

The Palestine Strategic Report 2022 – 2023



Edited By

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh



Al-Zaytouna Centre For Studies & Consultations

The Palestine Strategic Report 2022 – 2023



Al-Zaytouna Centre
For Studies & Consultations
Beirut - Lebanon

The Palestine Strategic Report 2022–2023

التقرير الاستراتيجي الفلسطيني 2022–2023

Editor:

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

First Published in 2024 by:

Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

P.O. Box: 14-5034, Beirut, Lebanon

Tel: +961 21 803644

Tel-fax: +961 21 803643

E-mail: info@alzaytouna.net

Website: www.alzaytouna.net

You can contact us and view the center's pages by clicking on the applications below:



ISBN 978-614-494-057-0

© All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher. For further information regarding permission(s), please write to: info@alzaytouna.net

The views expressed in this book are those of the authors alone. They do not necessarily reflect views of al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations.

Designed by:

Mr. Rabie Maarouf Murad

Printed by:

CA s.a.r.l. |Beirut, Lebanon| +961 1 30 44 44

The Palestine Strategic Report 2022 – 2023

Editor

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

Consultants

Mr. Munir Shafiq

Prof. Dr. Nizam Barakat

Prof. Dr. Sami al-Arian

Contributors

Dr. Basem Jalal Elkassem

Ms. Fatima Hassan 'Itani

Mr. Hani Mohammad 'Adnan al-Masri

Ms. Iqbal Walid 'Omeish

Dr. Mohannad Mustafa

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

Mr. Rabi' Mohammad al-Dannan

Dr. Sa'id Walid al-Haj

Mr. Sari 'Orabi

Prof. Dr. Talal 'Atrissi

Mr. Wael Ahmad Sa'ad

Prof. Dr. Walid 'Abd al-Hay

Translators

Mr. Baraa Zeidan

Ms. Baraah Darazi

Mr. Karim Traboulsi

Ms. Rana Sa'adah

Senior Language Editor

Ms. Rana Sa'adah

Assistant Editors

Ms. Fatima 'Itani

Ms. Iqbal 'Omeish

Ms. Rana Jarjour



The Palestine Strategic Report 2022 – 2023

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	5
List of Tables.....	11
List of Abbreviations.....	15
List of Contributors	17
Introduction	25
 Chapter One: The Internal Palestinian Scene	
Introduction	29
First: Overview of the Two Years	29
Second: The PA Institutions and Performance	33
1. Mohammad Shtayyeh Government	33
2. The PA Presidency and Judiciary	38
Third: Popularity Indicators and Public Action	41
1. General Elections	41
2. Local Elections	41
3. Trade Unions	43
4. Student Councils	43
5. Popularity Indicators Based on Opinion Polls	47
6. Summary of Popularity and Public Action	48
Fourth: The PLO	49
Fifth: Other Palestinian Activities	56
1. Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad	56
2. European Palestinians Conference	58
3. Palestinian Popular Conference – 14 Million	59
Sixth: National Internal Relations and the Internal Conditions of Palestinian Factions	61
1. Palestinian Reconciliation... Two Isolated Steps	61
2. Fatah Movement.. Incomplete Arrangements	65
3. Hamas.. Nothing New Except Operation al-Aqsa Flood	68



4. PIJ's Elections... for the Second Time	70
5. PFLP... Reappointment of the Secretary-General.....	71
6. The DFLP Conferences and Resignations	72
7. The PNI... The General National Conference.....	73
Seventh: Security Coordination – A Constant in PA's Policies.....	73
Conclusion	80

Chapter Two: Palestinian Demographic and Economic Indicators

Introduction	95
First: Demographic Indicators	95
1. The Palestinian Population Worldwide	95
2. The Demographic Characteristics of the Palestinians	98
3. Palestinian Refugees	109
4. Demographic Growth Trends	112
5. Palestinians Abroad and the Right of Return.....	114
Second: Economic Indicators in WB and GS	117
1. GDP in PA Territories (WB and GS)	119
2. GDP per Capita	123
3. Public Debt	127
4. The PA's General Budget.....	129
5. Work, Unemployment and Poverty	132
6. Industrial Activity	137
7. Agricultural Activity	140
8. Trade	142
9. External Financing and Foreign Aid	146
Conclusion	148

Chapter Three: The Land and the Holy Sites

Introduction	159
First: Islamic and Christian Holy Sites	159
1. Al-Aqsa Mosque	159
2. Islamic Holy Sites in Jerusalem.....	176

3. Islamic Holy Sites in the Rest of Palestine	177
4. Christian Holy Sites in Jerusalem and Palestine.....	180
Second: Population Under the Occupation	184
1. The Reality of the Demographic Battle	184
2. Attempts to Expel the Palestinian Population.....	186
3. The Policy of Assaults, Arrests and Deportation	189
4. Demolition of Houses and Structures	192
5. Confiscation and Seizure of Jerusalemites' Properties and Real Estate ...	193
Third: Development of Settlement Expansion in WB	199
1. Land Confiscation.....	201
2. Demolition of Palestinian Homes and Structures	202
3. The Separation Wall.....	203
4. Barriers	205
Conclusion	207
 Chapter Four: The Courses of Aggression, Resistance and the Peace Process	
Introduction	221
First: Resistance Operations and Escalation in WB	221
Second: Key Resistance Groups in WB	227
1. Jenin Battalion	227
2. Nablus Battalion (Lions' Den).....	228
3. Tulkarm Battalion	229
Third: GS Before Operation al-Aqsa Flood	230
1. Unity of the Arenas Battle (5–7/8/2022).....	230
2. Revenge of the Free Battle (9–13/5/2023).....	232
Fourth: Operation al-Aqsa Flood and Israeli War on GS	232
1. The Execution of Operation al-Aqsa Flood	232
2. The Strategic Implications of Operation al-Aqsa Flood	233
3. Developments of the Battle and the War on GS	235
4. Ground Offensive	241
5. Casualties.....	242
6. The WB During Operation al-Aqsa Flood.....	248



