

# A Land for All submission to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee Enquiry on the conflict in Israel and Palestine

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## Introduction to the authors

This submission has been authored by an informal network of A Land for All supporters in the UK who can provide more detailed information on request. The network includes:

- Professor Jonathan Roiser is Professor of Neuroscience and Mental Health at University College London
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Dr Rula Hardal, co-CEO of A Land for All in Israel/Palestine, also authored the submission.

## Submission

1. Both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians believe their national identity and right to self-determination is best realised through a nation-state. The question, therefore, for all those who remain committed to a sovereign Palestinian state existing alongside a sovereign Israeli state is *how can two states be enabled to work?*
2. Proposals for a resolution to the Israel/Palestine conflict have, at least since the 1993 Oslo Accords, adopted a model of self-determination for both peoples within separate sovereign nation-states (the 'two-state solution'). From all perspectives, the 'Westphalian' model of two states seems more at odds than ever with the new reality and is less plausible and less feasible than it was in 1993. The model does not fit the current reality, does not resolve significant deadlocks (such as Jerusalem, settlements, military control, or the right of return) and does not include an end vision for the final status of a sovereign Palestinian state. What support remained in the region and across the world for the two-state solution has been sorely tested by the events of October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and the ensuing war in Gaza and the region.
3. *The [A Land for All \(ALFA\)](#) initiative* is an update of the two-state model adapted to the realities on the ground. The update incorporates the rights of both peoples to self-determination and, importantly, the unavoidable truth that both peoples consider their homeland to be a single unit and have a strong attachment to this space. The integrative model responds to the intertwined reality of living and sharing the homeland together by developing a second essential component to the two-state model: a mechanism for shared institutions and a confederation. ALFA (also known as Two States, One

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<sup>1</sup> The ALFA vision is longstanding; it was developed over a decade ago following a series of meetings with diverse groups of Israelis and Palestinians. Over the past two years, this movement has grown significantly as a policy, research and advocacy organisation in Israel and Palestine. It is jointly led by May Pundak (a Jewish Israeli) and Dr. Rula Hardal (a Palestinian), two women dedicated to developing and championing shared futures.

Homeland) offers fresh thinking through a vision of shared sovereignty whereby relations between the two states are enshrined, managed, and negotiated<sup>1</sup>.

4. ALFA believes that peace, security and stability for all people in Israel/Palestine passes through two independent states, within a framework that allows members of both nations to travel, live and work throughout a shared homeland. The vision has three tenets:
  - a. *Independence*: Israel and Palestine will be two independent, sovereign states with complete control over their territory, with a border drawn broadly according to the lines of June 4, 1967. Both states will be democracies, with governance based on the rule of law, recognition of universal human rights as accepted in international law, equality, liberty, respect for the rights of minorities, and the sanctity of human life.
  - b. *Mutual respect and recognition*: Both states will respect the deep connection of Palestinians and Israelis to the land in its entirety. Both states will commit to the vision of a land where citizens of both countries have the basic right to travel, work, and live anywhere, achieved by distinguishing *citizenship* from *residency*. Borders will be managed, not completely open, and movement will be conditioned by economic and security realities.
  - c. *Partnership*: The two states will establish a shared superstructure of effective, joint institutions based on equality. This shared superstructure will allow the two states to work together in areas requiring collaboration and individually on matters they decide are better run independently. These shared institutions would address security, civil and socio-economic rights, economic issues, environmental protection, and climate change.
5. ALFA's vision of a shared framework and innovative proposals, such as the distinction between citizenship and residency, addresses the conflict's most intractable issues. For example:
  - a. The State of Palestine will have the sovereign power to grant Palestinian refugees citizenship of Palestine;
  - b. Citizens of the Palestinian state would be eligible for residency status in Israel and have all the rights conferred by such status, including the right to vote for local authorities;
  - c. Israeli settlements will cease to exist as a political and legal construct that supports Israeli privilege and will be converted into communities under full Palestinian sovereignty;
  - d. Israeli citizens, including those currently living in West Bank settlements, will be able to live freely and safely in the independent Palestinian state (provided they accept the sovereignty of the State of Palestine and respect its laws) by being eligible for residency status and enjoying all the rights conferred by such status, including the right to vote for local authorities;
  - e. Both Israel and Palestine would share sovereignty over the entire (undivided) Jerusalem, which would serve as the capital of the two states<sup>2</sup>.
6. ALFA's [vision paper](#) provides detailed explanations of how this could work in practice and workable solutions to previously intractable issues, including the status of Jerusalem, security, health, and water management. Whilst the model still requires some further elaboration, discussion and engagement with stakeholders, it is increasingly gaining traction in the region and here in the UK amongst supporters of the two-state solution and others who seek equal rights for Palestinians and Israelis residing in all of the

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<sup>2</sup> This is a similar constitutional arrangement to that which exists in Belgium, whereby Brussels serves as the capital city for both the French and Flemish populations.

territory. A model that recognises the interdependence of Israelis and Palestinians and aims to build upon it as the foundation of a political vision will not be achieved overnight; negotiations between two equal and recognised states would need to take place to agree on formal mechanisms over time.

7. The UK is well-placed to continue playing a leading role in ending the war and contributing to a long-term political vision. After the economic growth and employment provided during any rebuilding of Gaza, the only sustainable and viable future is an economic union between Israel and a Palestinian State. In this regard, ALFA offers a plausible and feasible vision for political, social and economic cooperation. Two sovereign states within a shared homeland might seem impossible to imagine at such a time of immense suffering. However, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and the ensuing catastrophic war demonstrated the failure of a security model based on separation and division. By contrast, areas characterised by greater interdependence and security cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians, such as the West Bank, have not seen the kind of threat to Israel posed by Hamas in Gaza.
8. Recent history of conflict resolution – particularly cases in which the UK played a critical role – indicates that where there is ethnic conflict, territorial disputes, and movements for self-determination, a sustainable peace derives from a model based on some degree of federated power or shared sovereignty (e.g. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Ireland). Proposals for a resolution to the Israel/Palestine conflict have, at least since the Oslo Accords, adopted a model of self-determination for both peoples within segregated sovereign nation-states: what the political scientist Iris Marion Young termed ‘self-determination as self-government’ whereby ‘people dwell together in a relatively large territory in which only members of their group reside, and this homogenous territory is contiguous and bounded’ (2005:140). The UK needs to move beyond this outdated model. We believe that the ALFA vision embodies core values, such as sovereignty, democracy and equality, that are aligned with our own in the UK. Given that this enquiry seeks to understand practically what the UK can do to support a long-term and sustainable peace, we urge UK policymakers to engage with the ALFA proposal.

*31<sup>st</sup> December 2024*