

Israel, Gaza and the Politics of Palliative Peace: Colonialism, (de)mobilization and why the Two-State Solution is made to Fail

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Andrea Teti

This brief piece picks apart selected standard narratives about the war on Gaza which Western media and governments use to describe the unprecedented devastation since October 7th. In particular:

- 1) **Arab governments vigorously oppose Israel's actions.** Despite the Palestinian question being central to the domestic politics of Arab states and despite energy suppliers' leverage over energy-insecure Western states, Arab regimes have done little more than issue stern public statements. Beyond contingent questions like personalisms, commercial ties, or defence dependencies, this piece sketches the roots of these choices in underlying strategies of regional autocrats' rule.
- 2) **Israel justifies its disproportionate use of force claiming this will eliminate armed groups and/or armed resistance *per se*.** But scholarship on mass violence against civilians shows this strategy produces the opposite effect.
- 3) **A 'peace process' towards a 'two-state solutions' is the only realistic pathway to peace.** Yet, since at least 1978 these 'peace processes' a) display similar structures, b) fail due to 'spoilers' which their principals are unwilling or unable to rein in, and c) never even reach the point of dealing with underlying causes (occupation, borders, refugees, Jerusalem, reparations, equal rights, etc.). Local, regional and Western policymakers insist on this structurally unstable strategy because it provides a 'palliative' solution to the Palestine question – whereas it actually further destabilizes Palestine/Israel and the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The analysis sketches how key characteristics of the Palestine/Israel question's colonial roots and post-independence regimes' strategies of power explains these contradictions and how they lead to 'palliative' peace processes which defer structural solutions rather than advance them.

More Information

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About the Author

[Andrea Teti](#) is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Salerno (Italy) and Managing Editor of *Middle East Critique*. Andrea has published widely on democratization and authoritarianism and on EU-Middle East policy, including as lead author of *The Arab Uprisings in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia* (2018) and *Democratization Against Democracy: How EU Policy Fails the Middle East* (2020).

Twitter: [@a_teti](#)