7. Lebanon	249
8. Yemen	252
9. Syria and Iraq.....	253
10. Tunnels in GS	253
Fifth: The Killed and Wounded.....	256
Sixth: Prisoners and Detainees.....	257
Seventh: Israeli GS Siege	261
Eighth: The Peace Process.....	264
1. Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the Peace Process	270
2. Will the “Two-State Solution” Materialize?	272
3. Challenges to the Peace Process	273
Conclusion	275

Chapter Five: The Israeli Scene

Introduction	289
First: The Internal Israeli Political Scene.....	289
1. The 25th Knesset Elections and Government Formation	289
2. Constitutional Changes	293
3. The Repercussions of the Constitutional Reform Bill	294
4. The Failure of 7 October and the War on GS	298
5. Formation of the Emergency Government	299
6. Netanyahu’s Future and the War.....	301
7. The Israeli Debate over the War’s Objectives.....	302
Second: Demographic Indicators	304
Third: Economic Indicators	310
Fourth: Military Indicators	322
1. Appointments and Structural Changes.....	323
2. Manpower	323
3. Military Plans and Trends.....	324
4. Military Maneuvers.....	327
5. Armaments and Arms Trade	327
6. Military Budget.....	329

Fifth: The Israeli Position on the Internal Palestinian Situation	331
Conclusion	334

Chapter Six: The Palestine Issue and the Arab World

Introduction	347
First: LAS Positions and the Arab Summit.....	347
1. Position on the Peace Process for the Palestine issue and the Resistance Project.....	347
2. The Position on Normalization	350
3. Internal Conflict and Reconciliation.....	350
4. The Position on Jerusalem	351
Second: The Positions and Roles of Some Key Countries.....	352
1. Egypt.....	352
2. Jordan.....	362
3. Syria.....	366
4. Lebanon	368
5. KSA and the Gulf States	374
6. Iraq and Yemen	394
7. Sudan, Algeria, Morocco and other Arab Countries.....	398
Third: Arab Public Opinion and Its Directions.....	413
Conclusion	416

Chapter Seven: The Palestine Issue and the Muslim World

Introduction	439
First: Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)	439
Second: Türkiye	442
Third: Iran.....	451
Fourth: Other Muslim Countries	463
Fifth: Muslim Public Engagement with the Palestine Issue	470
Sixth: Normalization and Israeli Relations with Muslim Countries	473
Conclusion	477

Chapter Eight: The Palestine Issue and the International Situation

Section One: The International Situation Post-Operation al-Aqsa Flood.....	489
Introduction.....	489
First: UN	490
1. Security Council	490
2. General Assembly.....	492
Second: The US.....	492
Third: The Russian Federation	498
Fourth: The EU.....	499
Fifth: China	501
Sixth: India	502
Seventh: The African Union	503
Eighth: International Public Opinion.....	504
1. US Public Opinion.....	504
2. UK Public Opinion	504
3. EU	504
Ninth: The Future Scene	507
Section Two: The International Situation Pre-Operation al-Aqsa Flood	507
First: UN	507
Second: The US.....	510
Third: The Russian Federation	515
Fourth: The EU.....	517
Fifth: China	518
Sixth: India	519
Seventh: Japan	520
Eighth: International Public Opinion.....	521
Ninth: Future Impact of Global Stances on Palestine.....	522
Index.....	533

List of Tables

Table 1/2: Palestinian Population Worldwide Estimate by Place of Residence at the End of 2022 and 2023	97
Table 2/2: Estimated Population Count in WB and GS by Governorate 2022–2023.....	99
Table 3/2: Selected Demographic Indicators of Palestinians in WB and GS....	103
Table 4/2: Selected Demographic Indicators of Palestinians by Residence	109
Table 5/2: UNRWA-RPs According to Their Area of Operation as of 30/6/2023...	111
Table 6/2: Selected Demographic Indicators of UNRWA-RPs According to Their Area of Operation 2022	112
Table 7/2: Estimated Population Count of Palestinians and Jews in Historic Palestine 2020–2030	113
Table 8/2: GDP in PA Territories 2018–2023.....	120
Table 9/2: GDP in WB and GS 2018–2023	121
Table 10/2: GDP Growth in the WB and GS 2018–2023	122
Table 11/2: GDP in PA Territories and Israel 2018–2023	122
Table 12/2: GDP per Capita in PA Territories 2018–2023	124
Table 13/2: Average GDP per Capita in the WB and GS 2018–2023	125
Table 14/2: GDP per Capita in the PA Territories and Israel 2018–2023.....	126
Table 15/2: PA Government Public Debt 2018–2023	127
Table 16/2: PA Fiscal Operations 2018–2023 Cash Basis	130
Table 17/2: Distribution of Palestinians Aged 15 Years and Above in WB and GS by Labor Force and Unemployment 2018–2023	133
Table 18/2: Industrial GDP in PA Territories 2018–2023	138
Table 19/2: Agricultural GDP in PA Territories 2018–2023	140
Table 20/2: Commodity Trade Balance in PA Territories 2018–2023	142
Table 21/2: Volume of Palestinian Trade, Exports and Imports in Goods in PA Territories to/ from Selected Group of Countries 2021–2022...	144

