

INITIATIVE 2025



**IMMEDIATE TERM ACTIONS
TO PROMOTE ISRAEL'S SECURITY**



Commanders for Israel's Security (CIS) is pleased to submit a plan of action on the Palestinian issue to the government of Israel and the general public. We propose a strategy that serves our nation's core interest: preserving Israel as a secure, Jewish and democratic state for generations to come. It calls for Israel to take the initiative. Guided by national security requirements, it must apply to Judea and Samaria, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. We firmly believe it is possible to forge a broad national consensus around this plan.

Our goal is to encourage public discourse on the issue, and encourage decision makers to formulate policies in line with the strategy recommended herein.

November, 2021



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE CHALLENGE

The way we address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will affect every aspect of our country's future. More than fifty years have passed since 1967 and Israel has yet to decide what policy best serves its national interest. Absent such a decision, we will continue our inexorable slide towards a single state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, a state without a sustainable Jewish majority. This, in turn, will oblige Israel to choose between granting equal rights to the entire population under its rule, thereby forfeiting the country's Jewish character, and denying civil rights to the Palestinians, thus eschewing its democratic values.

As the sovereign power in territories seized during the Six Day War, **Israel must decide what long-term solution it envisages, deriving therefrom a plan of action.**

THE OBJECTIVE

The preferred solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a security-based, negotiated Two States for Two Peoples agreement. Such a solution aligns with our values, provides required level of security, and ensures our future as a democratic society with a sustainable Jewish majority for generations to come.

We recognize that this solution is not feasible under current conditions. CIS, therefore, recommends that the government of Israel adopts a strategy to promote security and stability, improve prospects of a future two-state agreement and avoid irreversible steps that might limit the options of future governments in the pursuit of a negotiated agreement.

THE PROPOSED STRATEGY, THEREFORE:

- **Reflects a commitment to our primary national interest: strengthening Israel as the democratic, national home of the Jewish People, a state that enjoys the support of the majority of its citizenry and is capable of meeting ongoing security challenges.**

- **Rests on an understanding that maintaining Israel's strength demands -- and our own sense of national responsibility requires -- that we shape our nation's future in light of this supreme, national interest.** It rests on the further understanding that Israel enjoys considerable freedom of maneuver between the following options: the two-state solution (not currently a feasible alternative); unilateral separation that would create a security vacuum, likely to be filled by hostile forces; and a slide towards a single state between the Jordan and the sea. Adopting this strategy will satisfy neither those who seek full and immediate separation from the Palestinians nor partisans of greater Israel. It could, however, form the basis of a broad, national consensus.
- **Assumes that Israel has a direct interest in the existence of a functioning, Palestinian authority** that maintains close coordination with Israel's security forces.

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Achieving civilian separation while preserving security control until a lasting agreement can be reached.

In order to realize this strategy, **Israel must be proactive**, making intelligent use of three toolsets at its disposal: security measures, civilian-economic measures, and political measures.

- **Ongoing security control.** This is mandatory due to the current lack of any alternative to Israeli military control. The security arrangements we propose will provide a solution in the event of two conflicting and extreme scenarios, and a variety of alternatives in between: From sustained calm and stability to a deterioration of the security situation, to an outbreak of terror and, in the extreme case, the collapse of the Palestinian Authority (PA). While preventing terror and protecting the safety of Israel's citizens, our security forces will also be uncompromising in their enforcement of the law in the event of violent disturbances by Israelis on the West Bank. These latter disturbances threaten to spread chaos that could lead to the collapse of the PA, thwart efforts to achieve calm and undermine international support for Israel.

- **Civilian-economic measures.** Investments in infrastructure, trade, industry and employment, and easing of movement, will enable the PA to function better, improve the day-to-day lives of the civilian population on the West Bank, and reduce friction between Israelis and Palestinians. This, in turn, will promote stability and calm, build trust and instill hope for a better future.
- **Political-diplomatic measures.** We must always keep the political horizon in view. This is essential in order to secure the support of the Palestinian public, preserve the stability of the PA and ensure that it continues to coordinate with Israeli security forces. A viable political horizon will also help harness regional and international support for the initiative. In order to achieve this, it is important to maintain the status quo in East Jerusalem and the holy places.

