



## **Israeli foreign policy experts: Palestinian reconciliation can be good for Israel**

**24 April 2014**

**The Fatah-Hamas reconciliation agreement is being harshly condemned by Israeli government officials, including the Prime Minister himself. However, Israeli foreign policy experts from [Mitvim - The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies](#), are viewing things differently. While acknowledging the difficulties involved in the actual implementation of this agreement, they assess that Palestinian reconciliation has the potential to be a positive development for Israel and the peace process.**

This paper includes quotes on Palestinian reconciliation from Mitvim Institute experts **Dr. Nimrod Goren, Prof. Moshe Ma'oz, Dr. Ido Zelkovitz and Gabriel Mitchell**, including links to their op-eds and interviews on the topic.

**Dr. Nimrod Goren:** “The split between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is one of the largest obstacles to the two-state solution. Even the Israeli peace camp cannot provide a convincing explanation of how a final-status agreement can be implemented with only the West Bank on board. When Israel does eventually agree to make historic compromises on core issues, it will want to make sure the entire Palestinian leadership agrees that the conflict is over. Israel should stop rejecting the prospect of Palestinian reunification and start actively lobbying its Western allies to be engaged in the Palestinian reconciliation process, as to ensure that Israel’s interests are also taken into consideration.”

Read more: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.565039>

**Prof. Moshe Ma'oz:** “This is an opportunity to reach an agreement with the entire Palestinian people, if they will recognize Israel and condemn terror. This is what Israel declares all along that it wants. The PLO, too, used to be a terror organization. With Hamas, a religious organization, the transformation will be more difficult, but Hamas is currently in a weak position. Israel should not condemn the reconciliation agreement. What other alternative do we have? To keep fighting for another 50 years? We are a strong country that can be more flexible on this issue and that should give this opportunity a chance.”

Hear more, in Hebrew (beginning at 34:45):

<http://www.iba.org.il/bet/player.aspx#!/style/popAudio/ar/1492787/audio/yes>



**Dr. Ido Zerkovitz:** “The Israeli right-wing has claimed that there is no use in signing a peace agreement with Mahmoud Abbas because he represents only part of the Palestinian people. The reconciliation agreement can put Abbas in a different position in which he will hold all the cards. Israel should not be concerned about this agreement, and should treat the Palestinian reconciliation process as an opportunity, rather than a threat. It would be wrong to put an ultimatum to the PLO, whereby it is required to choose between negotiations with Israel and rapprochement with Hamas. Stability in the Palestinian political system can work in Israel’s favor, and if reconciliation is actually reached, any political process led by Abbas with Israel would also bind Hamas.”

Read more, in Hebrew: <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4512641,00.html>, and in English: <http://www.i24news.tv/en/opinion/130819-op-ed-ido-zerkovitz>

**Gabriel Mitchell:** “Assuming that an Israeli-Palestinian deal can be struck only with the Palestinian Authority and one can wait out Hamas (or that Palestinians will gradually accept a three-state solution) is in fact dangerous. The most beneficial thing for peace is that the Palestinians get on the same page and negotiate with Israel directly. Unity amongst the Palestinians - though strategically not as convenient for Israeli negotiators - must happen in order for a final status agreement to be reached. Do not be fooled by the rhetoric that Israel can't negotiate with actors who call for its destruction. It has in the past, it will in the future.”

Read more: <http://mideastinsider.com/israels-knee-jerk-reaction-palestinian-unity/>

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