians of their political and civil rights, and fourthly, to transform Palestinian daily life into an endless chain of hardship.”<sup>47</sup> These four main goals of the policy of sociocide each serve the end goal of the Israeli government, which is to expel every single Palestinian from Israel/Palestine.

The sociocide position emphasizes the fact that the Israeli government has essentially taken control of the land and water resources in Israel/Palestine, and that the government

continues to incentivize further displacement of Palestinians through the illegal settlement enterprise. The Israeli government currently has “total control” of Palestinians’ access to suitable drinking water, and the government has ensured that a disproportionate amount of water is made available to Jewish settlers living in the OPT, while Palestinians living in the OPT face frequent water shortages, sometimes for up to forty days at a time.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, due to the Israeli government’s decision to subsidize and incentivize Jewish settlement in the OPT; the number of settlers has risen to over 670,000.<sup>49</sup> While the Israeli government pours immense sums of money into producing housing that incentivizes Jewish settlement in the OPT, the government simultaneously ensures that the living conditions of Palestinians in the area are continuously degraded.

Additionally, the sociocide position highlights the fact that the Palestinian economy has been de-developed, or prevented from growing crops, due to the Israeli government’s complete control over Palestinian imports and exports, and Israeli efforts to exclude Palestinian labor from the Israeli labor market. Palestinians are unable to import goods without the consent of the Israeli government, which they are never granted, and their ability to export the goods they produce is dependent upon the willingness of Israelis to ship their goods to exterior markets.<sup>50</sup> The Israeli government forces Palestinians to use their spending power to

boost the Israeli economy, which proves to be detrimental to the Palestinians’ own economy. Furthermore, the Israeli government aims to exclude Palestinian labor from the Israeli labor market to the greatest possible extent. Those few Palestinians who are able to find jobs in the Israeli labor market find themselves working the most undesirable positions with barely any chance for career advancement, and for a significantly lower pay rate than their Jewish counterparts. The Palestinian laborers working within the Israeli labor market are denied the right to advocate on behalf of their rights as laborers, since they have been “forbidden to set up Palestinian labor unions.” Thus, these Palestinian laborers are forced to continue to work in conditions where they are discriminated against and where they are not receiving equal pay for equal work.<sup>51</sup>

The sociocide position often refers to the Israeli government’s suppression of Palestinian cultural traditions via their frequent closings and demolitions of Palestinian schools and the discriminatory laws in place that value Israeli holidays while ignoring Palestinian holidays. Schools in the OPT are often forced to close due to power shortages, which then leads to students suffering academically.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, the Israeli government has demolished multiple Palestinian schools, arguing that the schools were built “illegally” since the Palestinians failed to obtain the required permits prior to building, however, the government

The Palestinians living in the OPT are denied the right to gain citizenship.

does not address the fact that these permits are nearly never granted to the Palestinians who request them.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, the Israeli government has made a point of creating legislation that unjustly penalizes Palestinians for celebrating their cultural heritage and identity. For example, the discriminatory Nakba Law “authorizes Israel’s finance minister to revoke funding from institutions that reject Israel’s character as a ‘Jewish state’ or mark the country’s Independence Day as a day of mourning.”<sup>54</sup> The Nakba law denies Palestinians the right to mourn the day of the forced mass expulsion of more than half of the Palestinian population from their homes and livelihoods in Palestine. The law also forces Palestinians to refer to Israel as a “Jewish state” when in reality the Palestinians lived there for over a millennium and a half before the Zionist settlers arrived and began their ethno-religiously exclusive state-building project.

The sociocide position often emphasizes the fact that today more than four million Palestinians are living in the OPT under Israeli military law, which denies them their civil rights.<sup>55</sup> The Palestinians living in the OPT are denied the right to gain citizenship, even though the Israeli Law of Return ensures that any Jewish individual from anywhere in the world regardless of whether or not that individual or their relatives has ever lived in Israel/Palestine is granted the right to gain Israeli citizenship.<sup>56</sup> The daily lives of the Palestinians in the OPT are marked by Israeli checkpoints (there are currently over 500 permanent checkpoints) that restrict their movement and a permit process that requires Palestinians to receive the Israeli government’s permission before they are able to complete simple tasks

including visiting a doctor’s office, traveling outside of the country, or meeting up with friends.<sup>57,58</sup> Furthermore, the Israeli government often denies Palestinians their requested permits without offering any explanation. Additionally, Palestinians in the OPT live in constant fear of arbitrary arrest by Israeli military officers, since “pre-trial, pre-charge administrative detention of six months, renewable endlessly” is legal in Israel/Palestine.<sup>59</sup>

Arguably the most important benefit of the sociocide framework is that the term sociocide provides Palestinians with the opportunity to “name their own experience, if they so choose.”<sup>60</sup> The term sociocide is the most inclusive of the terms that exist, since it is able to encompass the multitude of ways the Israeli government has sought to create unbearable living conditions for Palestinians living in the OPT. The terms apartheid and genocide both fall into the trap Mahmood Mamdani warns us of in his article “Responsibility to Protect or Right to Punish?” where he discusses the fact that the selective application of human rights standards often results in human rights being nothing more than neo-colonialism dressed up in a tuxedo. The cultural imperialist tendencies of Western societies paired with the Western arrogance shared by many Americans cause Americans to feel that they should be able to name Palestinians’ experiences for them using Western standards and Western concepts, rather than providing Palestinians with the space to name their own experiences. Thus, Americans feel that they should be able to apply the more familiar terms of apartheid and genocide to the situation of the Palestinians in order to make the Palestinians’ experience feel more relatable to them, without taking into account the fact that this stance is culturally imperialist in nature.

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