Table 22/2: External Financing to the PA 2018–2023.....	146
Table 1/3: Number of Settlers Storming al-Aqsa Mosque During Jewish Holidays 2022–2023	165
Table 2/3: Israeli Attacks on the Ibrahimi Mosque 2022–2023	178
Table 3/3: Ratio of Christians to Jerusalem’s Population 2014–2022	181
Table 4/3: Demographic Balance in Jerusalem 2019–2022	185
Table 5/3: Deportation and Ban Orders Against Jerusalemites 2022–2023.....	192
Table 6/3: Demolished Structures in Jerusalem 2018–2023	193
Table 7/3: Israeli Forces and Settler Violations in WB 2022–2023	205
Table 1/4: Geographical Distribution of Palestinian Resistance Operations 2022–2023, According to Shabak.....	223
Table 2/4: Development of Resistance Action in WB 2020–2023.....	224
Table 3/4: Development of Significant Operations by Type from 2020–2023	224
Table 4/4: The Killed and Wounded Among Palestinians and Israelis in WB and GS 2019–2023.....	256
Table 5/4: Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli Prisons 2019–2023	260
Table 6/4: Administrative Detainees 2019–2023	261
Table 1/5: Results of the 23rd, 24th and 25th Knesset Elections.....	292
Table 2/5: Population of Israel – Selected Years.....	305
Table 3/5: Number of Jewish Immigrants to Israel 1990–2023	308
Table 4/5: World Jewish Population by Country 2023.....	310
Table 5/5: Israeli GDP 2015 and 2020–2023	312
Table 6/5: Israeli GDP per Capita 2015 and 2020–2023.....	313
Table 7/5: Budget Performance of Israeli Government Receipts and Payments 2021–2023	315
Table 8/5: Total Israeli Exports and Imports 2020–2023	317
Table 9/5: Volume of Israeli Trade, Exports and Imports with Selected Countries 2022–2023	319

Table 10/5: Israeli Exports by Commodity Group 2021–2023	321
Table 11/5: Israeli Imports by Commodity Group 2021–2023	321
Table 12/5: US Foreign Aid to Israel 1949–2023	322
Table 13/5: Actual Israeli Military Expenditures 2015–2023	330
Table 1/6: Israeli Exports and Imports with Some Arab Countries 2021–2023	393
Table 1/7: Israeli Trade Volume with a Number of non-Arab Muslim Countries 2021–2023.....	476
Table 1/8: Discrepancy Between European Public Opinion and European Governments on the Palestine Issue	505
Table 2/8: European Public Opinion Regarding the Ceasefire (Selected Countries) 10/11/2023–6/12/2023.....	506
Table 3/8: Voting on UN General Assembly Resolutions Regarding the Palestine Issue at the 77th Session	509
Table 4/8: Voting Coincidence with the US on the Palestine Issue.....	518
Table 5/8: Percentage of Sympathizers with Israel and the Palestinians in the US and Western European Countries 2023.....	522

List of Abbreviations

AGPS	Action Group for Palestinians of Syria
AIPAC	American Israel Public Affairs Committee
AKP	Justice and Development Party (<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i>)
ARIJ	Applied Research Institute–Jerusalem
AU	African Union
Balad	National Democratic Assembly
BDS	Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Campaign
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CBR	Crude Birth Rate
CBS	Israel Central Bureau of Statistics
CDR	Crude Death Rate
CEC	Central Elections Commission
CENTCOM	US Central Command
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CWRC	Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
EU	European Union
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	General Intelligence Service
GS	Gaza Strip
Hadash	Democratic Front for Peace and Equality
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
IAI	Israel Aerospace Industries
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICHR	Independent Commission for Human Rights
ICJ	International Court of Justice
INSS	Institute for National Security Studies
ISA	Israel Security Agency (<i>Shabak</i>)
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
LAS	League of Arab States
MoU	memorandum of understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization



OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCHA-oPt	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – occupied Palestinian territory
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PCC	Palestinian Central Council
PCPA	Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad
PEA	Palestinian Engineers Association
PEGASE	Mecanisme Palestino-Européen de Gestion et d'Aide Socio-Economique
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PIJ	Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PNC	Palestine National Council
PNF	Palestine National Fund
PNI	Palestinian National Initiative
PPP	Palestinian People's Party
RC	Refugee Camp
RP	Registered Person
STC	Southern Transitional Council
Ta'al	Arab Movement for Renewal
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
US	United States of America
WB	West Bank

List of Contributors

Editor

Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, Ph.D., is a professor of Palestine Studies, specialized in the historical, political and strategic fields. The General Manager of al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations since 2004 and former head of Department of History and Civilization at the International Islamic University (IIUM), Malaysia. He was granted the Baital-Maqdis (Jerusalem) Award for Young Muslim Scholars in 1997 and the Excellent Teaching Award (College level), given by IIUM in 2002. He is the author of 16 books and 21 chapters of academic books on the Palestine issue, and the editor of more than 100 books and volumes, including: *The Palestine Strategic Report* (13 volumes, 2005–2023), *The Palestine Documents* (7 volumes, 2005–2011), and *The Palestine Daily Chronicle* (10 volumes, 2014–2023), in addition to editing the Strategic Assessment Series (135 assessments). Saleh has published many peer-reviewed scientific studies and delivered presentations and interventions at over a hundred local and international conferences. As a regular contributor on Palestinian affairs to leading newspapers and websites, he has also given hundreds of interviews across television, radio and print media.

Contributors

Chapter One:

The Internal Palestinian Scene

Sari ‘Orabi, a researcher on Arab and Islamic issues, particularly the Palestinian national movement, along with a keen interest in Islamic thought. He holds a Master’s Degree in Contemporary Arab Studies from Birzeit University, where his thesis focused on “Transformations of Ideology and Politics in the Palestinian National Movement: The Student Battalion as a Model.” ‘Orabi collaborates with several research centers and has authored numerous research

papers, reports and position assessment studies. As a political analyst, he has appeared on Palestinian, Arab and international TV channels. He co-authored a book in a series that explores the concepts and terminologies related to the Palestine issue, and has published hundreds of articles, in both Arabic and English, addressing various intellectual and political topics.