While international support and coordination with the PA would go a long way to enhancing the strategy's prospects, we must pursue our goals even in their absence. **Israel cannot make vital decisions about its future conditional upon the current positions of other players.**

INITIATIVE 2025

IMMEDIATE TERM ACTIONS TO PROMOTE ISRAEL'S SECURITY

INTRODUCTION

Commanders for Israel's Security is pleased to submit *Initiative 2025*, a plan of action on the Palestinian issue, to the government of Israel and the general public. *Initiative 2025* is an interim plan designed to meet Israel's needs over the coming years, based on principles of Israeli security upon which we can build a broad, national consensus.

The Palestinian issue is, first and foremost, an Israeli challenge. It has, and will continue to have, a major impact on this country and its future. The best approach – and one that aligns with our values – is to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through an agreement to establish two separate states, an agreement that meets Israel's security needs. This would best serve to ensure Israel's safety, its democracy, and its Jewish majority for generations to come.

Since such an arrangement is not feasible under prevailing conditions, Commanders for Israel's Security, recommends that the government of Israel pursue **a course of action that promotes calm, security and stability, while refraining from irreversible actions** that could tie the hands of a future government, leaving it no alternative but the tragedy of a one-state solution. Our plan:

- Derives from a commitment to our supreme, national interest: strengthening Israel as the democratic, national home of the Jewish People, while maintaining its security.
- Reflects the desire of most Israeli citizens – and most Jews around the world – to preserve a solid Jewish majority in the State of Israel,

as well as the concomitant understanding that annexing millions of Palestinians is contrary to Israel's supreme, national interest.

- Rests on the assumption that Israel alone must determine its own future, and that we enjoy considerable freedom of maneuver among the following options: the two-state solution (not currently a feasible alternative); unilateral separation that would create a security vacuum, likely to be filled by hostile force; and a slide towards a single state (Israel's current trajectory). Our strategy will satisfy neither those who seek a two-state solution nor partisans of greater Israel. It will, however, shield us from the greatest national tragedy of all – the loss of the *third temple* – Jewish national independence in the modern era.

“Civilian separation with military control until an agreement is reached.”

Current circumstances leave us with only one alternative if we wish to preserve the Zionist vision: **“civilian separation with military control until an agreement is reached.”** In order to realize this strategy, Israel must be proactive, making intelligent use of three toolsets at its disposal: security, civilian-economic, and political:

- **Civil-economic separation.** To enhance the functioning of the PA, improve the day-to-day lives of the civilian population on the West Bank, and reduce friction between Israelis and Palestinians, Israel will promote investments in infrastructure, trade, industry and employment, and improvements in freedom of movement. This will serve to promote stability and calm, build trust and instill hope for a better future [details below].
- **Ongoing military control.** Currently, there is no alternative to continued Israeli military control. The arrangements we propose will ensure Israel's security under either of the following scenarios: sustained calm and stability, on the one hand; and a deterioration of the security situation on the other (including an outbreak of terror possibly and possibly the collapse of the PA [see below]).
- **The political-diplomatic dimension.** Our initiative would keep the political horizon in the background. This is necessary to secure the support of the Palestinian public, to ensure the stability of the PA and

its ongoing security coordination with Israeli security forces, and to harness regional and international support for the initiative.

THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE STATE OF ISRAEL

DEMOGRAPHICS:

13.6 million people live between the Jordan River and the sea, including 6.9 million Jews (52%) and 6.7 million Arabs (48%). Of the latter, 2.1 million are Israeli citizens. Demographic projections show that by 2048, today's already narrow Jewish advantage will give way to an Arab majority, with a population balance of 13.3 million Jews compared with 13.5 million Arabs.

