

## **Applying ‘If you are safe, I am safe’ to the Israel/Palestine conflict**



The principle of ‘If you are safe, I am safe’ has the potential to work everywhere. When we both look after each other’s security, and threat levels fall, there is greater security for all and the space and incentives for extremism shrink whilst those for co-operation rise. This offers real hope of an end to insecurity and division and the return to stability, security and even peace. However, that does not mean that essential building blocks are not required.

This can provide the basis of conflict resolution only if key elements of a peace between Palestinian and Israelis are put in place. These are well known, though they have become much more difficult to implement practically, both through settlement and because of 7 October 2023.

Palestinians cannot 'feel safe' without a state – even if that state has certain limitations placed on it. Fortunately, within an agreed framework, these would only reflect its commitment to focusing on securing safety for the other group – Israelis – rather than by enhancing its ability to threaten Israel to either achieve an improved settlement (at extraordinary cost and risk of failure) or to define itself as part of an existential struggle (whether nationalist, racial or religious). Being 'safe' deters politicians from following such a strategy because their public would oppose it.

If Israel's security is Palestine's security, then this should allow Palestinian commitments on the security plane that avoid raising the threat (or threatening to) and instead focus on securing Israeli security interests, including through deep cooperation and transparency.

On the same terms, a two-state solution can be brought back to the table as a realistic proposition because it can be anchored within the framework of mutual security.

'If you are safe, I am safe' offers a future that is determined by mutual concern and respect, not conflict and instability. This will do more than anything else to improve the lives of all members of the population and to secure a prosperous future for the next generation, and the ones that follow that.