

Introduction:

Barriers to Conflict Resolution

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The causes of the breakdown of the Oslo peace process and the violent deterioration of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that began in September 2000 have been extensively discussed in accounts written by the architects of the Oslo peace process and thoroughly analyzed in numerous academic studies. Some ascribed the failure of the peace talks to the nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an intractable, ungovernable, and insoluble conflict; others blamed the unwillingness of the parties to make the concessions necessary for reaching a settlement; still others blamed the mismanagement of the negotiations, the ill-conceived focus on an interim agreement rather than on a permanent agreement, the failure to address Israeli and Palestinian national narratives and ideas of justice and fairness, the failure of Israeli and Palestinian leaders to forge a coherent and lucid peace strategy or to garner public support for the peace process, and even the ineffective American mediation.

Between the January 2001 Taba Summit and the year 2008, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process was effectively caught in a deadlock, despite the numerous proposals that were put forward during that time, which included the Arab Peace Initiative, the Bush Initiative, the Road Map, the Nusseibeh-Ayalon Initiative, the Geneva Initiative, the Saudi peace plan, and the Annapolis Peace Conference. While many of these peace plans exhibited varying degrees of success in addressing some of the barriers that led to the breakdown of the talks, none of them fully grasped the extent of the barriers impeding the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Furthermore, these peace plans did not explore practicable strategies for neutralizing the barriers to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. After the Annapolis Peace Conference, the talks were split into two tracks: Ehud Olmert and Mahmoud Abbas on the one hand, and Tzipi Livni and Ahmed Qurei on the other. The difficulty in renewing the process since then only illustrates the difficulty of settling the conflict. Not only do most of the barriers that have

prevented its resolution in the past still exist, but they have even been exacerbated since the beginning of the process in Oslo, following the failure of the peace talks and the ensuing violence. Both the Hamas takeover of the Gaza strip and the rise to power of right-wing parties in Israel are evidence that forces on both sides have emerged that cast doubt on, or even plainly reject, a negotiated settlement of the conflict, and prefer continuing the conflict to managing it, whether intentionally or by perceived necessity.

This book calls attention to the pressing need for a thorough discussion of the barriers to a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This discussion must be directed toward the identification and characterization of the existing barriers, as well as toward an examination of the possibilities and means (if any) for addressing and overcoming those barriers. In the absence of such a debate, it is questionable whether it would be at all feasible for the various peace plans to advance toward resolution, and the circumstances would most likely leave the rival parties empty-handed once again, and on track to return to a cycle of violence. A comprehensive examination of these barriers to peace can also help assess the prospects for the success of the proposed resolutions (e.g., an interim agreement, a partial peace agreement that would not aim to end the conflict, or a comprehensive peace agreement that would end the conflict but not bring about reconciliation).

This book outlines the barriers to conflict resolution and classifies them as tangible or non-tangible factors that can prevent or undermine an agreement.¹ These barriers are a result of the nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its characteristics and history, and the relations between the parties. Barriers to the resolution of the conflict are the result of the contradictory interests of the parties on fundamental issues such as, for example, territory and borders. There are also barriers that arise from differences and contradictions between identities, values, beliefs, historical narratives, collective memories, and the myths of the parties regarding the origins and development of the conflict and the ways of managing it, as well as the feasibility of its resolution.

These barriers can be strategic, structural, or psychological. Strategic barriers relate to the security risks involved in making peace in cases where the parties are

¹ For a comprehensive discussion of barriers to conflict resolution, see Arrow, K. et al. (eds.) (1995). *Barriers to Conflict Resolution*. New York: Norton.

required to make concrete concessions (territorial). Strategic barriers may also relate to the efforts of the parties to maximize their gains at the negotiation table and to drive a hard bargain at the expense of the other side by employing hard strategies and tactics, while ignoring the need to build and maintain peace in both the immediate and long-term future.