Chapter Two:

Demographic and Economic Indicators

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

Iqbal Walid ‘Omeish, head of the Academic Editing Unit and a researcher at al-Zaytouna Centre, specializes in the Palestine issue. ‘Omeish contributed to the preparation of demographic, economic and educational indicators for several volumes of *The Palestine Strategic Report* series, and was also involved in preparing the Arabic book *Gaza Strip: Development and Construction in the Face of Siege and Destruction*. She participated in the editing of many al-Zaytouna books and publications. She contributed two chapters, “Economic Indicators for the Palestinian Authority 1994–2013” and “Human Development Under the Palestinian Authority” to the Arabic book: *The Palestinian National Authority: Studies of the Experience and Performance 1994–2013*.

Chapter Three:

The Land and the Holy Sites

Basem Jalal Elkassem, Ph. D., a researcher specializing in the Palestine issue. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Beirut Arab University and a Master’s degree in International and Diplomatic Relations from the Lebanese University. ElKassem serves as the head of the Archives and Information Department at al-Zaytouna Centre, and is the Editor-in-Chief of “Palestine Today” Newsletter. He is the author of the Arabic book *Resistance Rockets in Gaza: A Palestinian Deterrent Weapon*, and has published a refereed study entitled, *The Israeli Strategy Towards the Syrian Crisis 2011–2018*. Furthermore, he has contributed to the preparation of various Arabic studies and publications, including *The Information Report* series, the *Information File* series and the Arabic book *Egypt Between Two Eras: Morsi and al-Sisi: A Comparative*

Study. Elkassem also contributed a chapter titled “The Establishment of the Palestinian National Authority” to the Arabic book: *The Palestinian National Authority: Studies of the Experience and Performance 1994–2013*. He has participated in several local and international conferences.

Fatima Hassan ‘Itani, a researcher specializing in Palestinian studies at al-Zaytouna Centre. She has contributed to the preparation of four books, including three volumes from the *Am I Not a Human?* series and *Al-Jama‘ah Al-Islamiyyah in Lebanon: 1975–2000*. She also contributed a chapter titled “Corruption in the Palestinian National Authority” to the Arabic book: *The Palestinian National Authority: Studies of the Experience and Performance 1994–2013*. In 2019, ‘Itani published a peer-reviewed academic study titled “Israeli Unit 8200 and Its Role in Serving Israeli Espionage Technology.” In 2024, she published the academic paper “Examining Israeli Allegations of Atrocities by Resistance Forces in Operation al-Aqsa Flood on October 7th, 2023.” Additionally, ‘Itani co-prepared the *Information Report* series and co-edited several al-Zaytouna books and publications.

Chapter Four:

The Courses of Aggression, Resistance and the Peace Process

*** Israeli Aggression and Palestinian Resistance**

Rabi‘ Mohammad al-Dannan, a researcher specializing in the Palestine issue. He holds a BA degree in Arabic language and literature. He has been involved in the preparation and editing of *The Palestine Daily Chronicle*, published by al-Zaytouna Centre since 2014. Al-Dannan has contributed to the writing of several Arabic books issued by the Centre, most notably the *Information Report* series, the *Information File* series and the book *Egypt Between Two Eras: Morsi and al-Sisi: A Comparative Study*. He also contributed a chapter titled “The Palestinian Authority’s Policies Towards the Palestinian Resistance” to the Arabic book: *The Palestinian National Authority: Studies of the Experience and Performance 1994–2013*. Al-Dannan has also participated in various local and international conferences and seminars.



*** The Peace Process**

Hani Mohammad ‘Adnan al-Masri, an author, political analyst and journalist for *Alquds* newspaper. He previously wrote for *al-Ayyam* (Ramallah), *Assafir* (Beirut), *al-Khaleej* (al-Shariqa) and *al-Hayat* (London). Since 1980, he has been a member of the General Union of Palestinian Journalists and Writers and the Union of International Journalists. One of the founders and the general manager of the Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies—*Masarat*, a position he has held since April 2011. From 2005 till 2011, he served as the general manager of the Palestine Media, Research and Studies Centre—*Badael*. He also held the role of general director of the Department of Publication and Media Organizations Affairs at the Palestinian Ministry of Information 1995–2005. Al-Masri has published hundreds of articles, studies and research papers, and has been interviewed by numerous media outlets. He has contributed to various Arab and international conferences. Furthermore, he was a member of Board of Trustees of Yasser Arafat Foundation until 2021, and a consultant at the Palestinian Policies Network.

*Chapter Five:**The Israeli Scene**** The Internal Israeli Political Scene**

Mohannad Mustafa, Ph.D. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Haifa. He serves as the General Manager of Mada al-Carmel – Arab Center for Applied Social Research and is head of the History Department at the Arab Academic Institute for Education at Beit Berl Academic College. He has published numerous studies and books on Israeli and Palestinian affairs, in Arabic, English and Hebrew. He co-authored two Arabic books *The Palestinians in Israel: The Policies of Indigenous Minority in the Ethnic State* (2009) and *Israel’s Foreign Policy Towards the Emerging Powers: Turkey, India, China and Russia* (2010).

*** Israeli Demographic and Economic Indicators**

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh
Iqbal Walid ‘Omeish

***Israeli Military
Indicators**

Chapter Six:

***The Palestine
Issue and the Arab
World***

Dr. Basem Jalal Elkassem

Wael Ahmad Sa'ad, a specialized researcher in the Palestine studies. He is the author of the book: *Al-Hisar* (The Siege), and has contributed to the preparation and editing of several Arabic publications, including Al-Zaytouna's annual *The Palestine Documents* series, *The Palestinian National Authority: Studies of the Experience and Performance 1994–2013*, *Conflict of Wills Between Fatah and Hamas and Other Relevant Parties*, *Security Developments in the Palestinian Authority 2006–2007*, and *Critical Assessments of the Experience of Hamas and Its Government 2006–2007*. He has also participated in numerous local and international conferences and seminars.

