

The Jewish Democratic Initiative Newsletter

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THE SHTICK

South Africa | Israel-Palestine | Democracy



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Dr. David Shiffman 
@WhySharksMatter

I can't imagine what it's currently like being friends with Kamala Harris's Jewish mother-in-law, either. "Oh your son married a nice girl from the neighborhood? That's nice Leah, have I told you that my son married the Vice President?"

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2020 in Review

by Basil Dubb, JDI Chairperson

"What has happened over time is that many of us have difficulty relating to the prevailing myth – the ethos of our own community as portrayed by the established bodies. We struggle to connect to the prevailing narrative. The story of who we are, where we are from and where we are going. In other words where we belong today. Why do we feel that the narrative has drifted so far away from our values and our experience that we no longer belong to it? What should we, can we, do to change things? JDI is part of that response."

CLICK FOR FULL ARTICLE: <https://www.jdisa.org/media/2020-in-review-by-basil-dubb-chairperson-jdi>

South African Jewish Youth and Democracy

Extract from State of Jewish Democracy Event by Eden Plein

"This is the crux of it, in my estimation: On the right there are young people who are supported to take up roles in community leadership but because of the national landscape, would prefer to be in Israel or perhaps even the US or UK. On the left, there are young people that have been alienated from processes of representation at the community level and but would most likely want to stay in South Africa. This is of course a generalisation.

Ultimately I suppose that this suggests that the question of freedom of opinion on Israel is inseparable from freedom of speech in our community, and the contingent nature of freedom of speech is creating a situation where a very particular kind of person is welcome to sit at the table of Jewish community leadership, with others who might diverge from the narrative being passively disqualified."

CLICK FOR FULL ARTICLE: www.jdisa.org/media/south-african-jewish-youth-and-democracy

The Legal Angle: Vaccination Under Occupation

extract from Jewish Currents. [Click here for full article.](#)

"Israel is responsible for the millions of lives of those under occupation—it is as simple as that," said Michael Sfard, a leading Israeli human rights lawyer. Article 56 of the Fourth Geneva Convention—one of the pillars of international humanitarian law—stipulates that an occupying power is responsible for "ensuring and maintaining" public health in the occupied territories, which includes "the adoption and application of the prophylactic and preventative measures necessary to combat the spread of contagious diseases and epidemics." But that doesn't mean the Israeli government must directly vaccinate Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza or provide them the same care as it does for Israeli citizens living within the Green Line."

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Partner Organizations' Updates

J-Link Network (www.jlinknetwork.org)

[A Jewish-Arab Israeli Political Party in the making? Click for event recording](#)

Well respected Israeli political leaders in both Jewish and Arab communities have called for a Jewish/Arab party as an essential element in developing Israel's democracy. Others have warned that such an initiative could fail while negatively impacting existing pro-peace parties.

Yachad and NIF (www.yachad.org.uk) (www.nif.org)

[Covid-19 vaccine access in the occupied Palestinian territories. Click for recording](#)

With conflicting media reports, some suggesting Israel is ignoring Palestinians in its vaccination programme, and others claiming that the Palestinian Authority rejected Israeli help, we have invited a panel of experts to address what is actually happening on the ground.

From Our Socials



Israel, the Palestinians, and the Covid-19 Vaccine



Israel has vaccinated around 25% of its citizens, including Palestinian-Israeli citizens within Israel, permanent residents of annexed East Jerusalem and illegal West Bank settlers. Over 160,000 Palestinians in the occupied territories have tested positive.

The UN, the WHO and human rights bodies have called on Israel to provide vaccines to the Palestinian Authority who control parts of the West Bank.

Israel claims that the Oslo Accords (1995) assert that the burden falls on the Palestinian authority however the Accords equally expected a peaceful resolution to the Occupation within 5 years of signing. **The Oslo Accords cannot be used as an excuse to avoid an Occupier's responsibility under International Law.**

The Hague Regulations of 1907 states that an occupying force, must "...restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force..."

The Palestinian authorities' responsibility to protect the health of Palestinians in areas they control does not absolve Israel's international law responsibilities. Particularly in areas fully controlled by Israel.

The PA are working independently to acquire vaccines, though funds and access are limited. The Palestinian Health Ministry has approved the purchase of the Russian vaccine and are in communication with the WHO, COVAX and AstraZeneca as potential sources of supply.

Between the movement of the IDF in the occupied West Bank, and over 130,000 Palestinians working in both settlements and Israel proper, **not vaccinating Palestinians is a risk not only to Palestinians, but to Israeli citizens too.**

The State of Israel has both a moral and legal obligation to provide vaccinations for all people residing in the areas it controls – including Gaza and the entire West Bank.

For more info on Israeli-Palestinian health care:

Physicians for Human Rights ([physicians_for_human_rights_il](https://www.phr.org/)); **Project Rozana** ([@projectrozanainternational](https://www.projectrozana.org/));

Standing Together ([@standing.together.movement](https://www.standingtogether.org/)); **World Health Organization** ([@who](https://www.who.int/))