Do You Really Know the Reality of the Conflict?

Annexation is advancing on the ground, and Israel prefers not to talk about it

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Throughout 2026, the gap widened between the conflict discussed in Israel and the reality the Israeli government is creating. Public discourse returned to security management, wars, hostages, the conscription law, coalition crises and the approaching elections. It seemed as though the Israeli–Palestinian conflict had been put on hold, awaiting quieter days. Yet nothing is on hold on the ground. On the contrary: the process of de facto annexation is accelerating, becoming institutionalized and gradually moving from the ideological fringes into the machinery of the state.

Data from the Tamrur–Politography research group illustrate the depth of this disconnect. Of 1,175 posts by party leaders addressing the conflict, 1,102 focused on the status quo. Only 37 addressed two states, 33 annexation and three separation. In the Knesset, too, 1,998 relevant speeches were analyzed, of which 1,589 were classified within the status quo framework. Although the opposition frequently attacks the government, it does so mainly over its failures in managing the situation, rather than its lack of an alternative political objective.

The press does not correct this distortion. Of 2,156 front-page headlines examined across four newspapers, only 12 explicitly addressed a strategic direction—two states, separation, annexation or continuation of the status quo. Even in June, when coverage of the West Bank and settlers increased, it accounted for just 2.3% of headlines. Moreover, coverage is fragmented across separate communities: Haaretz accounted for 63% of headlines about the West Bank and settlers and 84% of those about the humanitarian crisis, while other newspapers presented their readers with an entirely different agenda. Each audience receives a different version of the conflict, making a shared public debate about its direction difficult.

“Status quo,” however, is a misleading term. It describes the discourse, not the reality. In the second quarter, the government adopted two decisions advancing de facto annexation, the boundaries of eight new Israeli settlements were formally established, and the transfer of planning powers and influence from the military command to Israeli government ministries and civilian bodies continued. The legal index measuring the West Bank’s movement toward integration into Israel reached an average of 3.25 out of 5—the highest in the past three years. This marks a shift from administering a territory on what is supposed to be a temporary basis to gradually incorporating it into the Israeli system.

The annexation camp’s advantage does not necessarily stem from its size, but from its ability to translate an idea into policy. On social media, 87.2% of posts addressing annexation supported it. The discourse has become less emotional and more operational: territorial planning, establishing settlements and creating facts on the ground. By contrast, 63.1% of

posts addressing two states supported that solution, but this community currently lacks political and institutional representation comparable to that of the annexation camp. Consequently, one side debates while the other acts.

Attitudes among the Jewish public also reflect this shift. Unilateral annexation is the single option commanding the most support—30%. Support for two states has fallen from 47% in 2018 to just 21%, while annexation and the status quo together command 55%. Even a regional alliance does not change the picture: 56% support it in principle, but only 20% support two states within that framework. The public wants the benefits of regional cooperation without paying the political price required on the Palestinian front.

The picture on the Palestinian side is more complex. In a survey conducted in the West Bank in September 2025, 52% preferred two states, with support rising to 75% when a comprehensive agreement package was presented. Negotiations were preferred by 43%, compared with 17% who supported armed struggle. At the same time, 54% rejected Israel's right to exist, and support for a negotiated settlement was much lower among young people. This is not a "moderate" Palestinian camp in any straightforward sense, but a combination of pragmatic willingness to reach an agreement with trauma, distrust and denial of legitimacy.

The greatest danger is not merely the absence of negotiations. It is becoming accustomed to a reality in which no formal political decision is made, yet a practical decision is taken every day. Israelis are growing accustomed to security management accompanied by cumulative annexation; Palestinians are growing accustomed to an ongoing struggle without a political horizon. This is not how the status quo is preserved. It is how the question of the land's future is gradually being decided—without public debate, without an explicit democratic decision and without serious examination of the price Israel will be required to pay.