Rabi' Mohammad al-Dannan

Dr. Basem Jalal Elkassem

Chapter Seven:

***The Palestine Issue
and the Muslim
World***

***Türkiye**

Sa'id Walid al-Haj, an author and a specialized researcher in Turkish studies and issues related to the Arab and Muslim region. A Palestinian physician, who graduated from Hacettepe University in Istanbul. He has authored hundreds of articles for prominent newspapers and well-known Arabic websites. Additionally, he has published numerous research papers on Turkish affairs in leading research centers. Al-Haj is the author of the Arabic book *The Turkish Arab Relations: Prospects and Challenges* (2016) and contributed a chapter titled "Turkey and the Arab World in the Justice and Development Term" to the book *The Experience of Justice and Development of Governance*, published by SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research in 2018. He has participated in numerous seminars, and both local and international conferences, and has been interviewed by various media outlets on Turkish and Palestinian affairs.



***Organisation
of Islamic
Cooperation**

Wael Ahmad Sa'ad

***Iran**

Talal 'Atrissi, Ph.D., a former dean of Higher Institute of Doctorate and the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Lebanese University, as well as the former director-general of the Center for Strategic Studies in Beirut. He is currently a sociology professor at the Lebanese University and serves as a scientific and academic advisor at Al Maaref University. 'Atrissi is a researcher specializing in Middle Eastern issues and a lecturer at the Command and Staff College of the Lebanese Army. He is also a member of several scientific and consultative committees at Lebanese and Arab research centers. He has published numerous studies and research papers in both Arab and international journals and has participated in regional and international conferences on cultural, political and social issues in the Middle East. Furthermore, he is the author of several books in Arabic, including *Islam and Political Thought: Democracy –The West– Iran* (et al.; 2003), *The Geostrategy of the Iranian Hill: Problems and Alternatives* (2009), *Supporting Marginalized Groups: Civil Society Experience in Supporting the Families of Prisoners* (2014), *The Image of Germany in the Arabic School History Books* (2016), and *Between Two Awakenings: Political Islam in a Transformed Middle East* (2020).

Chapter Eight:

***The Palestine
Issue and the
International
Situation***

Walid 'Abd al-Hay, Ph.D., former professor of Political Sciences at Yarmouk University in Jordan. He has taught at various Arab universities, and serves on the board of trustees at al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan, the National Center For Human Rights (NCHR) in Jordan, and Irbid National University. In addition to his teaching career, 'Abd al-Hay has held leadership roles, including serving as the head of the Political Science Department at Yarmouk University,

and acting as a consultant to the Higher Media Council and the Board of Grievances in Jordan. He has authored 37 books in Arabic, primarily focusing on theoretical and applied studies in futures research. His notable works include: *Futuristic Studies in International Relations*; *Futuristic Studies in Political Sciences*; *Methods of Futuristic Studies and Their Applications in the Arab World*; *The Futuristic Status of China in the International Power Scale 1978–2010*; and *Iran: The Future of Regional Status 2020*. ‘Abd al-Hay has also translated numerous books and studies from English into Arabic, and has published over 120 research articles in peer-reviewed academic journals.



Introduction

Although Operation al-Aqsa Flood occurred in the final quarter of the period covered by this strategic report, it left a significant mark on the report, shaping its character. This war represents a pivotal moment in the history of Palestine, with profound effects, implications and connotations for the Palestine issue and its future.

The years 2022–2023 brought increased challenges and risks to the Palestinian front, particularly due to the presence of an Israeli government dominated by extreme right-wing and religious ideologies, determined to erase and liquidate the Palestine issue. This was further exacerbated by the weak leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestinian Authority (PA) in Ramallah, whose cooperation with the occupation, suppression of resistance, and obstruction of efforts to reconcile internal Palestinian divisions, have compounded the crisis. Additionally, Arab normalization with Israel intensified during these two years, further weakening the Palestinian position on the international stage.

Operation al-Aqsa Flood has restored Arab and international focus on the Palestine issue, reaffirmed the impossibility of bypassing it, and strengthened the Palestinian people's support for the resistance. It further exposed the failure of the peace process. The operation dismantled the notion of Israeli security and deterrence, undermined the idea of Israel as a "safe haven" for Jews, and raised critical questions about Israel's functional role as a regional enforcer and tool of Western influence. Operation al-Aqsa Flood provided unprecedented inspiration to the *Ummah* (Muslim nation) and freedom seekers worldwide by showing that the Zionist project can be challenged. It has placed Israel in its most isolated global position since its inception, where it now faces growing international condemnation. Despite the heavy sacrifices, particularly in the Gaza Strip (GS), and the brutal display of Israeli violence, the Palestinian people's solidarity with the resistance became one of the defining features of this war.

This is the 13th volume in the Palestine Strategic Report (PSR) series, which has established itself as a key reference in Palestinian studies and has become indispensable for researchers, specialists and interested readers. PSR offers



extensive, accurate and well-documented information, presented within an objective and analytical framework that adheres to scientific research standards and methodologies, while also seeking to anticipate future developments. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the internal Palestinian situation, the Israeli scene, the paths of resistance and peace process, as well as the Arab, Islamic and international dimensions of the Palestine issue. Significant attention is also given to the land, Jerusalem, the holy sites, and the Palestinian demographic and economic conditions.

As per our established policy in previous editions of the report, the names of contributors, chapter titles and the titles of their research are listed at the beginning of the book, but not at the start of each chapter. This approach reflects the collective nature of the PSR and acknowledges that the editing of this report, as with all previous editions, goes beyond standard practices. Significant additions, revisions and updates have been made in certain chapters, making the responsibility for their final form a shared one.

