



**Headline:** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Israel a source of salvation for region

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# Israel a source of salvation for region

IN RESPONSE to Alan Boesak and Farid Esak's lengthy response to Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein's open letter to former archbishop Desmond Tutu ("Pure and simple segregation"), one comes to the realisation that the only point worthy of consideration is expressed towards the end of their piece.

"Until the Israeli and Zionist movement is prepared to accept that Palestinians have a place in their country as equal citizens, there can be no peace."

If that is so then, sadly, they are correct. Conflict in this region will remain until sanity prevails as there is no way that Israel will commit national suicide by conceding to a single unitary state in which Jews will once again depend on the benevolence of others – in this case a majority Muslim population that for centuries has displayed a hatred and ongoing hostility towards Jews.

There is nothing on the table to indicate that a Muslim dominance within the borders of Israel will result in anything other than disaster a mere 65 years after Jews suffered their worst tragedy in their 3 500-year history.

This is the very *raison d'être* behind the establishment of the independent Jewish state of Israel, a need recognised as far back as 1917 and reaffirmed by both the League of Nations and the United Nations in 1948.

I always find it strange that the Islamic exclusivity of Saudi Arabia has no bearing on the myopic thinking of Israel's critics.

Considering the tension under which Israel exists – the perpetual state of war since her birth unprecedented anywhere else in the world, which commits every newborn child to a future of hostility, belligerence and danger – this is a country that has displayed an innate decency and willingness to peacefully make a positive contribution to the region, were she only given that chance.

Israel is still, contrary to the cynicism expressed by Boesak and Esak, the only full democracy in the entire region, a region where that word is anathema to the vast majority of her enemies.

While there are undoubtedly cracks within that democracy, they would exist because of the special circumstances

under which Israel is forced to survive and she should be commended for the levels of fairness she attains and not condemned for the anomalies that might debatably occur because of her unique exposure to danger.

There is the old saying: "You make friends with your enemies, not your friends."

How true, but how frustratingly difficult when your enemies have intractable mindsets founded in open hatred for "the other".

When the Palestinians accept that Israel is that potential friend and not their enemy – and in fact the source of their very salvation within a region stuck in a time-warp of poverty and ignorance – this alone will be their saving, not their fellow Arab travellers who have done no more than ensure they remain eternal refugees in their own selfish political interests.

It is this that Boesak and Esak should be actively promoting, not the destruction of the only hope that could make this happen. The rest is irrelevant.  
**Victor Gordon, Brooklyn**