

Why Do the Palestinians Refuse a Jewish State?

The state of Israel is demanding recognition as the national homeland of the Jewish people in the negotiations with the Palestinians. The demand sounds logical and reasonable to the Western ear.

However, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas firmly opposes it. The Palestinians and their supporters among the left are trying to minimize their opposition, claiming that the demand is dealing with trivialities and should therefore be taken off the negotiating table. But the sad truth is that abandoning the demand will perpetuate the conflict between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Why?

In 1922, the League of Nations voted unanimously to accept the text of the Mandate for Palestine, thus fully recognizing the existence of the Jewish people, its historical connection to the land of Israel and its right to build a country there. Furthermore, the League of Nations had the authority to do this under international law, as an application of the power of disposition.

Moreover, the document that this vote turned into international law, which is still in effect, makes the Jewish people an exception among all residents of the land of Israel. According to the document, the civil and religious rights of all residents will be observed, but political and national rights will be reserved exclusively for Jewish residents. Exactly the same principles guide the joint resolution of the House and the Senate (which validated a law signed by U.S. President Warren Harding) and an international convention signed by the United States and Britain and ratified by the signatures of U.S. President Calvin Coolidge and the British monarch, King George V. Ratification of a convention turns it

into part of the national law code of the signatory countries.

This recognition of us as a people, of our historical link to the land of Israel and of our right to sovereignty over it was the reason for the outbreak of the armed political conflict between Jews and Arabs and the Arab riots of the 1920s, a conflict that continues in various incarnations until today. The goal of the Arabs was and still is to completely eliminate international recognition of our right to Israel. That is why they call these facts the "Jewish narrative," to reduce its importance and to hide the fact that opposing these rights contravenes international law. To undermine the Jewish narrative, they invented an "Arab narrative," the principles of which are in the Palestine National Charter, written in 1964.

The rationale on which the charter is based is that Jews share only a religion, not a nationality, and therefore they have no right to sovereignty. The conclusion: Their state must be destroyed and Palestine must be built on top of the ruins.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin agreed to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization and to allow Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip in return for scrapping the Palestine Charter. In response, Arafat promised (but did not follow through) to change the clauses in the charter that deny Israel's right to exist. In his last speech in the Knesset, Rabin said that he sees in these promised changes the ultimate test of the will and the ability of the Palestinian Authority, and that the requested changes will be an important and serious touchstone in continuing and implementing the agreement as a whole. The changes still have not been made. Moreover, Palestinian students now memorize the charter—without the changes—as part of their school curriculum.

Recognition of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people is a public assertion of the fact that the Arab narrative, on which they based their murderous activities, is

false. It is the recognition of the Jewish people's right to sovereignty over the land of Israel.

It is for this reason that Abbas has clearly said that he will never give that recognition; because he has no intention of ending the conflict before all the Jews have been removed from the land of Israel.

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