Allegation: If You Fight for Racial Justice in the U.S., You Must Join the Campaign Against Israel

Some activists have presented the fight against Israel, and for Palestinians rights, as the same as the fight for racial justice in the United States. While it is understandable to attempt to make sense of international events through the prism of our own domestic context, the specifics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict do not lend themselves to exact comparisons with the American experience of systemic racial inequality.

Distinct from issues in the United States, the root of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of competing national narratives and claims to territory by two indigenous peoples.

And just as the root problem is different from the issues of racial justice in the U.S., so is the solution. Championing only Palestinian rights will not resolve this complex conflict. Rather, one can be an advocate for both Jewish and Palestinian civil rights, self-determination and statehood, through policies and initiatives that promote Israeli-Palestinian engagement and ultimately good faith negotiations for peace and coexistence.

Separating the US reality from the conflict is not to diminish the realities of Palestinian hardships due to Israeli policies, nor the importance of calling out inequities and racism in Israel – just as we do for other countries around the world. Nor should the recognition of such hardship lead to the downplaying of the threats posed to Israelis from terrorists based in the Gaza Strip and beyond, or the dismissal of Israel's strong record on socially progressive issues.
Rather, conflating these two very different situations – one uniquely American and one uniquely Israeli and Palestinian – lacks important context. And it is counterproductive in calling for constructive solutions, such as measures aimed at promoting engagement, negotiations and ultimately a future of self-determination, security and dignity for both peoples.