We cannot change the demographics. We can, however, decide whether or not the Jewish and Palestinian peoples will be permanently entwined in a single state.

THE STABILITY OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY:

Twenty five years ago the State of Israel signed an agreement that established the PA, investing it with authority to manage the lives of most Palestinians. This included responsibility for maintaining law and order and fighting terrorism.

This arrangement was challenged by the suspension of security coordination during the second intifada and by the collapse of PA rule and the Hamas takeover in the Gaza Strip.

The PA survived these, two dramatic events, and resumed coordination with Israel's counterterrorism efforts. The security establishment in Israel credits this cooperation with saving many lives.

The PA also survived a series of other challenges, including four Israeli military confrontations with Gaza, US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the move of the American embassy to Jerusalem, and violent clashes in East Jerusalem neighborhoods and on the Temple Mount

(examples include clashes following the opening of the Western Wall tunnels, the installation of metal detectors and, most recently, the outbreak of violence in May of 2021).

Such events always have lingering effects. Thus, Israeli authorities continue to receive intelligence warnings about instability and threats to Israeli citizens. This is largely a result of the erosion of PA rule and criticism of its security apparatus by the very people it is intended to serve.

External factors alone are not to blame for the growing weakness of the PA. The Palestinian public is disenchanted by the behavior of its leadership. The PA is increasingly seen as corrupt, tired and lacking initiative. It is said to be governing ineffectively, violating human rights, and preventing elections. Officials are accused of subordinating the public interest to personal concerns, especially regarding the succession struggle as the Abbas era draws to a close.

Palestinians were willing to put up with these failings as long as they believed the PA was leading them towards national independence. As this hope recedes, criticism of the PA has grown, undermining its very legitimacy. It is accused of serving Israel's occupation rather than the national interests of the Palestinians themselves.

The above developments have brought many Israeli experts to express their concern about a possible collapse of security and order in areas under PA rule. It is feared that this could happen not as a result of a decision from above (with the PA threatening to "hand the keys" back to Israel) but rather due to the behavior of Palestinian society itself. This could take the form of popular rejection of the authority of the PA, or public pressure on Palestinian security forces to abandon their posts.

Two clear indications of this process are already apparent. The first is the emergence of areas in Judea and Samaria controlled by armed groups that reject the authority of the PA, and where Palestinian police and tax collectors fear to tread. The second is the phenomenon of Palestinian security officers deserting their posts at times of tension, so as not to be accused of collaboration with Israel.

The collapse of the PA would require Israel to deploy its own forces in both urban and rural areas of the Judea and Samaria in order to maintain

order and prevent a takeover by the Hamas. It would also shift responsibility back to Israel for managing the lives of millions of Palestinians. Termination of support by PA donor nations would place a large financial burden on Israeli tax payers. The greatest danger, however, is the lack of an exit strategy from this binational scenario. [For a detailed analysis of such a development and its possible outcomes, see our [study on the implications of annexation](#)¹.]

The bottom line is that a stable, functioning Palestinian authority – something of critical importance to Israeli security – requires the support of the Palestinian public. This support depends on two factors.

- The PA’s ability to govern effectively, serving the needs and improving the lives of its citizens.
- Progress towards Palestinian independence, even if this goal remains a remote one.

While neither of the above depends exclusively on Israel, previous actions by the Israeli government have served to weaken the Palestinian Authority. By the same token, a change in Israeli policy could now help promote the PA’s rehabilitation.

ISRAELI STRATEGY:

Over the past decade, Israeli strategy on the Palestinian front has comprised two elements: the status quo and isolation. In 2020 a third element accrued: the Abrahamic Accords.

The status quo element of Israel’s strategy is based on the assumption that we can continue to ensure stability over time; this, despite Hamas control in Gaza, the erosion of the relevance and governing capacity of the PA on the West Bank, and the attenuation of security arrangements in East Jerusalem neighborhoods and on the Temple Mount.

