



The failure to reach a deal to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict poses a bigger existential threat to Israel than the Iranian nuclear programme, according a former head of the country's security agency, Shin Bet.

Yuval Diskin, who left office two years ago, criticised the continuing occupation and the growth of settlements in the West Bank, saying a solution based on two states would soon no longer be an option.

"I would like to know that our national home has clear borders and that we hold the people sacred, not the land. I would like to see a national home that is not maintained by occupying another people. I say this even though it's not popular: we need an agreement now, before we reach a point of no return from which the two-state solution is not an option any longer," Diskin said in a speech to mark the 10th anniversary of the Geneva Initiative, a peace plan proposed by Israeli and Palestinian politicians and public figures.

The former security chief, who featured in the Oscar-nominated documentary *The Gatekeepers*, added: "We cannot live in one state between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean Sea and we cannot treat the conflict as shrapnel in the backside." He was referring to comments by the economy minister Naftali Bennett, who dismissed the conflict as "shrapnel in [the] rear end".

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