



UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE

USIP'S WORK IN

Israel, the Palestinian Territories, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

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CURRENT SITUATION

Tension and hostilities have increased markedly between Israeli and Palestinian societies since the collapse of another round of peace negotiations in the spring of 2014. Violent incidents have sparked retaliatory attacks in both directions, including over access to the Jerusalem religious site known as the Temple Mount or Haram al-Sharif. The risk of more widespread and sustained violent conflict looms, and political and social dynamics in both societies challenge the prospects for a negotiated settlement. Meanwhile, the international community seeks a way to enable the parties to stem the current wave of violence in the immediate term, while pursuing a more sustainable diplomatic solution to the ongoing conflict.

USIP'S WORK

The Institute implements programs and initiatives at both the policy and grassroots levels to prepare the ground for peace and in an effort to ensure that top-down diplomatic initiatives are informed by the challenges and priorities of civil society.

Supporting the Quartet on Middle East Peace: USIP contributes to the work of the Quartet (made up of the U.S., Russia, the United Nations, and the European Union) on strengthening the Palestinian justice system and developing an effective security sector. The Institute advises a range of Palestinian officials and stakeholders and international actors, including the U.S. Security Coordinator, the Quartet Representative, donor governments, and the European Union Police Mission in the Palestinian Territories.

Enhancing Capacity of the Palestinian Conflict Resolution Field: USIP is training Palestinian peacebuilding practitioners, in order to enhance their capacity to facilitate inter- and intra-group dialogues, community meetings, and training workshops, and to build a cadre of trainers who can further this work in the long term. The goal is to empower the peacebuilding field to increase its tangible and measureable impact, and to bolster the international community's investment in such initiatives.

Bridging Internal Divides to Broaden Support for Peace: USIP supports and guides a series of initiatives to stem the growing polarization within Israeli and Palestinian societies, a trend that poses a significant obstacle to peace. These projects reach beyond the typical "peace movement," to expand the circle of those pursuing peace. In Israel, these initiatives have engaged Muslim and Jewish religious leaders who have broad legitimacy within their own communities in dialogue and joint action with each other, as well as with influential political and thought leaders from the opposite side of the ideological spectrum, with the aim of fostering sustained, facilitated dialogues about the pursuit of Middle East peace.

Policy-Relevant Research and Analysis: Between 2009 and 2014, the bipartisan Senior Working Group on Middle East Peace, co-chaired by former National Security Advisors Stephen Hadley and Samuel Berger, regularly convened a panel of top scholars, former negotiators, and former members of Congress to develop innovative ideas related to U.S. diplomatic engagement in the Arab-Israeli peace process. The group shared and discussed its proposals with senior U.S. government officials.

USIP GRANTS

USIP provides grants to projects that promote peacebuilding and conflict resolution through initiatives in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. Active and recent grants include:

Kids4Peace (K4P) will evaluate the resilience and related lasting impact of participants' transformative experiences in their ongoing youth-focused peacebuilding; analyze what barriers prevent participants from taking further action to advocate for peace; then identify sources of support for participants; and share findings with the broader community of peacebuilders. K4P will draw on its 1,000 alumni, including parents and educators, who have engaged in the organization's six years of dialogue, community-building, and education for interfaith youth from Jerusalem and surrounding areas of the West Bank.

Middle East Education through Technology (MEET) will further its work empowering the next generation of young Israeli and Palestinian socially-minded entrepreneurs through technology, computer science, business skills, and leadership training. The bi-national network of young leaders will work together to find technology-based solutions to solve common problems facing their communities.

The Givat Haviva Center for Shared Society will bring together municipal leaders and civil society leaders of neighboring Jewish and Arab communities in Israel to create inter-community mechanisms that facilitate coordinated or joint responses to common needs, goals, and interests across a variety of sectors. The program aims to build the structures and relationships necessary to connect communities in Israel that are otherwise divided by increasing tension and mutual alienation.

Search for Common Ground will address interreligious tensions in Jerusalem by establishing a coalition of leaders to monitor and protect both minority populations and their holy sites on Mount Zion. The Jerusalem Forum on Religious Security will facilitate regular collaboration among religious, security, municipal, and national government stakeholders to explore solutions to addressing religious tensions on Mount Zion and Jerusalem more broadly.

Ta'awon for Conflict Resolution will work with the Palestinian Ministry of Religious Affairs and university faculty in the south and central West Bank to build the peacebuilding capacity of religious leaders and faculty. This training program will focus on tolerance and peace education to give leaders the tools and skills necessary to counter narratives that support violent conflict or extremism. The project also aims to raise the profile of moderate Islam in the West Bank to counter the spread of radicalism through the use of social media and public forums.

Arab Society-Police Relations: This project of the Abraham Fund Initiatives enhanced police practice in Israel through the development of training programs and relevant curricular materials on methods of policing that prevent conflict and build trust in divided societies. The project has developed models of participation and cooperation, and frameworks for dialogue and partnership between the police and Arab communities in Israel.

USIP PUBLICATIONS

USIP's staff and experts publish in-depth reports, as well as short, timely policy briefs, that distill expert research, lessons learned and problem-solving solutions to advance peacebuilding. Publications on this topic include:

The Peace Puzzle: America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace 1989-2011 (2013): Daniel C. Kurtzer, Scott B. Lasensky, William B. Quandt, Steven L. Spiegel, Shibley Z. Telhami. This book is the product of USIP's Study Group on Arab-Israeli Peacemaking, which convened some of America's most experienced authorities in that field. Informed by in-depth interviews with more than 120 policymakers, diplomats, academics, and civil society figures, it provides an objective account of the role of the United States in the peace process.

Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace (2007): Daniel C. Kurtzer and Scott B. Lasensky. This volume is designed as a tool for practitioners and scholars alike, as it assesses the role of U.S. diplomacy in the Arab-Israeli conflict arena since the end of the Cold War, and offers a set of ten core lessons to guide the efforts of future American negotiators.