Structural barriers are shaped by the internal political structures of the negotiating parties. Structural barriers create institutional and bureaucratic constraints that undermine the legitimacy of the peace process and its conditions, costs, and benefits. Political institutions and agents, like political elites, parties, and interest groups – and also organizations such as the military and other security agencies – may oppose the peace process for political, ideological, or security reasons. Such actors may reject those peace processes that they perceive as a threat to national and security interests. Moreover, there may be spoiling groups that violently resist any peace process that contradicts their views. Structural barriers to peace tend to become particularly powerful whenever conditions lead to confrontations between state and non-state actors or between several actors that vie for different forms of government and are influenced by vastly different arguments for the legitimacy of the peace process.

Psychological barriers are cognitive, emotional, or motivational barriers that are centered on national narratives and collective memories, and which hinder any changes in belief systems and attitudes towards the other side or towards the conflict. These psychological barriers affect the ways in which information is perceived and interpreted and add to the mistrust of the other side and of the peace process. Such barriers generate overconfidence that can impair the ability to direct the course of events. They promote exaggerated expectations for the success of realizing goals such as, for example, when they cause the negotiating parties to believe that time works on their behalf, and against their rivals. Such barriers promote the importance of absolute values – justice, fairness and equality – and undermine willingness to make concessions, to compromise, or to take risks. They undercut the need to set priorities and they warp perceptions of what is to be gained or lost (one example of this is the tendency to frame peaceful resolution of the conflict in terms of losses rather than gains). These psychological barriers obstruct the ability of each side to assess the actions and intentions of the other side correctly. They also create bias mechanisms that affect the interpretation of

each side's goals and strategies and further cause each of the negotiating sides to underestimate the commitment of the other side to resolving the conflict and making concessions. All of these barriers are interrelated and influence each other to the degree that it is sometimes difficult to separate them from one another.

This book presents groundbreaking, original research; it presents the efforts of Israeli researchers, who use a broad range of theoretical and empirical methods from a large number of disciplines, to re-examine the barriers to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This volume focuses on the unique characteristics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that give rise to the unique barriers – structural, strategic, political, psychological, historical, cultural, and religious – that prevent or hinder its resolution. The barriers to peace described in this volume are set in the deeper strata of the conflict – national identity, values, belief systems, historical narratives, and collective memory – and they underscore the fundamental differences between the two sides with regard to their understanding of both the conflict, in terms of its characteristics and components, and of the possibilities for its resolution. Although the barriers discussed in this volume have been addressed previously in various academic publications, they have never before been assembled so as to provide a comprehensive picture that reflects the complexity of the challenge that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict presents. The novelty of the present research volume is in its endeavor to suggest ways for overcoming the barriers to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a view to promoting a settlement.

This volume is composed of three main sections. The first section, consisting of three chapters, is dedicated to a discussion of psychological and sociological barriers to peace. The second section, which consists of three chapters, is concerned with barriers to peace that are rooted in Israeli and Palestinian narratives, values, cultures, religions, and perceptions of time. The third section, composed of three chapters, discusses substantive, strategic, and political barriers to peace. Admittedly, this division is somewhat artificial. Because the distinctions between the different types of barriers to peace are somewhat imprecise and undefined in both subject matter and content, the barriers are often quite similar and overlapping, and they are clearly interconnected. For example, psychological barriers can be said to be shaped by the nature of the conflict. A protracted and intractable conflict creates socio-psychological bias mechanisms, frames the

narratives and collective memories of both sides, and magnifies the cultural-religious-ideological differences between them to such a degree that these factors can actually become barriers to the resolution of the conflict. Furthermore, neither the proposed distinctions between barriers, nor their order of appearance, are in any way intended to indicate that some barriers are more “important” or “severe” than others. In fact, only a comprehensive account that includes all the barriers to peace can provide an accurate and overarching picture of the obstacles impeding the resolution of protracted and intractable conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The first chapter, “Socio-Psychological Barriers to Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: An Analysis of Jewish Israeli Society,” by Eran Halperin, Neta Oren, and Daniel Bar-Tal, posits that one of the main reasons why substantive disagreements in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have not yet been resolved – and are unlikely to be easily resolved in the future – is the existence of socio-psychological barriers that prevent the conflict from being resolved through peaceful means. These barriers reflect a range of cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes which, together with the psychological repertoire that is found on both sides of the conflict, lead to twisted, biased, and selective methods of processing information and everything else that relates to the conflict. These methods prevent the processing of new information that could contribute to the advancement of peaceful means of resolving the conflict. The analysis in this chapter is focused on the Israeli-Jewish side of the conflict. While the researchers claim that similar barriers exist on the Palestinian side as well, they contend that their decision to focus on the Israeli-Jewish perspective is based on their more intimate familiarity with Israeli-Jewish society and on their belief that Israel, given its control of the territories, wields the resources and ability to enforce a resolution to the conflict.

