

## The Land with Two Names

Written by Michael James Fares

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Every day more lives are lost in the country some call Israel and some call Palestine. Israeli gunfire kills Palestinians everyday, many of whom are small children or young teenagers who still have their lives ahead of them. The Israelis suffer similar casualties on a daily basis due to Palestinian attacks. Many innocent lives on both sides are continually at stake.

Although far easier said than done, I believe in the possibility of peaceful co-existence between the Israelis and Palestinians. The first thing that should be done is to educate the world, especially America, about the situation. It shocks me that, even in the most heated political arguments, I hardly ever hear this issue discussed. It should not be a subject people avoid talking about simply because it is too controversial. Talking to one another affords us an opportunity to become better informed and to shed off the prejudices and misconceptions which many of us have about either the Palestinians or the Israelis. If we are unable to get rid of our biases and unable to objectively consider this problem from all angles, then every effort we make to resolve the problem will be doomed to failure.



Unfortunately, most of the American media incorrectly portrays the Palestinians as malicious terrorists who hate the West and are out to kill the Israelis. In viewing the Palestinians this way, we are only sustaining the problem we are trying to solve. Not all Palestinians are terrorists. Those of them who are joining resistance groups are doing so because they see fighting back as the only way to salvage much of what they have lost. For many, fighting has become the only feasible means by which to make any improvement in their extremely difficult lives. The Palestinians do not have living conditions equal to those of the Israelis. Furthermore, many innocent Palestinians have lost homes, jobs, friends, and family members due to the Israeli occupation and Israeli attacks. It is illogical to think that somebody in a situation like the Palestinians find themselves in would simply just sit and do nothing. It is difficult to blame someone for joining a militant organization if that person has lived in an environment of violence, destruction, hopelessness, and fear, since the day he or she was born.

The Arab side of the coin is not much different than that the Western side. Many Arabs, much like we in the West tend to view the Palestinians, see the Israelis as heartless and inhumane murderers. This is incorrect. Not every Israeli seeks to make life for the Palestinians unbearable. Many Israelis are nothing more than people who have made settlements and are trying to live their lives in peace. Their fears of intermittent, unpredictable, and often extremely violent Palestinian attacks are completely legitimate.

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