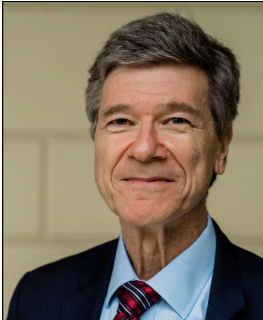


Open Letter

“Israel is not my country and never will be.”

by Jeffrey D. Sachs,* USA



Jeffrey D. Sachs (Picture Gabriella C. Marino, 2019)

As a Jew, Professor Jeffrey Sachs objects to being implicated by the Israeli government in “crimes against humanity”. He argues that the greatest threat to Israel’s survival is not the Arab nations, the Palestinians or Iran, but the policies of the extremist Israeli government. The letter reads as follows:

H.E. Gideon Sa’ar,
Foreign Minister, Government of Israel
Dear Mr. Minister,

I write to you following your speech¹ at the United Nations Security Council on 5 August. I attended the session but did not have the chance to speak with you following the session. I want to share my reflections on your speech.

In your speech you failed to recognize why almost the entire world, including many Jews such as myself, are aghast at your government’s behavior. In the view of most of the world, with which I concur, Israel is engaged in mass murder and starvation; you would not have known it from your speech. You failed to acknowledge that Israel has caused the deaths to date of some 18,500 Palestinian children, *whose names were recently listed by The Washington Post*.² You blamed all the mass murder of civilians by Israeli forces on Hamas, even as the world watches video clips every day of Israeli forces killing starving civilians in cold blood as they approach food distribution points. You lamented the starvation of 20 hostages but

failed to mention Israel’s starvation of 2 million Palestinians. You failed to mention that your own prime minister worked actively over the years to fund Hamas, as *The Times of Israel* has documented.³

Whether your oversights are the result of obtuseness or prevarication, they would be a tragedy for Israel alone were it not for the fact that you attempted to rope me and millions of other Jews into your government’s crimes against humanity. You declared at the U.N. session that Israel is “The sovereign state of the Jewish people”. This is false. Israel is the sovereign state of its citizens. I am a Jew, and a citizen of the United States. Israel is not my state and never will be.

Your language about Jews in your speech betrayed the gulf between us. You referred to Judaism as a nationality. This is indeed the Zionist construct, but it runs counter to 2,000 years of Jewish belief and Jewish life. It is an idea that I and millions of other Jews reject. Judaism for me and for countless others outside of Israel is a life of ethics, culture, tradition, law, and belief that has nothing to do with nationality. For 2,000 years, Jews lived in all parts of the world in countless nations.

The great Rabbinic sages of the Babylonian Talmud in fact explicitly proscribed a mass return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem, telling the Jewish people to live in their own homelands (*Ketubot 111a*).⁴ Sadly, the Zionists undertook massive campaigns including financial subsidies and scare tactics to induce Jewish communities to leave their own homelands, languages, local cultures, and relations with their fellow inhabitants to draw them to Israel. I have traveled throughout the world visiting nearly empty synagogues and vacated Jewish communities, with only a few elderly Jews remaining, and where these few remaining Jews insisted that their communities once lived in peace and harmony with the non-Jewish majorities. Zionism has weakened or put an end to countless vibrant

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communities of our co-religionists around the world.

It is an ironic fact that when Zionists convinced the British Government in 1917 to issue the Balfour Declaration, the one Jew in the Cabinet, *Sir Edwin Montagu, strenuously objected*,⁵ stating that he was a British citizen who happened to be Jewish, not the member of a Jewish nation:

"I assert that there is not a Jewish nation. The members of my family, for instance, who have been in this country for generations, have no sort or kind of community of view or of desire with any Jewish family in any other country beyond the fact that they profess to a greater or less degree the same religion."

In this context, it's also worth recalling that the *Balfour Declaration states clearly and unequivocally*⁶ that

"nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine". Zionism has failed that test.

