

al-shabaka executive summary

TALKING PALESTINE: WHAT FRAME OF ANALYSIS? WHICH GOALS AND MESSAGES?

By [Nadia Hijab](#) and [Ingrid Jaradat Gassner](#)

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Palestinians are mired in a one- or two-state debate that leapfrogs the need for a process of decolonization as well as reparations. The problem is compounded as there is no political settlement in sight. Palestinians must come together around a strategic framework of analysis so that they can agree on and work toward a clear set of goals, which include freedom from occupation and colonization, the right of the refugees to return to their homes and properties, and non-discrimination and full equality of Palestinian citizens of Israel. The authors argue that the anti-apartheid framework, rather than the settler colonial framework, is the most strategic for the following reasons:

- Though colonialism is prohibited and treated as a serious violation of international law, the state system as well as the UN consider colonialism to be an issue of the past. Further, prohibition of colonialism in regard to Israel is only applicable to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, since colonialism was not expressly prohibited at the time Israel was established.
- In contrast, apartheid is not only prohibited but is also treated as a current violation under international law. It constitutes what is likely the second most serious crime against humanity after genocide.
- An anti-apartheid framework mobilizes international solidarity and support. Due to the legacy of the international campaign that brought down apartheid in South Africa as well as Palestinian activism on the issue, many people understand that apartheid regimes are to be boycotted and isolated.

Policy Recommendations:

1. The powerful message must be that the Palestinian struggle is for freedom, justice, and equality in the homeland, whether in a single secular democratic state or in two sovereign states side by side, in which all citizens enjoy all human rights.
2. An education and awareness-raising campaign is badly needed to build consensus around the anti-apartheid framework of analysis, as is investment in the knowledge and skills of the Palestinian and solidarity activists working to advance it.
3. Those working to disseminate messages about Palestinian rights through the media should not focus on either one or two states. If they truly want to advance Palestinian freedom, they should focus on the process of decolonization and reparations that must be realized whatever the political settlement.