We extend our gratitude to the experts who contributed to drafting the report, the consultants who revised its content, and the staff at al-Zaytouna Centre, including editorial assistants and archivists, for their significant role in providing materials, reviewing texts and ensuring the report meets the required standards.

Finally, praise be to Allah for the success of this report and its recognition as a specialized reference. We extend our gratitude to everyone who supported and encouraged the work behind it. We also welcome all constructive criticism, advice and suggestions.

Editor

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammed Saleh

Chapter One

The Internal Palestinian Scene

The Internal Palestinian Scene

Introduction

In various metrics, the years 2022 and 2023 are consistent with the period since the Palestinian schism began in 2007: The Palestinian internal landscape remains in a deadlock. The Palestinian Authority (PA) continues its policies, despite the formation of the most extremist government in Israel's history, led by Benjamin Netanyahu and his coalition allies in the Religious Zionist parties. The PA faces a blocked political horizon and a crippling economic crisis, primarily due to Israeli control over Palestinian economic resources.

These trajectories have profound implications for the internal situation, remaining on course despite the growing resistance in the West Bank (WB) since early 2022, the series of Israeli assaults on Gaza Strip (GS) in 2022 and 2023, and the Israeli genocidal war on GS erupting in late 2023, lasting for an unprecedented length of time and inflicting unprecedented death and devastation, deliberately targeting civilian life. None of this has had any immediate impact on the behavior of the PA or on improving intra-Palestinian relations, even in the face of the greatest challenge the Palestinians have faced since the defeat of the 1967 war.

This chapter unpacks and analyzes all aspects of the internal Palestinian situation, including the PA and its institutions, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), national activities in the public sphere, intra-Palestinian relations, the status of Palestinian parties and security coordination.

First: Overview of the Two Years

The year 2023 ended with an epic transition into 2024, with an unprecedented war with Israel in the history of the region. For Israel, this marks its longest war in its history, which began when Hamas initiated from GS Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023, posing a significant challenge to Israel's security, military capabilities, and its ongoing presence in the region. This manifested in a ferocious war described as genocidal, marked by deliberate starvation. By the end of 2023

and the beginning of 2024, Operation al-Aqsa Flood evolved into an Israeli war on GS. This transformation sparked discussions on major issues such as the potential displacement of Palestinians from GS, the future of Hamas and the role of the PA. The issue of Palestinian statehood has resurfaced in the regional and international political discourse. As the war extends into the new year with uncertainty about its endgame and potential outcomes, this chapter will focus on the trajectories of 2022 and 2023, following the approach used in previous years' chapters. While considering the war's ultimate impact, which dominates the last quarter of 2023, in the chapter's conclusions.

This chapter is structured into several sections, starting with a section that tackles the PA institutions and performance with emphasis on the government of Mohammad Shtayyeh, its political context and overall performance. This government serves as the executive arm of the policies set by the presidency in internal matters. After the consolidation of powers within the presidency institution, the Palestinian President now oversees all Palestinian affairs without exception across government, the PLO, Fatah movement, internal national relations and security coordination.

The policies of Shtayyeh government are reviewed within the broader framework, taking into account its political context, economic performance, administrative trends, and plans to address associated challenges. These include addressing economic crises linked, to some extent, to the political situation, particularly Israel's control of Palestinian clearance funds, and the implications of these issues in the public sphere. Notably, union movements have been the most prominent manifestations of public activity, amidst the closure of the public sphere under the PA ever since the so-called Palestinian schism.

Given this context, it was pertinent to allocate a section to discuss the presidency within the discussion of the PA institutions and performance given the centrality of this institution. Indeed, it has expanded its influence in both legislative and judicial domains, not only due to the dissolution of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) after first paralyzing the latter, using executive decrees by President Mahmud 'Abbas to legislate in its stead, but also due to a series of legal and structural amendments that, according to many jurists and human rights institutions, compromised the judiciary's independence in favor of the executive authority with implications across various labor, security and political files.

The current situation of the public sphere's closure, the blocking of general elections, and the concentration of Palestinian institutions within the presidency institution prompt an examination of Palestinian activity within the public sphere. This includes assessing indicators of popular support for Palestinian factions. After discussing the cancellation of the general elections planned for 2021, the chapter explores the second phase of local elections held in March, followed by union and student elections. It traces the trajectory of these activities over previous years to establish the overarching pattern governing activities in the Palestinian public sphere and link the years covered in the chapter with those preceding it, while analyzing the political, professional and tribal motives and implications of such elections, and the surrounding security and political conditions. Additionally, this chapter addresses the debate surrounding the significance of these elections in GS, particularly regarding local and student elections.

This necessitates examining popularity indicators through means other than elections. Local, union and student elections are affected by security obstacles and non-political considerations, rendering their indicators of limited relevance. Therefore, to gauge the popularity of influential actors, especially Hamas and Fatah, involves relying on prominent surveys conducted by relevant research centers. After analyzing surveys to understand how public opinion is influenced by general events and trends, or the influence of political actors and evaluating of their performance, popularity indicators which are given a special importance can be compiled and taken into account in the remaining sections of the chapter, which should be read as a cohesive whole, complementing each other.

Discussion of Palestinian institutions involves examining the PLO conditions. The PLO's Palestinian Central Council (PCC) convened in February 2022, then held in May 2022, an emergency consultative session limited to its members in Palestine. However, these sporadic meetings deviate from the council's bylaws. Similarly, the PLO's Palestine National Council (PNC) has not convened since 2018, indicating a pattern of irregularity in its operations. This prompts an examination of the frequency of these sessions, the implications of their irregularity, and the political circumstances surrounding the activation of the PLO, particularly regarding the organization of Fatah's internal affairs, subsequent escalations, appointments and the stance of national forces on these matters. Additionally, it's important to assess the status of the PLO in connection to the PA, particularly the PLC whose general secretariat was made subordinate to the PNC.