The first part of this chapter lays out the general conceptual framework of the socio-psychological barriers to the peaceful resolution of the conflict. These barriers include beliefs that support the conflict – both ideological and social beliefs constructed around the ethos upholding the conflict – as well as collective memories. These socio-psychological barriers further include circumstantial beliefs that are formed in a particular context, influenced by its circumstances (thus, for example, distrust of the other side’s political leader could be the result

of that leader's political weakness and could change in response to changes in his political power). Finally, negative emotions, such as fear or hatred, are also included among socio-psychological barriers to peace. The second part of this chapter is dedicated to an analysis of the central issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as they are manifested in the negotiations: territory and borders, the character of the Palestinian state, and the issues surrounding Jerusalem, settlements, and the Palestinian refugees from 1947-1949 and 1967. This analysis also addresses opinions found within the general Israeli public vis-à-vis these issues. The third section of the chapter lists the main socio-psychological barriers that impede the advancement of Israeli society toward possibilities for peaceful resolution of the conflict. These barriers include beliefs and ideologies that support the conflict; beliefs regarding Israeli-Palestinian goals in the conflict; negative portrayals of Arabs; Israeli society's belief in its own victimization; Israel's positive self-image as a virtuous and moral military power; decline in the centrality and importance of ideas of peace in Israel; circumstantial beliefs that support the conflict, including distrust of the desire or ability of the Palestinian leadership to reach a peace agreement; the belief that time works for the benefit of Israel; and various emotional barriers, such as fear and hatred.

The researchers' conclusions point to the central role that socio-psychological barriers within Jewish-Israeli society play in preventing the resolution of the conflict. The primary effects of such socio-psychological barriers are the selective processing of information about the conflict and the shutting out of new ideas about peace and the prospects of peace.

In the second chapter, "Barriers to Resolution of the Conflict with Israel – The Palestinian Perspective," Yohanan Tzoreff focuses on the main barriers to peace that influence decision-making and deliberation processes on the Palestinian side, particularly among the political leadership. Although these barriers to peace resemble those that Egypt and Jordan also faced when preparing to sign peace agreements with Israel, they are much more deeply entrenched and difficult to uproot in the intra-Palestinian context. This is because of the uniqueness of the Palestinian situation, and the fact that the Palestinians are a non-state actor that has yet to experience independence. Tzoreff distinguishes among a number of different types of barriers. Structural barriers include intra-Palestinian divisions and inter-organizational rivalry, particularly between the PLO and Hamas, as well as the involvement of other Arab states in the Palestinian conflict. Territorial and

geographical barriers stem from the difficulty of accepting a compromise along the lines of the 1967 borders because of Palestinian narratives of the Palestinian right to the land, despondency at the prospect of achieving a two-state solution, and the Palestinian Diaspora, which is scattered throughout many regions and countries and mired by problems and the alienation created by the status of the Palestinians as refugees. Identity barriers stem from tensions surrounding the desire to preserve national identity in the absence of a state, fear of losing the old national identity when the state is established, and apprehension about the possibility that the so-called “holy” armed resistance against the Israeli Occupation will cease to be considered a central pillar of Palestinian identity. Psychological, religious, and cultural barriers take a number of forms, including the demand for the correction of a historic injustice, namely the establishment of the State of Israel and the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem, defeatist and victimizing psychological complexes, and a culture of denial and repression. Political barriers are the result of a weakened trust in politicians, deficient political mechanisms for managing disputes and political discord, and a culture of rhetoric constructed around hackneyed clichés that constrain both the Palestinian political leadership and the general public. Despite the sheer magnitude and intensity of these barriers to peace on the Palestinian side, Tzoreff points to Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians as a force for neutralizing these barriers and for paving the road to peace. He enjoins Israel to improve its treatment of the Palestinian people and to increase its concern for Palestinian needs and rights.

