

The United States Should Help Close Gaps Between Israelis and Palestinians

by [Dennis Ross \(/experts/dennis-ross\)](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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The multitude of other crises in the region and the strong doubts among Israelis and Palestinians cannot be an argument for walking away from diplomatic efforts.

Rarely have the psychological gaps between Israelis and Palestinians been greater. The kidnapping of three teenagers in the West Bank traumatized Israeli society, which celebrates and cherishes its children. On the Palestinian side, the kidnapping was initially celebrated as a means to get prisoners released from Israeli jails; the fact that the kidnappers made no demands did not seem to register with the members of the Palestinian public who adopted a three-finger gesture, symbolizing the three Israeli teens, as a sign of potential victory. But there was no victory, only the killing of the teens, Eyal Yifrach, Gilad Shaar and Naftali Fraenkel, followed by the killing of Palestinian teenager Mohammad Abu Khieder, possibly in reprisal. These slayings will surely widen the gaps, with the Israeli public feeling deep anger and the Palestinians feeling they are again the victims of Israeli power. Moreover, with Hamas operatives believed responsible for the Israeli teenagers' killings, there may also be serious escalation between Israel and Hamas, particularly in Gaza.

Peace-making in such an environment seems far-fetched, to say the least. Unfortunately, the gaps between Israelis and Palestinians have developed over a long period...

[Read the full article on the *Washington Post* website. \(http://m.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-united-states-should-help-build-a-bridge-between-israelis-and-palestinians/2014/07/03/1ecd7054-023a-11e4-b8ff-89afd3fad6bd_story.html\)](http://m.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-united-states-should-help-build-a-bridge-between-israelis-and-palestinians/2014/07/03/1ecd7054-023a-11e4-b8ff-89afd3fad6bd_story.html) ❖

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