The policy of isolation, meanwhile, is intended to separate different Palestinian areas one from another, to prevent developments in one place from undermining security in another sector, and to forestall a Hamas takeover on the West Bank.

Ramifications of West Bank Annexation: Security and Beyond. Commanders for Israel's Security, ¹ October 2018.

The events of May 2021 exposed the failure of these two strategy elements, when a single event in Jerusalem led not only to unrest throughout the city but to clashes in other Israeli cities, rocket fire from Gaza, a further erosion of support for the PA and growing support for the Hamas both on the West Bank and among Palestinians throughout the Arab world.

Regretfully, Israeli behavior throughout has been only reactive, leaving the initiative to others.

The one exception to this reactive behavior, has been the Abrahamic Accords. These agreements are indeed an achievement of far reaching historic significance.

This achievement notwithstanding, the events of May 2021 demonstrate that even agreements with other Arab states cannot impair the need to address the Palestinian issue. Moreover, other developments point to the impossibility of decoupling the process of regional normalization from developments on the Palestinian front. These include reports that the UAE pressed for an early cease-fire during the last confrontation with Gaza, and held back on the process diplomatic normalization during the crisis.

Beyond questions of strategy, day-to-day events on the West Bank are cause for an alarm. Tasking the IDF with police duties over Palestinian civilians burdens it with responsibilities it is not trained for and detracts it from its core mission of combat preparedness. Furthermore, ongoing friction between the IDF and the civilian population is undermining the army's position at the heart of Israel's national consensus, and public confidence in the military. Evidence of this can be seen in the case of Elor Azaria and recently documented accounts of IDF performance in response to acts of settler violence towards Palestinians.

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GUIDELINES AND ASSUMPTIONS

The failure of Israeli strategy on the Palestinian front was clearly illustrated during Operation “Guardian of the Walls”. That experience underscored the need for a new strategic approach to more effectively promote our supreme national interest: ensuring that Israel remains a strong, secure and democratic national home for the Jewish People. This requires that we halt Israel’s drift towards a situation in which it is no longer possible to separate between the two national groups – something that will inevitably lead to the end of the Zionist vision.

As long as a political agreement remains elusive, Israel must avoid steps that move us closer to a single state. By the same token we must be steadfast in our pursuit of interim measures that enhance Israel’s strategic position.

ASSUMPTIONS:

- Israel enjoys considerable freedom of maneuver between the following options: the two-state solution (not currently a feasible alternative); unilateral separation that would create a security vacuum, likely to be filled by hostile forces; and drifting towards a single state (our current trajectory). Our proposed strategy will satisfy neither those who seek an immediate, two-state solution nor partisans of greater Israel. It could, however, form the basis of a broad, national consensus. Above all, it will shield us from the greatest national tragedy of all – the loss of the *third temple* – Jewish national independence in the modern era.
- Current circumstances leave only one alternative that serves the Zionist vision: Civilian separation while maintaining security control until a negotiated agreement.
- Calm and stability is a necessary condition for routine life throughout the interim period, and an essential part of the infrastructure for any sustainable agreement.

- The existence of a functioning Palestinian authority with the capacity to govern, one that maintains coordination with our security forces, serves Israel's national interest. It is also essential to any process leading to separation between Israel and the Palestinians.

GUIDELINES:

- By definition, the present proposal is an Israeli initiative. Optimally, it would be implemented in coordination with the PA. It is not, however, conditional upon such coordination.
- Raising funds from countries in the Middle East and elsewhere would contribute significantly to the implementation of key elements of the plan.
- It possible to proceed with careful and measured steps, while maintaining Israeli control all along the way, and enhancing Israel's security.
- Implementing this plan will block efforts promoting annexation and prevent the slide towards the tragedy of a single state solution, one that can only lead to violence and bloodshed.
- Acting in accordance with this initiative will help us avoid making irreversible changes before the time is ripe, while preserving -- and even enhancing -- conditions for their public acceptance at the appropriate time.