In the third chapter, “National Narratives in a Conflict of Identity” Yehudith Auerbach argues that the barriers to peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are first and foremost a result of the nature of the conflict as one of identities rooted in conflicting national narratives and meta-narratives, which cannot be bridged at this stage. The chapter is divided into a theoretical section and an empirical section. The theoretical section draws distinctions between different types of international conflicts, between conflicts of identity and material conflicts, and between meta-narratives and national narratives that determine the identity-based nature of the conflict. Whereas meta-narratives include the ethos of a people and its conceptual and ideological frameworks, national narratives are concerned with self-determination, ancestral connection and the right to the land (especially if there is a territorial dispute), and relations with the rival nation. By providing a conceptual framework for ideas of national exceptionalism, national

cohesion and national endurance, meta-narratives and national narratives function as key sources behind the formation of national identity. Unfortunately, the very same narratives have also proven to be the most pronounced barriers to peaceful resolution of conflicts, and while meta-narratives are considered impossible to alter or overturn, and are often regarded as holy and treated as protected values, national narratives are malleable enough to be reconstructed as necessary in order to allow for the resolution of conflicts. Still, national narratives need to be reworked and reconstructed to a large degree, and such serious conceptual and emotional changes are often difficult for societies with a long history of intractable conflict. The empirical section of the chapter is an in-depth analysis of Israeli and Palestinian meta-narratives and national narratives, as reflected in their founding documents and declarations, including the Israeli Declaration of Independence, the Palestinian National Charter, and the “Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel,” published by the National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel. Auerbach’s study leads to the inescapable conclusion that the gaps between the narratives are staggering and impossible to bridge at present. Nevertheless, both sides must demonstrate their willingness to rework their national narratives together, as it is highly unlikely that a peaceful resolution of the conflict will be possible without it.

In the fourth chapter, “Barriers to Peace: Protected Values in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” Shiri Landman contends that protected values are key barriers to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Protected values are distinct, fundamental values that are perceived by a particular social group as sacred and not open to compromise, replacement, or abandonment. They hold a taboo status and their violation is likened to the violation of society’s ethical and moral principles. The widespread objection found on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to any form of compromise over the core issues at the heart of the conflict – permanent borders, settlements, Jerusalem, and Palestinian refugees – should be understood as resistance to the violation of protected values. Both the Israeli and Palestinian sides relate to these issues – particularly to the questions of the future of the Temple Mount and the Historic Basin in the Old City of Jerusalem and of the Palestinian Right of Return – as protected values that are not open to discussion, negotiation, or compromise. The power of protected values is based in national narratives and meta-narratives of the conflicting nations.

This chapter comprises three parts. The first section is primarily theoretical. It introduces the term “protected value” and describes the psychological response mechanisms to proposed compromises over protected values. The primarily empirical second part of the chapter explores the connection between protected values and core issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It focuses on Israeli and Palestinian regard for core issues as protected values, as exhibited in public-opinion polls and analyses of positions expressed on each side. The “value-based opposition” within both societies is a fundamentally substantive discourse that will necessitate wide-scale public support in order to change. The third section of this chapter suggests several strategies that may help weaken moral opposition to proposed compromises over core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by drawing distinctions between different propositions for compromise over protected values.

