



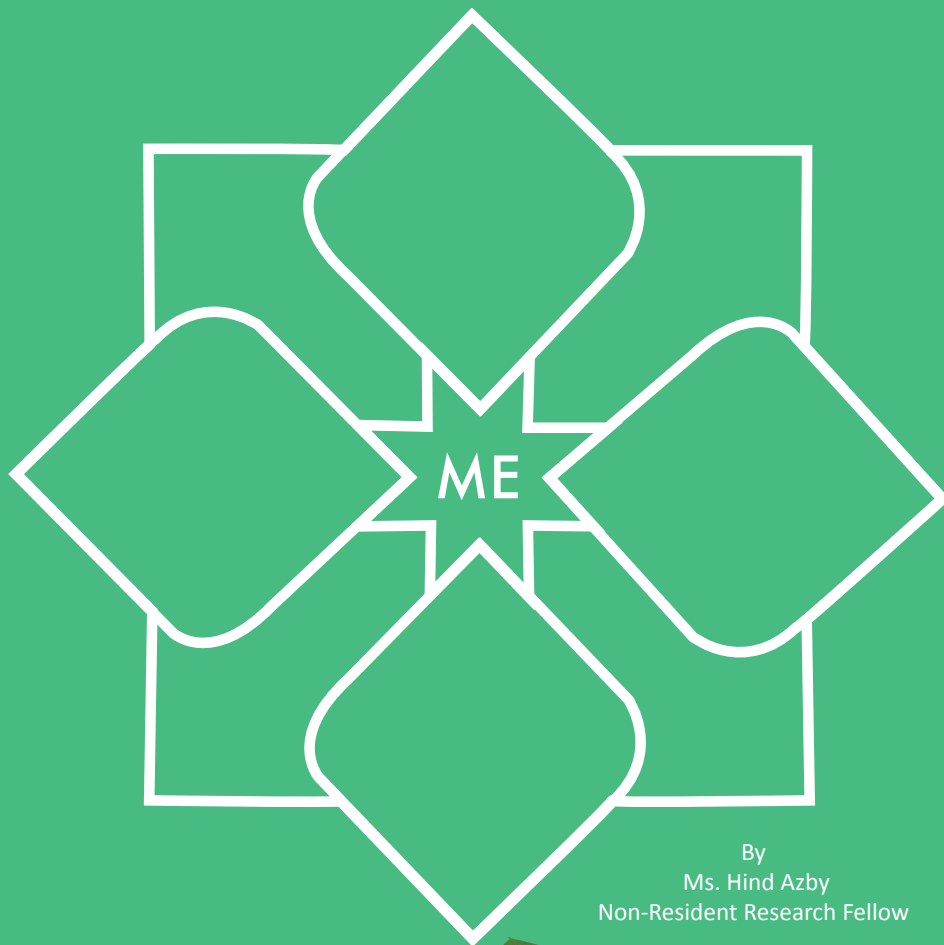
VIIMES

Vienna International Institute for Middle East Studies

Articles by VIIMES Research Fellows

Article Number -5

Greater Israel: From Extreme Ideology to Dangerous Political Mission



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14th September 2025

Introduction

“Greater Israel” refers to an ultranationalist Zionist concept advocating for a Jewish state that encompasses modern-day Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, and parts of Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Jordan. Rooted in biblical promises to the Jewish people, the idea envisions a state stretching from the Nile River in Egypt to the Euphrates River in Iraq. While often dismissed as a radical notion, its proponents argue that these lands are historically and religiously part of the Land of Israel.

At its core, Greater Israel is both a territorial and ideological vision. For some, it represents the fulfilment of a divine promise. For many however, it is viewed as a dangerous project of territorial expansion that undermines peace, violates international law, and poses grave risks for regional stability.

Biblical and Religious Roots

Supporters of Greater Israel often invoke religious texts that describe a promised land extending well beyond Israel’s current borders, from the Euphrates in Iraq to the Nile in Egypt. These texts, particularly in Genesis and Samuel, are used to argue that the land was divinely granted to the Jewish people. This framing is not limited to theological debates—it continues to influence the political outlook of religious-nationalist movements and many Israeli settlers, reinforcing the belief that settlement and territorial expansion are part of a spiritual duty. Moreover, the Israeli government, together with the Israeli settlers, have misused these Jewish texts, in order to justify violence, killings and the expansion of illegal settlements. They have also invoked these texts, to legitimize attacks on several Arab countries.

Political and Ideological Context

The concept of Greater Israel has gained renewed prominence in contemporary Israeli politics, particularly under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In a widely-discussed interview on August 12, 2025, with i24 News, Netanyahu explicitly endorsed the vision of Greater Israel. When asked if he personally identified with the concept, he replied, “*Very much.*” He went further, framing it as a generational mission:

“Our parents’ generation had to establish the state. And our generation, my generation, has to guarantee its continued existence. And I see that as a great mission.”

Netanyahu’s remarks tied the idea of Greater Israel to a historic and spiritual responsibility. By invoking biblical narratives and portraying himself as the custodian of a divine mission, he reinforced the ideological foundations of territorial maximalist. His statements also signalled that the concept is no longer confined to the margins of Israeli politics—it is being articulated from the very top of government leadership.