DETAILS OF THE INITIATIVE

JUDEA AND SAMARIA

PURSUING CIVILIAN SEPARATION WHILE MAINTAINING SECURITY CONTROL.

This strategy requires the integrated use of three different toolsets: civilian-economic, security and political-diplomatic.

- In order to promote **civilian separation**, investments will be made in infrastructure, trade, industry and employment, and freedom of movement will be improved. This will enable the PA to function better, improve the day-to-day lives of the civilian population on the West Bank, boost the economy and enhance quality of life, and reduce friction between Israelis and Palestinians. It will also promote stability and calm, build trust and instill hope for a better future [see below].
- **Ongoing security control** is mandatory due to the lack of any alternative to Israeli military control for an indefinite, interim period of time. The arrangements we propose will ensure Israel's security in the event of two, opposing scenarios: Sustained calm and stability on the one hand and a deterioration of the security situation on the other, including a possible outbreak of terror and even the collapse of the PA itself. Israeli control will be maintained while reducing the presence of the IDF in heavily populated Palestinian areas. Israel will make a sustained effort to preserve law and order and prevent acts of violence from either side by deploying more police forces, including the border police.
- **Political-diplomatic measures.** It is important to keep the diplomatic prospects in order to maintain the support of the Palestinian public, preserve the stability of the PA and ensure that it continues to coordinate with Israeli security forces. It will also help enlist regional and international support for the initiative, and for the State of Israel in general. Given the current composition of the Israeli government, it cannot be expected to make significant efforts on this front.

Absent such efforts on the Israeli side, regional and international bodies can fill the vacuum.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

To evaluate any measure under consideration, whether as part of this initiative or not, we must ask three questions. Does it -

- Promote or inhibit civilian separation?
- Contribute to or detract from Israeli security?
- Advance or impede the goal of civilian separation while maintaining security control?

[For a list of measures available in every toolset, see below]:

THE GAZA STRIP

Israel will launch a game-changing initiative that combines three, key efforts: political measures, economic reconstruction and enhancing and augmenting the security. This will be done in partnership with a powerful, international coalition.

The plan will gradually, but simultaneously, promote five objectives.

1. Weakening the Hamas and its control over the Gaza Strip.
2. Strengthening the PA and making it part of any arrangement in Gaza, while planning for the future reassertion of its authority over the territory.
3. Forging a powerful international coalition that can overcome resistance from the Hamas and the reluctance of the PA, while providing the resources for the plan's long-term implementation.
4. Enhancing security. This includes: strengthening and formalizing the cease-fire, while implementing mechanisms for communication and oversight; restraining Hamas armament efforts and blocking their tunneling program; training PA forces in anticipation of future deployment in Gaza.
5. Comprehensive rehabilitation and development efforts, and raising the necessary investments to facilitate this (while simultaneously promoting investment in the PA).

The plan will be carried out in stages, with progress from one stage to the next contingent upon a strict observance of the cease-fire by the other side, as well as a return of missing Israelis from the Gaza Strip.

[For more details, see the four-point program for Gaza.]

EAST JERUSALEM AND THE HOLY PLACES

THE TEMPLE MOUNT

The Temple Mount is a fault line that threatens to transform the Israeli-Palestinian dispute into a religious conflict with the entire Arab and Moslem world. All Israeli governments since 1967 have understood this sensitivity and acted accordingly.

In recent years, however, the government has shown less caution than its predecessors. The events of May, 2021 illustrate how dangerous this can be. That outbreak of violence strengthened the Hamas and weakened the PA, undermined our strategic relationship with Jordan, harmed our relations with other Arab states -- including Egypt and those countries with whom Israel has just recently signed normalization agreements -- and damaged the very delicate fabric of ethnic relations within Israeli cities.