In the fifth chapter, “Justice and Fairness as Barriers to the Resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov posits that the Palestinian demand for achieving a “just peace” as a precondition for peaceful resolution of the conflict has the power to undermine any chances of reaching a settlement, and should thus be considered a barrier to peace. The Palestinian demand for a “just peace,” as defined by Palestinian statesmen and scholars, has focused primarily on the injustices that Israel inflicted on the Palestinians in the 1947-1949 War through the mass deportations that created the Palestinian refugee problem. Thus, they argue, unless Israel accepts responsibility for the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their land and agrees to a “just solution” to the refugee problem, as defined by the Palestinians, there will be no settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Palestinians demand that the Palestinian refugees be allowed to return to their homes in Palestine (i.e., in pre-1967 Israeli territory) although they are, in principle, willing to negotiate over the number of refugees that will be allowed to return. The Palestinians are unwilling, however, to accept responsibility for either the outbreak of the 1947-1949 War, or for its outcomes, one of which was the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem. Israel refuses, and has historically refused, to accept these Palestinian preconditions to a settlement; it refuses both to assume responsibility for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem and to allow the Palestinians to resettle within Israel’s borders in accordance with the Palestinian “right of return.” Israel has, however, agreed to allow a limited

number of refugees to settle in Israel, not because of the “right of return,” but for humanitarian considerations – primarily family reunification.

This chapter is divided into a theoretical section and an empirical section. The theoretical section discusses the concept of “justice” and its relation to peace, whether as a necessary precondition or potential barrier, as conceptualized through different paradigms. The empirical discussion analyzes the narratives of both sides of the conflict and examines the Palestinian demand for a “just peace” according to its official formulation in negotiations from the time of the Oslo Accords of 1993 through the Taba Peace Conference of 2001 and in Track II diplomatic initiatives (i.e., the Geneva Initiative and the Ayalon-Nusseibeh Initiative). The Palestinian demand for a “just peace” is then reduced to its components: transitional justice, distributive justice, and compensatory justice. The chapter concludes that the Palestinian claim for a “just peace” was, in fact, a barrier to peace in formal negotiations, but did not present a barrier to peace in the Track II diplomatic initiatives.

The conflicting historical narratives of both sides regarding the historical injustices committed and the ways to rectify them present the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a classic case study of the link between justice and peace. The link between the issues of justice and peace is incredibly important, cannot be overlooked, and demands the attention of both sides. Given the intractable and unbridgeable divide that separates the two sides on the issue of justice and peace, it should not be addressed until later stages of reconciliation and should be avoided while forging a settlement of the conflict.

In the sixth chapter, “Religion as a Barrier to Compromise in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” Yitzhak Reiter examines the role of religion as a universal barrier in ethnic conflict worldwide, and within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular. The religion barrier exists in a situation where religious values and symbols prevent any possibility of negotiation and compromise as a means for settling a territorial dispute. In the chapter, Reiter contends that religion presents a barrier to conflict resolution when some or all of the following conditions exist in both societies: (1) the values of the religious belief system enshrine war and continued control of holy sites and holy territories, while denouncing any possibility of negotiation or compromise over these values; (2) religious values dominate the general public discourse among even the secular or loosely observant

parts of society in such a way that religious symbols and values become an integral part of their identity and are not open to compromise; (3) religious parties that espouse religious values and actively use their influence to disseminate them wield decisive political power (whether formally, or because they are simply in the position to tip the scales in a deeply divided political system or convert large political alliances into political blocs); (4) radical activities are perpetrated by individuals or movements motivated by a nationalist-religious ideology that can undermine successful diplomatic negotiations by carrying out political assassinations or large-scale terrorist attacks; and (5) radical elements recruit zealous “warriors” from outside the society or contested territory.

Following the theoretical discussion of these five conditions, the article examines whether these conditions are fulfilled on either side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Here, the article shows that the importance of religious values and the influence of religious players are more pronounced in Palestinian society than in Israeli society because Palestinian society is less secularized, and because of the power Hamas wields through its paramilitary organization, with a wide base of popular support. The important role that these conditions play in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict demonstrates the great degree to which religion functions as a substantive barrier to resolving the conflict.

