

Session 2

A Tipping Point in the Israel-Palestine Conflict: Where to After Gaza?



Moderator

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Speakers

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Robert S. Ford, Senior Fellow, Middle East Institute

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Discussants

Dr. Ahmet Yusuf Özdemir, Assistant Professor, Ibn Haldun University

Haydar Oruç, Researcher, Middle East Institute, Sakarya University

Ambassador Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba, Ambassador, South Africa

Dr. Aslı Nur Düzgün, Medeniyet University

Abdullah Baabood, Non-Resident Scholar, Malcolm H. Kerr, Carnegie Middle East Centre

Dr. Bruno Macaes, Former Secretary of State for Europe in Portugal

Özgür Dikmen, Lecturer, Stanford University

Dr. Alptekin Cihangir İşbilir, Anadolu Agency News Academy Manager

Key Takeaways

- The atrocities in Gaza, heightened by the events on October 7, poses significant challenges. Long-standing issues, such as extrajudicial killings, land annexations, and the Gaza blockade, mean that a two-state solution is not logical. The term “genocide” is debated, with concerns raised about Israel’s actions indicating intent. International mechanisms, like the International Criminal Court (ICC), face challenges, and there are calls for UN reform.
- The US role in the crisis is complex, with a historical context and internal dynamics, including the influence of Evangelicals. The lack of a clear Israeli endgame raises concerns, and there is uncertainty about when the US might take concrete action against Israel. The situation poses risks of a humanitarian crisis, potential displacement, and a re-evaluation of international norms.
- Efforts for accountability, potential sanctions, and the need for a just international system are emphasised. The atrocities in Gaza raise questions about the peace process, potential shifts in US foreign policy, and the role of the international community in the face of humanitarian crises.

Summary

During this expert roundtable session the Israeli violence in Gaza's global attention and rising concerns about the longstanding humanitarian conflict in Gaza was debated. While international organisations, including the UN, are being scrutinised for their ineffectiveness, finding a sustainable resolution, understanding the historical context and addressing core issues—such as extrajudicial killings, land annexations, and the Gaza blockade—is crucial. Without tackling these challenges, achieving lasting peace remains a formidable task. Netanyahu's actions, denying Palestinian rights and pursuing de facto annexation, face mild objections globally. During the roundtable, experts stated that the term "Gazacaust" signals a paradigm shift, urging the exploration of alternative approaches. The displacement of Palestinians raises concerns about a humanitarian crisis and potential conflicts with Egypt. The absence of an apparent exit strategy, an ineffective international system, and the need for a paradigm shift are also discussed.

Experts also talked about the need for reviving the Palestinian Authority, but its return to Gaza seems unlikely. The lack of credible leadership hinders a peace process. The focus on security as a prerequisite for humanitarian access is also emphasised. Suggestions for sanctions focus on targeting individuals and influencing US actions in the Security Council. As experts specified, expressing criticism of Israel is considered risky, with academic and intellectual stifling on the matter. Biden's silence on apartheid in Palestine raises concerns, and public mobilisation is urged, focusing on the ICC.

The expert roundtable encompassed the complex historical context of the problem, challenges to peace, concerns about genocide, lack of international accountability, and the need for a paradigm shift in addressing the crisis in Gaza. As discussions unfolded, the focus turned to potential humanitarian crises, the Palestinian refugee issue, and the urgency for a clear US stance. Experts eventually stressed upon the need for accountability, coupled with challenges in the existing international security architecture, and they called for a paradigm shift in addressing the complex dynamics of the crisis.

