

## Opinion | Thanks to Its Regime, Israel Is Losing the Justification For its existence

The abandonment of its citizens in captivity in favor of pursuing the messianic ideology of the radical right, in addition to the rampant repression of government critics, has rendered Israel a failed state

Michael Sfard Feb 18, 2025 1:59 pm IST 🔔 Follow

Israel is steadily losing the justification for its existence. From a democratic and humanistic perspective, a state isn't an end in itself, but rather a means to realize the rights of its citizens and subjects. Much like a cooperative, the state owns nothing of its own; everything it has belongs to its members, and all its powers derive from them.

A state is a political entity meant to serve human beings. If it fails to do so, especially if it worsens their situation, the justification for its existence evaporates.

There are states whose regimes undermine this purpose, states that only serve the ruling class, that exploit those who don't belong to it and are indifferent to the welfare of their subjects. These are corrupt, criminal states, like a bank that steals its customers' funds.

There's no justification for their existence. Any flirtation with the concept of the state as an end in itself – as an entity with its own purpose rather than as a means – is a dangerous flirtation with fascism. It may seem innocent at

first, but it ultimately leads to gulags where regime opponents are imprisoned.

The goal of a state that claims to be democratic is to create a legal, political, cultural, economic and security environment that enables its subjects to realize their talents, freely author their own life stories, fully exercise their autonomy and pursue their happiness. Such an environment is only possible on a normative basis that sanctifies fundamental freedoms, human dignity and equality.

That's why human rights and democracy are inseparable. There can be no true democracy without a governance system which has the protection of the fundamental rights of every individual under the state's authority at its core. Likewise, there are no human rights without a political structure founded on democratic values such as an elected legislator, separation of powers and the rule of law applied equally to all. It should be that simple. It should be what children are taught in first grade. But that's not what's happening around us, and it's not what our children are being taught in schools.

The Israeli project purported to establish a liberal democracy, but today, it is far from that ideal and continues to move swiftly in the opposite direction with each passing day.

The lofty ideals of the essence of the state – shaped by the French and American revolutions, through the lessons of World War II, the creation of the United Nations, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – have been replaced by the dark tenets of hatred, racism, silencing dissent and the concentration of power by the ruling coalition. Any

honest assessment of the current Israeli reality would struggle to find a justification for its existence as a state. Let's take a look at some of Israel's defining characteristics.

As of 2025, Israel is led by a government that forsakes its citizens. This has been said a thousand times before, but I'll say it my way: We have a government that failed to prevent the abduction of citizens from their beds, and a year and four months later – when it's clear they are starving, beaten, and enduring unimaginable abuse in Gaza – this same government is attempting to sabotage a deal that could free them.

There may be legitimate reasons to oppose a hostage deal under certain conditions, but the sabotage of the deal unfolding before our eyes isn't driven by concerns for Israel's security. Instead, it's designed to serve the messianic and colonial fantasies of the radical right and to ensure the political survival of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

If that weren't the case, we would've been told explicitly that the government has no intention of expelling the Palestinians from Gaza and resettle the Strip. But we're told the opposite. As long as it depends on the Israeli government, therefore, the remaining living hostages are doomed to die in agony to fulfill Finance Minister [Bezalel Smotrich](#)'s dream of becoming the Nebuchadnezzar of Gaza – expelling its inhabitants and establishing settlements there.

Our hostages will continue to endure hunger and torture in dark basements and tunnels so that Netanyahu can remain at the Prime Minister's residence on Balfour Street in

Jerusalem. This unfathomable betrayal alone is enough to undermine the primary justification for Israel's existence: the protection of its citizens and the social solidarity that ensures every citizen will be cared for, especially in extreme circumstances, when harmed by enemies.

The Israeli regime of 2025 suppresses criticism. When my parents shared with me their experiences in communist Poland, where the regime canceled theater performances, censored books and imprisoned those who dared criticize it, I counted myself fortunate to have been born in a country where none of this occurred. Well, it's happening now. It has always happened to Palestinians, on both sides of the so-called Green Line. Now, it's happening to everyone and it's happening big-time.

The management of a school in Tzur Hadassah, near Jerusalem, canceled a lecture by author [Shoham Smith](#) because she sharply criticized Israel's actions in Gaza. The Knesset is advancing a bill that would prohibit the legal use of the term "West Bank," requiring us to use "Judea and Samaria" instead. Last week, the police raided a bookstore in East Jerusalem and arrested its owners because the books there weren't considered Zionist enough.

This has all happened in recent days. Pro-democracy protesters, as well as those advocating for a cease-fire and a hostage deal, are arrested daily by the same police and state prosecution which turn a blind eye to the incitement to war crimes, crimes against humanity and [even genocide](#) – all of which have become commonplace.

[The Israeli regime hates one-fifth of its citizens, Palestinian citizens of Israel.](#) It discriminates against them and enacts

policies and practices aimed at keeping them away from centers of power. Every cubic centimeter of Israeli air screams at them that they don't belong, that they're here conditionally. From the delegitimization of their political representatives to the indifference toward the wave of murders in Arab towns, to the Nation-State Law, the message is clear: Of all the identity markers a person can have in Israel, the best predictor of whether a child will grow up to be an influential citizen in any field – economic, cultural, social and, of course, political – is their national affiliation. Jews – yes, Arabs – not really.

Israel is a racist state, it supports ethnic cleansing, devours its critics, harbors contempt for its non-Jewish citizens and shows no compassion for its innocent civilians who have been taken hostage. It's like a bank that robs its clients and then incites against them. What justification remains for its existence?

**Click the alert icon to follow topics:**

 [Zionism](#)    [Gaza](#)    [Israeli politics](#)    [Jewish nation-state](#)