

Binational State Proposal

Background: Given the prolonged nature of the conflict, lack of confidence on both sides, demographic realities within the green line (1949-67 border), continuing security concerns, economic ties between the occupied territories and Israel, lack of resources within the occupied territories, a single-state solution is the only solution, i.e. a binational state that respects the rights and obligations of all of its citizens. This concept is not new. The minority opinion of the UN Special Committee on Palestine (1947), consisting of Iran, Yugoslavia, and India, recommended a unitary federal state in which autonomous areas of Jews and Palestinians would jointly govern the country. This proposal, however, differs from the 1947 minority opinion of UNSCOP in that all territories would be open to all citizens. While this notion may seem Utopian, so too did Herzl's dream of a Jewish state in the late 1890s.

Name: The Zionist Arab Republic of Palestine? *Other suggestions welcome.*

Refugees/Immigration/land/settlements: This plan would seek to dismantle all refugee camps within Palestine and in surrounding states over a period of ten years. *Where and how to settle refugees? Compensation? Can/should the Law of Return continue? Should the Law of Return extend to Palestinians in diaspora (i.e. to people not registered with the UNRWA)? Can/should settlements be dismantled? From which countries should funds be solicited to pay for solutions to these problems?*

Citizenship: *Who can claim citizenship in the new state? Must citizenship in Jordan or other Arab states be renounced? What are the obligations of the citizens? What is/are the language(s) of the state? Will all citizens serve a mandatory period in the military? Should there be a military?*

Structure of Government: *Should the state continue the example set by the Israeli state (parliamentary democracy with a unicameral legislature), or should an entirely different system be established? Should the state follow the Lebanese example or would this compromise negate the value of a binational state? Will there be some sort of constitutional convention to create a new constitution and if so, will there be a plebiscite to determine support of the people?*

Separation of Church & State: *Can or should this concept be achieved? Access to religious sites in Jerusalem, Hebron, etc.?*

Education: *Will there be a joint educational system? What type of history will be taught? What role will Jewish, Islamic, and Christian schools play—will there be state regulation of private school curriculum? How can or will the educational system buttress the notion of a unitary state?*

Identity: *Will the new state be allowed to join the Arab League? Should the new state join the Arab League? How can or will the new state assure recognition by its neighbors?*

Extremists: *How will the new state deal with dissidents who refuse to accept the binational state solution? Who will be allowed to carry/hold arms in the new state?*