The situation of the PLO necessitates exploring alternative efforts aimed at addressing its disruption, either to benefit the PA or for functional purposes, while excluding key forces from joining the PLO and marginalizing Palestinians in the diaspora. We thus review the prominent attempts to establish large popular frameworks seeking to advance the Palestine issue and revitalize the public sphere. This includes the second conference of the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad (PCPA) held in February 2022, the 20th European Palestinians Conference held in May 2023, and the Palestinian Popular Conference – 14 Million held for the first time in November 2022. Reviewing these three events requires an examination of their history, organizing principles, decisions, achievements, challenges, and the stance of the PLO leadership, Fatah movement and the PA towards them.

Discussion of these events brings attention to the situation of Palestinian forces, particularly in terms of intra-Palestinian relations, and notably the reconciliation issue, which has been stalled since the cancellation of the general elections scheduled for May 2021. The only steps in this regard were the “Reunification Conference for Achieving Palestinian National Unity,” held in Algeria October 2022, and the meeting of the general secretaries of these factions in Egypt in July 2023. However, such conferences have not translated into tangible results, necessitating a study of their contexts, motives and surrounding circumstances.

The issue of Palestinian forces and intra-Palestinian relations prompts next examining their internal conditions. This includes the postponement of the Eighth Conference of the Fatah movement, the alternatives sought by Fatah in managing its internal contradictions, and the PLO’s position on this matter. Internal elections were held by the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (PIJ), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) held its eighth national conference, while the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) held organizational workshops and regional conferences, paving the way for its eighth national conference. The Palestinian National Initiative (PNI) convened its national conference. As for Hamas, its regular elections are not yet due.

The final section reviews the PA security coordination policies, as a consistent policy, unaffected by various changes from the Bennett-Lapid government to the Netanyahu government, described as the most extreme in the history of Israel. This review addresses inactive decisions to halt security coordination, prominent aspects of coordination, its political implications, and its impact on the Palestinian situation overall.

The Palestinian situation in the years 2022 and 2023, like the preceding years, was marked by entrenched stagnation, especially in internal national relations and PA policies. The conflict remained deadlocked, except for the escalation of resistance in WB at the beginning of 2022, followed by two Israeli wars on GS in August 2022 and May 2023. However, Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023, and its aftermath of an Israeli genocidal war on Palestinians in GS, may lead to a fundamental transformation in the Palestinian internal situation, if not in the near future, then possibly in the medium and long terms.

Second: The PA Institutions and Performance

1. Mohammad Shtayyeh Government

Mohammad Shtayyeh government took the oath before Palestinian President Mahmud ‘Abbas on 13/4/2019, and remained until early 2024. This continuity over the five years represents one of the expressions of what is known in the Palestinian lexicon as the “Palestinian schism,” as this government, in particular, embodies the depth of that division. Indeed, the prime minister is a member of the Fatah Central Committee, meaning it is a Fatah government, not a nonpartisan government. Moreover, the government represented since formation an official declaration to annul a series of agreements between Hamas and Fatah, starting with Al-Shati’ Agreement of 23/4/2014, which led to the formation of the Consensus Government headed by Rami Hamdallah, then the subsequent Cairo Agreement of 25/9/2014, which defined the tasks of this government and resolved disputes over pending issues, and finally the Cairo Agreement of 12/10/2017, which was supposed to regulate the work mechanisms of the Consensus Government in GS. Afterwards, and since the Palestinian schism and the paralysis of the PLC at the time, followed by its dissolution on 23/12/2018, this government has not sought any votes of confidence from the PLC.

The political backdrop surrounding Mohammed Shtayyeh government’s ascent to power vividly reflects the schism within PA institutions. This backdrop persisted throughout the government’s tenure, spanning even the months of the GS war, the most protracted and intense war in the history of the Israeli occupation. The PA maintained a consistent stance toward Hamas, displaying reluctance to adopt



tangible measures in support of Palestinian resistance or adopt rhetoric aligning closely with Hamas. This stance naturally extended to Shtayyeh government. However, the economic role entrusted to Shtayyeh government was considered the most prominent challenge for the PA, revealing the depth of the Palestinian economic crisis, which has become linked to the Israeli policies regarding Palestinian clearance revenues.

The Shtayyeh government inherited the “clearance” crisis from the Hamdallah administration. This crisis, characterized as “Israeli blackmail and pressure tactics,” has persistently troubled the PA, even during the peak of the schism years.¹ However, it has since developed into a more profound political impasse. For the Israeli Knesset approved, in both first and second readings on 2/7/2018, to deduct from the tax revenues transferred by Israel to the PA the money that the Palestinians allocate to prisoners, others killed by Israeli forces, and their families.² This crisis escalated to a new level with a political dimension linked to the war on GS, when Israel decided to withhold the entire GS’s share of the “clearance” funds. Subsequently, discussions veered toward compromise solutions, such as transferring the “clearance” funds into a third party instead of the PA directly, thus allowing Israel to monitor and supervise the payments.³ The Knesset eventually approved the transfer of these funds to the Norwegian government, leaving GS’s monthly share, amounting to 275 million shekels (about \$73 million) out of 800 million shekels (about \$213 million) in total, deposited with Norway.⁴ Reports suggest that the PA consented to this proposal, intending to allocate payments for retirees and needy families in GS from the WB’s share.⁵

This issue carries grave political implications as it cements Israel’s absolute economic dominance over the Palestinian economy, including control over citizens’ funds. The Israeli tax collection through the “clearance” mechanism functions as a levy on Palestinian trade activities. Combined with direct Israeli actions, such as raids on money exchange shops in WB and the confiscation of their funds—a pattern also seen during the war on GS⁶ with the recent seizure of 200 million shekels (about \$54 million) from the Bank of Palestine in GS⁷—this underscores this ongoing economic crisis facing the PA. The crisis is further exacerbated by the prevention of Palestinian workers from WB from accessing employment in the 1948 occupied territories. These workers’ incomes, along with PA salaries, are crucial components of WB’s economic cycle.