We therefore recommend the government take the following steps:

- Reassert and rigorously implement the status quo on the Temple Mount.
- Strengthen cooperation with Jordan and preserve its status with regard to the holy places, as set down in the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty.
- Maintain cooperation with the PA.
- Prevent extremists from carrying out provocations at the holy places and elsewhere in East Jerusalem that could undermine stability.

EAST JERUSALEM

Reactions in the Arab world, western countries and Israel's closest allies in the United States to events in Sheikh Jarrah, Silwan and other East Jerusalem neighborhoods show that the holy sites are not the only places where Israel must tread carefully.

In fact, the need for change is evident in neighborhoods beyond those directly affected by the events of May 2021. To prevent another outbreak of violence, Israel must take a new approach to all Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. The “knife intifada” offered a glimpse of how serious the potential for violence is. As the recent discovery of tens of thousands of weapons in a single, East Jerusalem refugee camp shows, the lack of government presence creates fertile ground for criminals. The stronger the latter grow, the more likely they will become involved in terrorist activity.

The paucity of basic services, and the lack of education and employment opportunities, all serve to drive hopeless, young people into the arms of hostile elements, starting with crime and continuing with terrorism.

Israel’s policy towards East Jerusalem and the holy places, therefore, requires an approach that combines both civilian and security elements.

- Israel must impose law and order, and collect illegally held weapons in Palestinian areas of the city that are currently devoid of a police presence.
- The City of Jerusalem must establish a separate administrative and budgetary mechanism for East Jerusalem, and devise a master plan for its rehabilitation and development [for details see *Jerusalem: Opportunity or Ticking Bomb*²

Jerusalem, Opportunity or Ticking Bomb, Commanders for Israel's Security, ²

PROPOSED MEASURES

JUDEA AND SAMARIA: CIVILIAN-ECONOMIC STEPS

Israel will launch a civilian-economic plan to improve the welfare and standard of living of the Palestinians, reduce Israeli involvement in their daily lives, and promote stability. (The government has already announced plans to carry out some of these recommendations).

As with other elements of Initiative 2025, Israel's interest in security and stability requires that we proactively take the following measures, independent and irrespective of other players. Nevertheless, the cooperation of the PA would offer significant advantages, as would the involvement of donor countries, from within the region and without. The latter could play an important role both in financing the plan and training Palestinians to implement it.

Some examples:

- Increasing the number of work permits in Israel. The government has already taken initial steps in this direction. Increasing the number of work permits provides a livelihood for Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza, expands the workforce available to Israel's economy, and reduces the number of Palestinians residing in Israel illegally. We should add to the 15,000 permits already issued for Palestinians from the West Bank and the few thousands from Gaza vetted by the Israel Security Agency.
- Improving transport infrastructures and creating contiguity of transportation routes for Palestinian use. A Palestinian transport system would allow for rapid movement between population centers, industrial zones and border crossings. It would positively affect the governing capacity of the PA, allow it to deploy its security forces more efficiently, reduce friction between Palestinians and Israelis, and boost the Palestinian economy and the overall public mood. This, in turn, will increase stability and enhance security [for a detailed plan, see [Enhancing West Bank Security and Stability](#)³].

Enhancing West Bank Security and Stability. Commanders for Israel's Security, June 2017.³

