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Shalom Achshav Peace Foundation**

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## NEWS

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### PALESTINIANS MUST NOT ABANDON TWO-STATE IDEA, SAYS PEACE NOW

TORONTO--[June 3, 2013]— At a time when US Secretary of State John Kerry is attempting to revive moribund talks on a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is disturbing and unhelpful that some prominent members of Fatah are reverting to the idea of a single bi-national state in historic Palestine, Canadian Friends of Peace Now said today.

Fatah, the main faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the axis of power for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, remains committed in principle to the goal of two states for two peoples, but 30 of its key figures signed a document in mid-May declaring that such a solution is no longer viable.

"We tried the two-state solution and it's no longer realistic," said Radi Jarai, one of the leaders of the one-state movement within Fatah. He is a political scientist at al-Quds University who long supported the peace process, but became disillusioned as final-status negotiations faltered and Israeli settlement building continued apace.

It is understandable that many Palestinians are deeply skeptical of prospects for a two-state solution in light of Prime Minister Netanyahu's obvious lack of interest in meaningful negotiations. But if those Palestinians regard a two-state solution as improbable, they may as well dismiss a single-state alternative as pure fantasy.

Public opinion polls consistently show only four to eight percent of Jewish Israelis favour a "secular, democratic, bi-national state" within historic Palestine. Even polls among Palestinians in the West Bank have found only about 30% favour this outcome. The notion that Israelis and Palestinians cannot live at peace in neighbouring states but would somehow reconcile within a single state defies all logic.

Nor is such flirtation with fantasy a harmless day dream. It deepens the mood of pessimism on both sides that surrounds and hampers any attempt to revive peace talks, and it enables the Netanyahu Government to argue that there is no Palestinian partner for peace. The danger is that Mr. Netanyahu's argument will become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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