



**Gulf Research Center**

Knowledge for All



## **“The New York Conference on the Two-State Solution: Challenges and the Ability to Implement Solutions.”**

**Ms. Agnès Levallois,**  
**President of iReMMO, French institute**  
**Middle East and Mediterranean issues, Paris**



@Gulf\_Research Gulfresearchcenter gulfresearchcenter gulfresearchcenter



The French Saudi initiative about The Two-State Solution is a real challenge for French diplomacy and for several reasons. The first one is the evolution of the position of Paris towards the Israeli Palestinian conflict for years. It began to change under the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy (2007-2012), François Hollande (2012-2017) then Emmanuel Macron when Israeli's interests took precedence. Then, the Abrahams' accords under Trump administration in 2020 comforted those who thought that the Palestinians question was over, highlighting a fatigue with the endless conflict. The tragic events of October 7 convinced many analysts and politicians that no solution was possible anymore the priority should be the fight against terrorism. The first Macron's address to the French people after the terrorist attacks was to "condemn the atrocities in the strongest terms" and added: "We know that the only response to terrorism, the only possible response, is always a strong and fair response, one that is strong because it is fair. This statement was well received due to the terrible attacks by Hamas. But when he made a proposal a few days later to involve the international coalition against the Islamic State organization

(IS) - created in 2014 and of which France remains a member – in the outright destruction of the Palestinian group Hamas he took the diplomats by surprise. Associating Hamas with Palestine has appeared unacceptable in Palestine and in the Arab world because it was a way to adopt the Israeli's narrative which makes no difference between the Hamas fighters and the people of Gaza, and it ignores the fact that the party is woven into the fabric of Palestinian society.

After the reactions following this proposal, the French presidency said: "we don't believe that the solution can be solely military" without be able to propose a political or diplomatic initiative and that for a single reason which is during months the line followed by the French diplomacy was ambiguous.

Then, more than one year later, after the visit Macron made in Egypt in April 2025, he considered the situation had become unbearable for the civilian population of Gaza. A part of public opinion in France said "finally" and considered that it was time to take into consideration the tragic situation of the Gaza's population.

The second reason is the consequence on French Israeli relationships. After months of support of the Israeli strategy on Gaza, president Macron considered that the Israeli army was no longer following the war objectives, particularly the liberation of the hostages held by Hamas, but of destroying the Gaza Strip and the number of civilian victims, including children, becoming unbearable.



The third one is the ability of French diplomacy to lead other countries to recognize the Palestinian State and from there to regain a role in the Middle East. Before the 7 October 2023, France like a lot of countries had forgotten the conflict through a kind of fatigue, as the conflict seemed so insoluble. Then the sequence opened by the Abraham Accords in 2020 initiated by Donald Trump during his first term gave Israel the illusion that it could reshape the region while bypassing the Palestinian issue. This participated in the concealment of the Palestinian question, including from France while for decades it had defended the right to self-determination of Palestinians and the two-state solution. But for President Macron at that time this solution was always defended by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which he did not trust. The young president who presents himself as disruptive, wanted new ideas and asked his diplomatic team to be creative. This will lead him to have his Prime Minister say at the dinner of the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in 2022 “that Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the Jewish people”, which has never been France’s position, especially since the Palestinians also claim Jerusalem as their capital and this highly sensitive issue must be negotiated by both parties involved. Another position defended two years before by President Macron and strongly criticized by NGOs that criticize the policy followed by the Israeli government is that which consisted of integrating anti-Zionism into the definition of anti-Semitism.

We therefore understand that following the attacks of October 7, unconditional support was given to Israel, but the disproportion of the Israeli response will gradually change Macron’s position and lead him to become involved in a political solution. The turning point was in Egypt last April when he went to Al-Arich and he saw the wounded Palestinians and said that the humanitarian blockade imposed on Gaza was a disgrace. Then during his address during the Shangri-La Dialogue in Manama he added: “we do have to work very hard for recognition of a Palestinian state and mutual recognition in order to create a strong architecture of security in the region”. In fact, preserving the two State solution is a way against unilateral measure and to give the priority to the international law which is continually flouted by Israel.



**following the attacks of October 7, unconditional support was given to Israel, but the disproportion of the Israeli response will gradually change Macron’s position and lead him to become involved in a political solution**





The French Saudi initiative is part of the willing of doing something and to avoid criticism of the double standard. Paris is aware of the need for an initiative that is not only French, and the legitimate partner is Saudi Arabia because of the strong links between the two countries, and the key role Riyadh is playing in the Middle East. This is an important test for the future of the relationships between Paris and Riyadh. But all these efforts to convince countries to join the Franco Saudi dynamic will be limited and largely insufficient if at the same time nothing is done to stop the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the continuation of colonization in the West Bank.



Of course, the implementation of a Two-State Solution is very important because it is a recognition of the existence of the Palestinian people. But at the same time this people is dying, disappearing, he is drowned in the suffering of displacement, famine, massacres and incessant bombardments by the Israeli army. Palestinians' journalists living in Gaza and the West Bank report that without concrete sanctions against Israel to stop the massacres and colonization, this recognition will be useless. They added that since this announcement, violence has increased further as a form of revenge by Israel against the Palestinian people.

The result of the French Saudi initiative is positive because UK, Canada and Australia announce recognition of the Palestinian state on 21 September before French which will make the announce on the 22. Belgium, Luxembourg, Malta and possibly New Zealand and Liechtenstein also. This must be the first step toward an effective cease fire, an end to the war and the release of all hostages, otherwise all these diplomatic efforts will be reduced to nothing.

**Ms. Agnès Levallois,**

**President of iReMMO, French institute**

**Middle East and Mediterranean issues, Paris**



# Gulf Research Center

Knowledge for All



مركز الخليج للأبحاث  
المعرفة للجميع



## Gulf Research Center Jeddah (Main office)

19 Rayat Alitihad Street  
P.O. Box 2134  
Jeddah 21451  
Saudi Arabia  
Tel: +966 12 6511999  
Fax: +966 12 6531375  
Email: info@grc.net



## Gulf Research Center Riyadh

Unit FN11A  
King Faisal Foundation  
North Tower  
King Fahd Branch Rd  
Al Olaya Riyadh 12212  
Saudi Arabia  
Tel: +966 112112567  
Email: info@grc.net



## Gulf Research Center Foundation Geneva

Avenue de France 23  
1202 Geneva  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41227162730  
Email: info@grc.net



## Gulf Research Centre Cambridge

University of Cambridge  
Sidgwick Avenue,  
Cambridge CB3 9DA  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44-1223-760758  
Fax: +44-1223-335110



## Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels

Avenue de  
Cortenbergh 89  
4<sup>th</sup> floor, 1000  
Brussels  
Belgium