- Regulating construction in Area C: addressing the needs of natural growth. In the 25 years since areas A and B were defined, their reserves of land available for construction have been exhausted. The requirements of natural growth must now be addressed. Furthermore, a solution must be found to the 250,000 housing units that have been built without permits on the periphery of these areas, and which face the threat of demolition. A solution to these problems that the PA can take credit for would go a long way to rehabilitating its prestige⁴
- Agricultural development. Israel will institute a rapid approval process for laying down water lines to Palestinian agricultural land reserves, prioritized jointly with the PA (if its cooperation can be secured) and donor states. Water quotas for agriculture will be increased, along with the use of recycled water for irrigation. Where necessary, the paving of dirt roads for transporting agricultural equipment will be allowed.
- Easing restrictions on the transport and export of goods. Israel will ease restrictions on the transport of Palestinian goods within the West Bank (among other ways, by reducing the need for multiple security checks); between the West Bank and Israel, including Israeli ports; between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; and between the West Bank and Jordan.
- Removing obstacles to economic development. This will include computerizing the department in Israel's tax authority dealing with VAT applicable to the PA, creating an interface between Israeli and Palestinian banks via the SWIFT system and promoting Palestinian trade (including with states with which Israel has no diplomatic and/or trade relations).
- JEC. Implementing the government decision to restart operation of the Palestinian – Israeli Joint Economic Committee (JEC) to resolve problems and facilitate economic projects in the private sector.
- Industrial zones. Israel will approve and promote the construction of Palestinian industrial and employment zones adjacent to the security

Regulating Israeli and Palestinian Construction in Area C. Commanders for Israel's Security, May ⁴ 2017.

fence, recruit donor states to invest in these projects, and speed up procedures necessary for their implementation.

- A new Palestinian city. Israel will promote the establishment of another, new Palestinian city (like Rawabi). This will create thousands of jobs (hundreds of them for academics and white-collar workers such as engineers and economists), and help relieve the housing shortage.
- A phased, demolition and construction program in the refugee camps. Israel will enlist the United States and other donor states to examine the feasibility of such an effort, with the goal of addressing the housing shortage, improving Palestinian quality of life, strengthening the PA and reducing the number of young Palestinians who turn to crime and terrorism.
- Stopping illegal settlements. The government will fully implement its decision to immediately remove any new residential sites not approved for settlements.

JUDEA AND SAMARIA – SECURITY MEASURES

The State of Israel faces multiple, mutually reinforcing security challenges on different fronts simultaneously, and developments on each front affect the others. It is therefore essential to -isolate Judea and Samaria from the influence of escalation elsewhere. Experience shows that common threats and mutual interests form the basis of fruitful security cooperation between Israel and the PA. Therein lies the potential to isolate Judea and Samaria from conflict on other fronts.

The security of Israel and its citizens require that we act both independently and in coordination with others. Initiative 2025 is based, first and foremost, on measures that Israel can take irrespective of other players. At the same time, the involvement of the PA offers major advantages, as does the support of other countries within the region and without (Egypt and Jordan above all, as well as the newly normalizing states).

Some examples:

- **Completion of the security fence.** Of the 770 kilometer fence that was planned and budgeted, only 650 km have been built. Major

gaps in the barrier offer easy points of entry for infiltrators. The security logic that called for a physical barrier between Israel and Judea and Samaria is as relevant today as it was at times of heightened terror. The barrier is essential in order to promote separation and calm, and will of course become even more important if Israel experiences a resumption in terrorism. Completing the fence will enhance Israel's overall security, including that of the 75% of settlers who live in Area C⁵.

- **Closing the Gush Etzion gap.** Repeated cases of infiltration and terror attacks and at the Gush Etzion junction highlight the need to complete the security fence in this area. Closing the gap will create a contiguous physical barrier from the Gilboa region to the southern Mt. Hebron area, removing 90,000 Israelis from the confrontation line.
- **Gush Etzion Junction and Route 60.** Route 60, running through Gush Etzion Junction, traverses the settlement bloc from north to south. It is also a site of ongoing friction between Israelis and Palestinians, and a focal point for terror attacks. In order to separate Gush Etzion from Palestinian areas while completing the security fence, it is necessary to isolate Israeli and Palestinian transport lanes on this route. This can be achieved by paving a parallel road for Palestinian use by means of the dig and cover method: building a new lane on a lower level and covering it with a concrete and sand roof. Separating traffic in this way would facilitate uninterrupted, free and safe movement for Israelis between Jerusalem and the Gush Etzion settlements, and Palestinian traffic between Bethlehem and Hebron.
- **Effective border control.** While the separation barrier in Judea and Samaria is intended to block the illegal movement of Palestinians into Israel proper, it cannot prevent this completely. Major gaps in the fence alongside lax enforcement continue to expose Israel's heartland to the threat of terrorism. A stricter border control regime would reduce the scale of illegal residency, but also have a negative impact on the livelihoods of thousands of Palestinian families, thus undermining stability. Our abovementioned recommendation to

