

Call for Papers – Conference on 13 February 2026

The Hague, The Netherlands

Realising Palestinian Self-Determination and State Sovereignty: *What Next?*

An international conference to discuss roles, responsibilities, and priorities, particularly international solidarity, in realising Palestinian self-determination and statehood, from scholarly, civil society, and political perspectives.

1. Introduction:

The purpose of this conference is to reflect at a critical moment on the prospects of Palestinian self-determination and Palestinian State sovereignty. The Conference intends to draw multiple perspectives from academics, civil society representatives, and experts who are closely following geo-political developments.

The past two years have been a turning point, both in generating unprecedented global mobilization and awareness and solidarity for the Palestinian people and in relation to legal developments in the international apex courts of the Hague.

These shifts have, however, occurred amidst a catastrophic genocide and humanitarian disaster and widespread devastation of Gaza, alongside the unrelenting advance of Israeli colonization in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Moreover, these developments have taken place against a historical backdrop of various failed external attempts to bring peace to the region outside the framework of international law. This includes the Oslo Process, and most recently the 20-point Trump “peace plan”, both of which fail to address Palestinian self-determination. Adding to this trajectory, on 17 November 2025, the UN Security Council adopted a United States-sponsored

resolution to establish among other measures an “International Temporary Stabilization Force for the Gaza Strip,” thus further underscoring the extent to which external interventions fail to be grounded in international law. This particularly the case in relation to the Palestinian right to self-determination; Palestinian state sovereignty is recognised on paper but not reality.

While questions regarding Palestinian political leadership, ideas, and sources of funding for Palestinian-led reconstruction and political pathways to Palestinian self-determination remain critically-discussed and unresolved, there is a need for discussion as to how and where to harness these broader solidarity and legal gains in the absence of clear answers to these questions.

2. Conference Objectives:

The conference aims to:

1. Situate the global conversation on Palestinian self-determination and sovereignty in light of international crimes, intensified settler colonization, and shifting geopolitical dynamics.
2. Critically examine the political, legal, and social structures shaping Palestinian futures, including questions of governance, representation, and reconstruction.
3. Assess the potential and limitations of international solidarity and identify sustainable strategies for mobilizing global support for Palestinian rights.
4. Produce academically grounded policy outputs, including policy briefs and strategic recommendations for governments, international organizations, and civil society actors.
5. Elevate international voices alongside Palestinian experiences within academic and political discourse, ensuring an inclusive platform that reflects Palestinian and global perspectives.
6. Assess the impact of the UN Security Council’s decision to establish a Peace Council and an international stabilization force in Gaza in relation to the Palestinian right to self-determination and sovereignty.

3. Themes of the Parallel Sessions

The conference is organized around three main thematic pillars as follows:

1. *Political and Diplomatic Challenges in the Midst of Impunity*

The magnitude of Israeli crimes that have been perpetrated upon the Palestinian people would not have been possible without decades of inaction and normalization of relations with the State of Israel, which have fostered an environment of impunity. This is despite clear international obligations on the part of Third States and outside entities. While Hamas as a governmental entity has been subject to extensive restrictions, there has been hardly any attempt to hold Israel (as a State) accountable

to its obligations, as laid out in three Advisory Opinions of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Provisional Measures of the ICJ in a case brought by South Africa against Israel on charges of genocide. Moreover, despite the issuing of arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court and a few isolated charges against individuals accountable for international crimes, individual impunity, on which international criminal law is premised, remains a key challenge.

We will also explore whether international interventions, from the Oslo Process to the Trump Plan, create pathways toward ending Israel's control over Gaza, or whether they risk entrenching new forms of external oversight that undermine the independence of Palestinian decision-making. By situating the resolution within the broader historical context of these externally imposed frameworks, we explore how international governance mechanisms align with, challenge, or explicitly undermine the Palestinian national project.

2. Scholarship on Resistance, Recognition and Repair

There has been unyielding resilience and resistance on the part of the Palestinian people, especially in Gaza. Medical professionals, academics, teachers, and farmers have all played especially critical roles. This has been in the face of unrelenting assaults on the human, physical, and social fabric of Palestinian society. With land at the core of the Israeli settler-colonial enterprise, the role of farmers in remaining on their land has assumed a particular, core function in resisting the advance of Israeli colonization.

More broadly, the creation of political and social spaces at local and international levels, to discuss the harms, repair, justice, leadership, and healing enables a critical process of legal and political recognition, rehumanization, and repair for Palestinian people, both at home and abroad.

3. Civil Society and the Future of Solidarity for Palestinians

The Netherlands has seen three massive demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of people, weekly civil servant protests, and regular disruptions directed against Israel's genocide and bombardment of the Gaza Strip. The momentum and scale of mobilization in the Netherlands and indeed the broader international community have been unprecedented in modern times. However, with talks of a 'ceasefire', there are concerns that this solidarity will begin to dissipate as the underlying calls for Palestinian self-determination and sovereignty become subsumed by other issues, while remaining totally unresolved.

Further, over the past decade, and with unprecedented intensity since the genocide in Gaza, digital spaces have become central platforms for Palestinian resistance, narrative production, and global advocacy. Social media platforms, digital archiving initiatives, open-source investigations, and

community-based campaigns have reshaped global understanding of the Palestinian struggle in ways that traditional media outlets and diplomatic channels have long failed to achieve. Yet these developments are unfolding within a landscape marked by algorithmic suppression, coordinated disinformation campaigns, censorship of Palestinian voices, and the increasing weaponization of digital platforms by state and non-state actors.

Organized around these 3 broad themes, this conference provides an opportunity for relevant and thoughtful conversations from political-diplomatic, scholarly, and civil society perspectives about the role of and possible pathways forward for international solidarity and Palestinian self-determination.

4. Organizers:

This conference is co-sponsored by Birzeit University, Palestine, and the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University, Rotterdam (Hague Campus) in the Netherlands.

Birzeit University is a leading educational institution in Palestine, and an intellectual hub that attracts top students and faculty from across historic Palestine and globally, offering a wide range of academic programs and professional development opportunities.

The International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam is an international graduate school of policy-oriented critical social science. Based in The Hague, it brings together students and faculty from the majority and minority worlds in a European environment.

We will utilise the organizational capacities and network of the Legal Mobilization Platform, in co-sponsorship with Birzeit University and the ISS, to facilitate and centre the inclusion of perspectives from across Historic Palestine into the discussion. The strategic location and academic track-record of Erasmus University's International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague will allow input from state representatives of surrounding embassies.

The scholarly goals of the conference are grounded in the fundamental values of respectful dialogue, critical debate, and open intellectual exchange.

5. Call for Papers:

Abstracts of **no more than 500 words** are invited from academics, diplomats, and civil society actors by no later than **15 January 2026**.

The conference will be held in English. There may be some opportunity for Arabic-language presentations.

6. Important Dates

Key event	Key date
The deadline for receiving the initial abstract (no more than 500 words in English):	Friday, January 15, 2026
The conference will be held:	Friday, February 13, 2026

7. Correspondence

All correspondence and inquiries should be addressed to the Conference Committee at the following via the following address: LMP@iss.nl