In the seventh chapter, “The Time Factor as a Barrier to Resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” Dan Zakay and Dida Fleisig examine ways of relating to and conceptualizing time and its impact on processes of deliberation and negotiation. Their research analyzes the degree to which this factor influences prospects of resolving conflicts through dialogue between representatives of different cultures. The chapter is divided into several subsections: the first section is a general introduction to the concept of time and its connection to culture and individual personality. The second section is a survey of the reflection of time in conflicts and negotiation processes, as well as a discussion of the following topics: the negotiators’ treatment of time, perceived urgency of the time frame, timetable pressures, time as a source of power, tactical uses of time, the use of timetables and deadlines for delimiting negotiations, the impact of time on building trust relations between the sides, and the implications of a time gap between negotiations and the defined time for implementing an agreement. The third section presents the concept of time in the Islamic-Arab and Jewish-Israeli

cultures. The fourth section analyzes the consequences that follow from the different ways of conceptualizing time in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in both the Israeli and Palestinian cultures. The conclusion of the study leaves little room for optimism concerning the prospects of resolving the conflict. The gap between the concept and conception of time on both sides is considerable, to the point of being unbridgeable.

In the eighth chapter, “Strategic Decisions Taken During the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process as Barriers to Resolving the Conflict,” Ephraim Lavie and Henry Fishman argue that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be resolved through negotiations, provided that certain strategic barriers impeding or preventing its advancement are overcome. The strategic barriers responsible for the failure of the Oslo process were located in discrepancies between the opposing parties’ perceptions of what strategic decisions were needed at different stages of the negotiations. Whereas Israel understood the negotiations to be centered on the outcomes of the 1967 War, the Palestinians believed the negotiations to be about the outcomes of the 1947-1949 War. The discrepancy between these two approaches was of critical importance because the Palestinian view included the Palestinian “right of return” as a solution to the Palestinian refugee problem and implied that without such a solution, the conflict could not be settled. It became clear afterwards that neither side was prepared to make historic strategic decisions that would entail substantive concessions on the issues of borders, refugees, or Jerusalem, and that they treated the process as a tactical maneuver, rather than a strategic endgame. Furthermore, the negotiations were severely mismanaged, primarily in three areas: (1) the decision to advance incrementally, stage-by-stage, moving from lighter to heavier disputes, and from an interim agreement to a permanent status agreement; (2) the assumption that trust relations would develop between the interlocutors during the process itself; (3) the ambiguity surrounding the real meaning of the process, i.e., the nature of the permanent agreement to be reached. To these, one might add both sides’ violations of the Oslo Accords and the lack of public support for the Accords as major factors that caused the failure.

In this chapter, Lavie and Fishman suggest three ways of improving the peace process: (1) the strategic decisions of the parties must be truly substantive decisions that provide a clearly-defined framework for negotiating a settlement; (2) the

interlocutors need to agree on a negotiation strategy that will be in accordance with the substantive decision for negotiating a settlement; (3) the interlocutors need to agree on a source of authority for the process and to commit to proceeding with the necessary strategic concessions that will be required of them.

In the ninth chapter, “The Geopolitical Environment as a Barrier to Resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” Kobi Michael analyzes the complexity of Israel’s geopolitical environment and examines the process through which this environment becomes a serious barrier whenever Israeli leaders begin to hesitate about taking chances to resolve the conflict. Michael’s decision to concentrate on the geopolitical barrier is not intended to imply that it is the primary or only barrier preventing the resolution of the conflict. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly an important and pivotal barrier which will, most likely, prevent any progress on the road to peace unless Israel finds a way to overcome it. The discussion of the geopolitical environment as a barrier to peaceful resolution includes the physical factors of the conflict’s setting and the conceptual factors connected to the perceived threats that result from the conflict’s violent history and the general mistrust dominating relations between the two nations. The characteristics of the conflict and its geopolitical setting have affected the way Israel’s security establishment perceives strategic threats, causing Israel to amplify them, and as a result, to increase its demands for security measures (such as territory, early warning, and airspace security measures) and security guarantees. Whereas security threats hinder the Israeli government from agreeing to concessions that require security risks, security measures and security guarantees may be used to help prepare for potential threats.