



By
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Annuling Israel's Annexation Threat

An International Responsibility

The Israeli annexation of the Jordan Valley, or any other part of Palestine, means the end of any negotiated solution. Despite the Trump administration's continuous encouragement to Israel to move ahead with annexation, the international position is unified in rejecting such a creeping Israeli violation. Most importantly, several countries are breaking the taboo of referring to sanctions against Israel due to its systematic violations of international law that further threaten peace and security in Palestine, Israel, and the entire Middle East. Understanding what annexation fundamentally connotes is critical to driving a genuine and concrete international action towards the achievement of peace.

Above all, it is necessary to put things into context. The current discussion and statements made by several members of the international community may make some people think that Israel has thus far respected its obligations under international law and that it will only cease to do so once it declares annexation. This is clearly not the case: Israel annexed East Jerusalem during the first years of its colonial occupation and has throughout its time as an occupying power been systematically violating its obligations under international law, international human rights law, and UN resolutions. In fact, we only agreed to enter the peace process when Israel accepted that Jerusalem was also a final status issue.

The annexation of any further part of Palestine is about expanding Israel's colonial settlement enterprise and further shrinking the Palestinian space. It is about Israel's theft of our land and natural resources and the imposition of further restrictions on Palestine's present and future. Every inch of land is pivotal for the development and prosperity of the independent State of Palestine, including building roads, bridges, homes, universities and academic institutions, scientific centers, hospitals, factories, an airport, and more. The Jordan Valley case clearly illustrates Israel's intent behind annexation as well as the impossibility of a sovereign State of Palestine, and thus any political solution.

The Palestinian side of the Jordan Valley represents 28.5 percent of the occupied State of Palestine (1,600 km²), where Israel allows Israeli companies and 11,000 of its illegal settlers to exploit Palestinian agricultural land and natural

resources. Since the early days of the occupation, Israel defined its capture of this significant part of Palestine as strategic for its colonial ambitions. The Jordan Valley is Palestine's breadbasket, with a unique climate, water resources, and fertile soil, as well as its only border with Jordan. It contains several archeological and pilgrimage sites, including Qumran, Al-Maghtas, the Baptism site, Deir Hijleh, and the Dead Sea, considered one of the natural wonders of the world. Israel's annexation plan is about ensuring the permanency of its exploitation of Palestinian assets and wealth.

any obstacles, including within the territory of Israel's leading trade partner, the European Union. So far, Israel has survived the chorus of international condemnations, knowing that no concrete actions would be taken to hold it accountable.

Is it possible then to mark a change by preventing Israel's current threat? Yes. In fact, the evident disastrous scenario of annexation cannot be deterred without urgent international action.

For example, Jordan's firm opposition to annexation has served to make



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Regarding tourism alone, for the past 53 years of its occupation, Israel has been allowed to steal substantial revenues through its control over the Jordan Valley, mainly the Dead Sea. Products from Israeli settlements in the area, from cosmetics to dates and herbs, are commonly traded in international markets without

Israel realize that, this time, at least some of its strategic interests are going to be harmed due to its utter disregard for the basic principles of a just and peaceful solution. Among the main projects to be damaged by Israel's annexation in the Jordan Valley is the "Red Sea – Dead Sea" plan that aims to save the Dead Sea from extinction and provide Jordan,



Photo courtesy of Khaled Ammar.

Israel, and Palestine with crucial benefits. This is just one aspect of how a new scenario would look if Israel insists on moving ahead with its destructive plans.

Curbing the current Israeli threat is not only about annulling annexation to merely go back to the status quo of Israel's colonial-settlement expansion, which is defined as "de facto" annexation. It is instead an opportunity to regain the initiative in favor of a just and lasting peace by dismantling Israel's illegal colonial-settlement enterprise and

putting an end to its occupation. The international community has the responsibility to employ international law in ensuring the realization of the long-overdue inalienable rights of the people of Palestine, who deserve no less. Those who are genuinely concerned and committed to peace must move in that direction.

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