This has generated alarm across the Arab world as well as among the international community, where the vision of Greater Israel is widely seen as an expansionist and destabilizing agenda.

Historical Context

The idea of Greater Israel has roots in religious texts, specifically biblical narratives about a divinely promised land. Moreover, early Zionist thought, where nationalist aspirations linked this religious heritage to territorial claims, framing it not just as a refuge for Jews but as a divinely mandated territory.

In modern political history, early Zionist leaders such as Theodor Herzl did not explicitly advocate for the borders of Greater Israel, but the idea appeared on maps and in debates among Zionist activists. After the establishment of Israel in 1948, the concept re-emerged more forcefully, particularly after the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israel gained control over the West Bank, Gaza,

Sinai, and the Golan Heights. For religious-nationalist groups, the victory reinforced the notion that biblical prophecy was being fulfilled.

Over the decades, the idea of Greater Israel shifted from being a fringe aspiration to a political tool embraced by parts of the Israeli right, especially settler movements. Leaders like Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon, while not always explicitly endorsing Greater Israel, pursued settlement policies that aligned with its vision by expanding Israeli presence in the occupied territories. This long ideological trajectory set the stage for contemporary politicians, including Netanyahu, to link national security, religious heritage, and territorial expansion into a single political mission.

Netanyahu's Role

Benjamin Netanyahu has played a central role in mainstreaming the Greater Israel concept into Israel's political discourse. His repeated rejection of a two-state solution, his government's expansion of settlements, and his moves toward de facto annexation of parts of the West Bank all reflect a territorial maximalist vision. Netanyahu frames these actions not as optional policies but as existential necessities for Israel's survival and continuity.

Under his leadership, alliances with far-right and religious-nationalist parties have deepened. Figures such as Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, who openly advocate for annexation and the erasure of Palestinian statehood, hold influential positions in his coalition. This political alignment demonstrates how what was once considered an extremist aspiration has become embedded in government policy.

Netanyahu's rhetoric—particularly his emphasis on a “historic and spiritual mission” tied to Greater Israel—positions him not only as a politician but as a custodian of a religious destiny. By invoking the biblical promise of land, he provides ideological justification for policies that international law deems illegal, effectively merging faith-based narratives with statecraft.

Regional and International Implications

The vision of a Greater Israel poses significant geopolitical risks. By advocating for territorial expansion into neighbouring countries, it threatens regional stability in the Middle East. Countries such as Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan view these ambitions as existential threats, while Palestinian territories remain the most immediate flashpoints for conflict.

Internationally, the concept violates established norms under international law, particularly the principles of sovereignty and the prohibitions against acquiring land by force. The expansionist rhetoric also complicates Israel's diplomatic relations with major powers, fuelling tensions with both Arab states and the broader international community.

Security and Humanitarian Concerns

The pursuit of Greater Israel risks exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Palestinian territories, including the West Bank and Gaza, where expansionist policies often coincide with settlement growth, forced evictions, and restrictions on movement. The concept also has the potential to trigger further armed conflicts, destabilize fragile states in the region, and provoke retaliatory actions from neighbouring countries or non-state actors.

Human rights organizations have repeatedly warned that such territorial ambitions undermine peace processes and jeopardize the safety and livelihoods of millions of civilians. In practice, Greater Israel translates into policies that perpetuate displacement, segregation, and violence, making a just and lasting peace increasingly unattainable.

Why It is Dangerous?

The pursuit of Greater Israel carries grave consequences for Palestinians, the region, and international order. For Palestinians, it signals the continuation—and likely escalation—of dispossession, settlement expansion, forced evictions, and restrictions on basic freedoms. By rejecting Palestinian sovereignty altogether, the Greater Israel vision entrenches a system many international observers already describe as apartheid.

Regionally, the rhetoric destabilizes fragile relations between Israel and its neighbours. Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan interpret these territorial claims as existential threats. Expansionist policies risk sparking new cycles of conflict that could engulf the broader Middle East.

Internationally, Greater Israel undermines fundamental principles of international law, particularly the prohibition on acquiring territory by force. By normalizing expansionist ambitions, it weakens multilateral conflict resolution mechanisms and erodes trust in peace processes.

What makes this particularly perilous is the shift from radical discourse to mainstream policy. When a sitting prime minister openly endorses Greater Israel, the concept is no longer symbolic—it becomes a roadmap for action. History shows that expansionist ideologies, once legitimized, rarely remain rhetorical; they manifest in policies, wars, and human suffering.

Conclusion

The concept of Greater Israel, once dismissed as an ultranationalist dream, has re-emerged as a guiding vision for Israel's leadership. Netanyahu's rhetoric and policies demonstrate how religious narratives and territorial ambitions intersect to shape state policy. While proponents see it as the fulfilment of a divine promise, its realization would mean ongoing displacement of Palestinians, destabilization of the Middle East, and the erosion of international law.

Greater Israel is not just a biblical or ideological idea—it is a dangerous political mission with global implications. Recognizing its risks is essential for the international community, which must hold Israel accountable for expansionist policies and prevent further normalization of this ultranationalist vision. **The pursuit of Greater Israel threatens not only Palestinians but also the fragile stability of the region as well as the norms that uphold global order.**

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