



[Israel's President Visits the United Arab Emirates as Social Justice Activists Lament the Normalization of Relations at the Expense of Palestinians](#)

President Isaac Herzog is the latest high-level member of the Israeli government to visit the United Arab Emirates, as activists have lamented the normalization of relations which have taken place at the expense of social justice for Palestinians. Impartial analysts have conveyed justifiable criticism toward the so-called Abraham Accords, pointing out that the United Arab Emirates and others who signed on broke with the longstanding position that fair Israeli concessions must first be made to Palestinians in order to ensure substantial and concrete advancements in the peace process. They have also expressed that the deal merely formalized already existing Israeli ties with autocratic governments in the region, and the legitimate concern that it serves to solidify the status quo and the universally-condemned illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. Additionally, the majority of citizens in Arab countries do not support diplomatic normalization with Israel until Palestinian rights are secured but because of the repressive nature of many of the regimes, public opinion often has little effect on policy. Activists have voiced their frustration with the disregard of their governments to the plight of Palestinians and tried to draw attention to how the Abraham Accords have in actuality played a role in this as well.

When the Abraham Accords were first signed back in 2020, it was touted by then-U.S. President Donald Trump as a big step in advancing peace, despite the fact that Israel received formal normalization with several Arab governments for nothing. They promised no real policies to improve the lives of Palestinians. In fact, Israeli human rights abuses against Palestinians have only continued. In May of 2021, roughly 9 months after the signing of the accords, Israel engaged in heinous and indiscriminate airstrikes on Gaza. These resulted in the death of 200 people and another 1,000 or more injured in the Palestinian territory, and disturbingly included at least 59 child fatalities. Furthermore, illegal Israeli settlements and land seizures against Palestinians have persisted. Israel has also violated basic Palestinian rights by forcibly displacing families from their generational homes, raiding sites like the Al-Aqsa Mosque with rubber bullets and smoke bombs, and enabling violent attacks against Palestinians by Israeli settlers and far-right groups.

The public disdain in the Arab world toward Israel's behavior and actions is evident. A recent Arab Opinion Index poll conducted in 13 countries across the region found that 88% rejected the idea of normalizing with Israel under the existing conditions and 79% said Palestine remains a major concern for all Arabs. Unfortunately, however, autocratic leaders place no weight on these factors. A satirical song, entitled "Dubai, Dubai," by Israeli comedian Noam Shuster-Eliassi also delivered biting criticism of how Israel and the United Arab Emirates have normalized relations at the expense of justice for Palestinians. The song brought renewed international attention to the abandonment of the Palestinian cause by many Arab leaders in the region.

The Abraham Accords also reinforce the dangerous phenomena of the United States coordinating with authoritarian governments. It legitimizes them on the world stage and further entrenches their oppression, with the major beneficiaries seeming to be the governments of the signing countries and arms manufacturers. Former U.S. President Trump used the agreement to falsely claim that he had advanced the peace process in the Middle East, and former Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu unsuccessfully tried to use it as a distraction from his mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic. In the end, no concrete progress has truly been made to secure just and lasting peace, and this will continue to be the case until Palestinians are treated as equal citizens by the state of Israel.