

The Palestinian Position

Palestinian rejection of recent “offers” reflects the fact that even the most minimal versions of Israel’s long-standing annexation plans fall far short of Palestinian needs and are unacceptable as they clearly subordinate legitimate Palestinian interests and the contiguity of their state as well as control over their natural resources to Israeli interests. Not only represent the West Bank and Gaza Strip already a painful territorial compromise - merely 22% of historical Palestine - the recent proposals also impose parameters prioritizing the legitimization, maintenance and expansion of Israel’s illegal settlement policies.

In both the proposed ‘land swap’ and the Jerusalem ‘scheme’, Israeli contiguity, integrity and territorial domination override Palestinian needs and rights; the latter creating isolated Palestinian islands within the city, the former supposing the ‘exchange’ of land at a rate of 6% for 1-3%, an equation which reflects the spirit of the ‘offers’ and indicates the unacceptable extent of the intended and ongoing domination of the Israeli state over the Palestinian people.

The following two maps illustrate why the Palestinians object strongly to an annexation of 6% of the West Bank.

Roughly half of the intended annexation is made up of the so-called “Shomron Bloc” of settlements anchored by Ariel, Emanuel, Alfe Menashe and Elkana. This bloc would carve a deep indent into the northern West Bank, cutting three quarters of the Qalqilya district off from its main city, on which it relies for public services, employment and the trade. The main Palestinian highway to the west, leading from Ramallah to Qalqilya and Tulkarem, would run dead at the village of Rantis, leaving only the Nablus-Jerusalem highway for through traffic. Palestinians will also be subjected to the annexation of the open areas within the Shomron Bloc, where Israel today monopolizes exclusive control over the vital national water resources that can be tapped from there. In all, the intended annexation would adversely affect the livelihood of round four times as many Palestinian citizens as the number of settlers residing in the blocs.

