

The Claim for Recognition of Israel as a Jewish State: A Reassessment

by [Tal Becker \(/experts/tal-becker\)](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Tal Becker serves as the legal adviser of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is a former fellow at The Washington Institute.



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Israel's claim for recognition as a "Jewish" state continues to generate substantial controversy: what many Israelis see as an elementary component of true peace, many Palestinians perceive as a ploy to undermine it. And because this debate has been cast in zero-sum terms, it has created the impression of an insurmountable obstacle to Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation. In the heat of the argument, there has been a failure to identify the genuine interests at stake, to weigh their legitimacy, and to consider the alternatives for addressing them.

In *The Claim for Recognition of Israel as a Jewish State: A Reassessment*, Tal Becker seeks to demystify this debate and contend with the inflated and misleading dimensions it has acquired in the public discourse. It places the demand for recognition of Israel's Jewish character in its historical, political, and strategic context, exploring its essence and engaging directly with the arguments against it. This groundbreaking Washington Institute study provides means not only to understand the debate but also to reconcile the issues. In so doing, it helps overcome what has emerged as a major challenge to navigating the difficult road to an Israeli-Palestinian agreement. [Read a review \(http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2011/03/israels_jewish_identity\)](http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2011/03/israels_jewish_identity) in *The Economist*.

THE AUTHOR

Tal Becker, an international associate of The Washington Institute, served as senior policy advisor to Israel's minister of foreign affairs from 2006 to 2009 and was a lead negotiator during the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations that took place under the auspices of the Annapolis peace process. Representing Israel in a wide variety of bilateral and multilateral negotiations, he has also served as director of the International Law Department at the Israeli Foreign Ministry, as counsel to Israel's UN Mission in New York, and as an international law expert in the Military Advocate General's Corps of the Israel Defense Forces. In 2003, he was elected vice chairman of the UN General Assembly's Legal Committee, the first Israeli to serve in a UN post of this stature in more than forty years. Dr. Becker lectures widely throughout Israel and overseas, and is the recipient of numerous scholarly awards. His 2007 study, *Terrorism and the State: Rethinking the Rules of State Responsibility*, was the recipient of the 2007 Guggenheim Prize for Best International Law Book.

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