Your government is committed to the permanent occupation of all of Palestine and stands in violent, unrelenting opposition to a sovereign State of Palestine. The founding platform of Likud in 1977 hides nothing in this regard, *declaring openly*⁷ that "between the Sea and the Jordan there will only be Israeli sovereignty."

To accomplish this, Israel demonizes the Palestinian people and crushes them physically, through mass starvation, murder, ethnic cleansing, administrative detention, torture, land seizures, and other forms of brutal repression. You yourself shamefully declared that "all Palestinian factions" support terrorism.

Your counterpart at the U.N. Security Council session, Palestinian Ambassador Riyad Mansour, declared just the opposite. He stated clearly:

"The solution is ending this illegal occupation and ending this disastrous conflict; it is the realization of the independence and sovereignty of the Palestinian state, not its destruction; it is the fulfillment of our rights, not their continued denial; it is respect for international law, not its trampling; it is the implementation of the two-state solution, not a one state reality with Palestinians condemned to genocide, ethnic cleansing, or apartheid."

Israel stands against almost the entire world in its endeavor to block the two-state solution.

Already, 147 countries recognize the State of Palestine,⁸ and many more will soon do so. One-hundred and seventy U.N. member states⁹ recently voted in support of the right of the Palestinian people to political self-determination, with only six opposed (Argentina, Israel, Micronesia, Nauru, Paraguay, United States).

Your presentation utterly neglected the powerful "*New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State solution*,"¹⁰ issued by the world community at the High-Level International Conference on Implementing the Two-State Solution held on July 29, 2025, just one week before your own speech at the U.N. Security Council. Saudi Arabia and France co-chaired that high-level conference. Arab and Islamic nations all over the world called for peace and normalization of relations with Israel when Israel abides by international law and decency in line with the two-state solution. Your government rejects peace, because it aims for domination over all of Palestine instead.

Israel holds on to its extremist position by a slenderest of threads, backed (until now) by the United States but by no other major power. We also should acknowledge a major reason for the U.S. backing until now: Christian Evangelical Protestants who believe that the gathering of the Jews in Israel is the prelude to the damnation or conversion of the Jews, and the end of the world. Those are your government's allies. As for overall American public opinion, *disapproval of Israel's actions now stands at 60%*,¹¹ with only 32% approving.

Mr. Minister, the global revulsion you cited is against the actions of your government, not against Jews. Israel is threatened from within by zealotry and extremism that in turn bring worldwide disapprobation of Israel by Jews and non-Jews alike. The great threat to Israel's survival is not the Arab nations, the Palestinians, or Iran, but the policies of Israel's extremist government, led by *Benjamin Netanyahu, Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir*.

The two-state solution is the path—and the only path—to Israel's survival. You may believe that nuclear weapons and the U.S. government are your salvation, but brute power will be evanescent if Israel's grave injustice toward the Palestinian people continues. The Jewish

Prophets taught again and again that unjust states do not long survive.

Sincerely yours,
Jeffrey D. Sachs
New York City, 9. August 2025

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/open-letter-to-sa-ar>, 11 August 2025

¹ <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/fm-sa-ar-addresses-the-special-un-security-council-meeting-on-the-issue-of-the-hostages-5-aug-2025>

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2025/israel-gaza-war-children-death-toll/>

³ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/for-years-netanyahu-propped-up-amas-now-its-blown-up-in-our-faces/>

⁴ <https://www.sefaria.org/Ketubot.111a.4?lang=bi>

⁵ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/montagu-memo-on-british-government-s-anti-semitism>

⁶ https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/balfour.asp

⁷ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/original-party-platform-of-the-likud-party>

⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/30/world/middle-east/palestinian-state-recognition-maps.html>

⁹ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/the-right-of-the-palestinian-people-to-self-determination-08nov24/>

¹⁰ <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/israel-palestinian-territories/news/2025/article/united-nations-high-level-international-conference-new-york-declaration-on-the>

¹¹ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/692948/u.s.-back-israel-military-action-gaza-new-low.aspx>