According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (August, 2021), 485,000 settlers live on the West Bank, of these 360,000 west of the security fence – both the completed and planned parts.

increase the number of permits for Palestinian workers in Israel would counteract the latter effect.

- **Law and order in Palestinian areas.** Areas A and B – those under the control of the PA – comprise 186 separate and noncontiguous geographic “islands,” surrounded by area C. Neither the Palestinian police nor Palestinian tax officials have proper access to these areas, let alone a regular presence. Consequently, some 500,000 Palestinians live in areas with no law enforcement. This governance vacuum permits criminal and terrorist elements to operate freely and arm themselves. Establishing contiguous geographic units and/or transportation routes would strengthen PA governance and contribute to the security of both Palestinians and Israelis [for a detailed plan, including maps, see [Enhancing West Bank Stability and Security](#)⁶].
- **Expanding and training Palestinian security forces.** Strengthening the PA’s enforcement capability in the face of both crime and terrorism – something that would help ensure calm and stability – serves the interests of both Israelis and Palestinians. International efforts to strengthen the police, judiciary and punitive systems in the PA are led by the United States Security Coordinator (USSC). Israel will call upon the USSC to expand the number of Palestinian security personnel and enhance their capabilities through manpower training, embedding operational procedures, establishing command and control mechanisms, and procurement of equipment and supplies. Not only will this help maintain stability on the West Bank; it will also lay the groundwork for a gradual restoration of PA control in Gaza [for more details, see [Gaza: An Alternative Strategy](#)⁷].
- **Reducing friction with the IDF.** While IDF raids on Palestinian population centers often yield positive results in terms of security, they also demand a price. Palestinian security forces and their leaders feel that by ignoring their presence and, at times, removing them from the scene, Israel undermines their authority and respect among the Palestinian public and, consequently, their ability to enforce law and order. While operational decisions must be made by IDF commanders in the field based on local needs and conditions,

Enhancing West Bank Stability and Security, Commanders for Israel's Security, June 2017.⁶
Gaza: An Alternative Strategy. Commanders for Israel's Security, Nov. 2019].⁷

Israel should consider reducing the frequency with which it intervenes directly, and allowing Palestinian security forces to carry out missions on their own. Reducing direct IDF involvement will make Israel's military presence less conspicuous and reduce friction with Palestinian civilians.

- **Governance, law, and order.** A different kind of response to violations of law and order by groups and individuals is called for in order to prevent a new outbreak of violence and a possible loss of control over events. This response must be two-dimensional. First, it must be swift, immediate and uncompromising. Second, it must be carried out by trained, law enforcement professionals. The IDF should not be burdened with police responsibilities, but rather tasked with missions that are exclusively military in nature. This will require an expansion in the size of the Israel Police and the Israel Border Police, increased training of these forces to deal with civilians, including children, women, adults, legal demonstrations and violations of the public order.



COMMANDERS For Israel's Security



Commanders for Israel's Security (CIS) is a non-partisan movement. Its members are retired generals and equivalents in Israel's security services (the IDF, the Shin Bet, Mossad and Israel Police) who are motivated solely by concern for the future of Israel.

CIS took a decision to promote a security-political initiative that will extricate Israel from the current impasse as an interim step toward implementing its vision.

The movement's vision is centered around the need to reach a permanent two-state agreement with the Palestinians, to normalize relations and enter into security arrangements with pragmatic Arab states, and thus to secure Israel within final, recognized boundaries while ensuring its future as the democratic state of the Jewish people.

en.cis.org.il