

Strategy paper
One State Foundation (OSF)

Aim of OSF

The overarching aim of the Foundation is to promote and advocate for a one state solution (defined mainly by full equality for all those living under the control of the same state structure) amongst, primarily, but not exclusively, Palestinians and Israelis from all lingual, ethnic and religious backgrounds, as a fair, just and comprehensive settlement to what is known as the ‘Palestinian-Israeli conflict’. Therefore, The One State Foundation (OSF) will apply various tools to attain this goal, including but not limited to, stimulating popular debates and dialogue across divides on the matter, lobbying and advocacy. The Foundation will also act as a clearinghouse for information and public awareness in Mandatory Palestine (nowadays most commonly known as Israel and the Occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip), as well as in the international arena.

Rationale for The One State Foundation’s actions

The asymmetrical relationships of power between the State of Israel and the Palestinians, and the consequent oppression and dispossession of the latter, are at the root of the crisis. Ending oppression by awarding full and equal rights to the Palestinians living under the control of the State of Israel, and repairing the dispossession that has taken place over decades, are the essential prerequisites for a sustainable peace. Particularly, the United Nations’ General Assembly Resolution no. 194 provides (in part) a legal basis for the latter.

The concept of a one state solution to the crisis is in no way new. It has roots in all relevant communities, even before 1948. The debate has, however, often been rather ‘fringe’ and academic/philosophical, rather than a ‘mainstream’ discourse, within the communities involved or within the broader international community. In the mainstream Israeli context, the one state concept may be perceived as a serious and personal existential threat, while in the Palestinian society, it may often be deemed as compromising the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, while at the same time many Palestinians doubt the prospect of living in full equality of rights with the privileged citizens of a settler-colonial state who are currently involved in their decades-long oppression and dispossession. The ‘zero sum game’ outlook on both ends, seeking a state exclusively for one’s own ethnic/religious group, not wanting to give in or give up on established privileges (on the Israeli side) play an important role as well. Emotional aspects or ‘arguments’ are understandably often the driving force for the outlook on the crisis.

The Foundation, on the one hand, wants to address and acknowledge the psychological barriers in place, but at the same time put forward a rational argument for a solution that would ultimately present a win-win situation for all involved; a reality in which once past wrongdoings are addressed and repaired, each person can live in full equality of rights and opportunities. The Foundation acknowledges the existence of numerous difficult obstacles to the attainment of this eventual win-win outcome, as well as the different perspectives on what ‘winning’ in this context looks like.

Perspective on the one state solution adhered to by the foundation

Since 1967, a *de- facto* one sovereignty/state reality has been in place with the State of Israel controlling the full territory between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, and all its inhabitants. This very problematic ‘one state’ reality, in which legal and practical inequality based on nationality/religion is the norm, could be transformed to a *de-jure* one state reality in which all those living under control of the same state have equal human rights and equal access to opportunities. In other words, the aim would be to transform today’s reality into a true inclusive and democratic state, in which equality before the law of each and every individual, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, is guaranteed.

In order to make a success of this model, recognition of past injustices, mostly since the establishment of the State of Israel onwards to today, is essential. Recognition of, and accountability for, the fact that the establishment of the State of Israel has resulted in the dispossession of Palestinians and made the vast majority of them refugees (in what is commonly known amongst Palestinians as the Nakba/Catastrophe) is necessary, as well as recognition of the continued dispossession and injustices that have happened since, in order to move on to a model of coexistence in full equality. Transitional justice would need to be developed and applied, as well as truth and reconciliation mechanisms. For those Palestinian refugees, currently outside the area concerned, a combination of return to their towns and villages or other solutions in accordance with their inalienable rights should be offered, for which United Nations’ General Assembly resolution 194 provides a clear legal basis.

The international community at large, which bears a collective responsibility for the creation of the continuing crisis known as the ‘Israeli-Palestinian conflict’, would need to step in to make a successful transition possible, providing political, financial and practical support. Ultimately, a resolution of the crisis would be beneficial primarily to those directly involved, but most certainly to the international community at large as well.

The Foundation chooses to promote and focus on a one state solution as described above, based on the conviction that it is relatively the easiest and most inclusive solution within the current *de-facto* one state reality. The Foundation has, however, no exclusive or absolutist convictions, and it welcomes any solution to the crisis in which the aforementioned essential aspects of

(1) full and equal rights to all living under control of the same state and

(2) the implementation of accountability and responsibility for human rights violations since the establishment of the State of Israel/the Nakba, for which United Nations General Assembly resolution 194 provides (in part) a clear legal basis, are addressed.

Any ‘solution’ not taking into account and addressing these two crucial aspects would not deal with the roots of the crisis and would merely offer another form of ‘managing’ the crisis.

Perspective of the Foundation on the importance of application of pressure on The State of Israel

While the Foundation focuses on building popular debate and ultimately support for a sustainable, rights-based one state solution to the crisis amongst Palestinians as well as Israelis, we are at the same time aware that a state with dominating power and control over a

marginalized and dispossessed people is generally unlikely to give up its position of domination and power of its own accord. The foundation therefore acknowledges the importance of political, economic, diplomatic and popular external pressure which aims to create leverage on the Israeli state to end injustice and discrimination vis a vis the Palestinian people.

Organizational structure of the Foundation

For practical purposes, the Foundation is has been set up in The Netherlands, under Dutch law. This will guarantee a certain freedom to the Foundation in receiving funding, as well as operative capacities that possibly would not be in place if the Foundation was based in Israel, on the West Bank or in the Gaza Strip.

In the initial phase, the Foundation will have a three member board consisting of a Palestinian, Israeli and Dutch national.

The board is supported by an advisory board, with as diverse as possible a representation of both communities, as well as members of the international (diplomatic) community supporting the initiative.

In the initial phase, the board will be in charge of giving shape to the activities of the Foundation and the chair of the board will act as director of the Foundation on a voluntary basis. Volunteer(s) can be recruited to offer support. Once sufficient funding is secured a formal director will be appointed.

Funding outlook

The set-up of the Foundation will be financed by private means provided by the board. Once the website of the Foundation is up and running, it will provide a platform through which donations to the Foundation can be made directly. In addition, the Foundation will subsequently pursue structural funding opportunities by approaching organizations potentially interested in funding a grassroots initiative of this nature.