The issue extends beyond the PA's ability to continue paying salaries fully or even partially. This problem became evident when the PA disbursed only 60% of its employees' salaries for December 2023 in February 2024.⁸ However, the ongoing crisis dates back to November 2021, when the PA began paying reduced salaries to its employees.⁹ Beyond its immediate implications, this crisis highlights the PA's inability to confront Israeli policies aimed at controlling and manipulating Palestinian finances, including direct encroachments on individuals' funds. Moreover, it exposes the PA to Israeli extortion, reducing it to a mere security façade that cannot protect its citizens or their assets, bolster Palestinian resilience, or fulfill its economic responsibilities, ultimately undermining its legitimacy. Neither the PA's institutions, including the government led by Shtayyeh, are the result of an electoral democratic process, nor can the PA produce a new political trajectory after the demise of the peace project. Additionally, the PA is unable to provide an independent economic base capable of confronting Israeli policies.¹⁰ This is despite Shtayyeh's affirmation of the goal to sever economic ties with Israel during his tenure as chairman of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR).¹¹

This issue is rooted in the economic policies of the Shtayyeh government. The Shtayyeh government approved the 2022 budget with a deficit of \$558 million.¹² Similar to all budgets approved since 2008, it was not presented to the PLC, resulting in a lack of transparency in Palestinian official policy. This opacity is due to the concentration of powers in the hands of the Palestinian president, who issues laws as presidential decrees, while the Palestinian government published the general budget in a brief and non-detailed manner. Additionally, a summary of the budget proposal was not published or discussed with civil society, further undermining the legislative institution. The semi-annual report, which should analyze the performance of the first half of the year and outline policies for the remaining half, was also not released.¹³ Based on this budget, it was evident that the PA's revenues from internal tax collections it manages, and external taxes collected by Israel, have increased compared to all previous years since 2014. This rise is due to improved tax collection capabilities and increased prices resulting from the Russian-Ukrainian war, which has boosted customs revenues. However, the PA has only been able to pay employees 80% of their salaries throughout the year, with an additional 5% for past dues.¹⁴ This situation indicates that the PA relies heavily on Palestinian citizens for its revenues, but due to the significant rise in prices, it



is unable to pay full salaries to its employees. This raises questions about the PA's ability to strengthen the resilience of Palestinians, especially considering that it operates in a context of national schism and lacks renewed popular legitimacy through elections or national consensus.

Although the government had included an economic reform plan in its budget with aimed at reducing wage costs, it approved the appointment of 1,500 new security personnel across all security forces.¹⁵ This indicates an increasing reliance on security forces, which currently employ 52 thousand individuals, compared to 88 thousand civilian employees. Among these civilians, 55 thousand work in the education sector, 15 thousand in health, and 18 thousand in the administrative apparatus of the PA.¹⁶ The budget of the Ministry of Interior and National Security was 3.6 billion shekels (about \$970 million), excluding direct external support, representing 23% of the total expenditure on PA departments, making it the largest share of the budget.¹⁷

In 2023, the government approved an emergency budget, with disbursements based on available treasury cash flows. The estimated deficit was \$360 million without Israeli deductions, and \$610 million with them.¹⁸ The financial policy that year, and the challenges it faced, continued the previous trend of failing to meet commitments, particularly towards public sector employees, and issues in the approval and management of financial policy. The Shtayyeh government was criticized for not adhering to the Law of the Organization of the General Budget and Public Finances No. 7 of 1998, and for a lack transparency, consultation and inclusivity, ignoring taxpayers' rights to participate in shaping public spending priorities. Moreover, the Decision by Law on the Budget for 2023 granted extensive powers and discretionary authority to both the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister. This was seen "in contravention with Article 61 of the Basic Law, and the Law of the Organization of the General Budget and Public Finances No. 7 of 1998, which asserted that PLC, the legislature, which has the power of issuing laws, has the power to take decisions on shifting between budget items and expenditure appropriations."¹⁹

The performance of the Shtayyeh government can be viewed as a compounded institutional void, with power concentrated in the presidency amid deep national divisions and a political environment where the occupation weaponizes financial leverage to disable the political effectiveness of the PA, including the Shtayyeh

government. In response to the PA's initiative of forming two legal teams, locally and internationally, to follow up on the General Assembly's decision to refer the issue of Israeli occupation to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a legal opinion on the occupation and its presence in the "Palestinian territories,"²⁰ Israel enacted a series of punitive measures against the PA. These measures included new financial deductions,²¹ and the revocation of "VIP cards" from Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki and three Fatah leaders.²² The PA, as articulated by Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh, viewed these policies as efforts to undermine it and push it towards collapse, particularly in light of the ongoing financial deductions from the PA's funds.²³

The financial crisis of the PA and the government's policies towards it are closely tied to the trade union movement, which has at times been the sole manifestation of public action in WB. Consequently, the PA has responded to trade unionism by employing various strategies, including weaponizing the judiciary to delegitimize union strikes. One notable example is the urgent decision by the Supreme Administrative Court in March 2023, which ordered the cessation of the open strike by government school teachers organized by the "Teachers' Movement," following a lawsuit filed by the Ministry of Education.²⁴ The Human Rights Observatory in the Palestinian Bar Association criticized this decision, stating it "lacked the essential elements of a judicial ruling, such as the right to a defense, and failed to ensure a fair trial."²⁵ This was not the first instance of the judiciary being used to halt union strikes. The same court issued a decision in August 2022 to stop the Palestinian Engineers Association's (PEA's) strike,²⁶ and another in September 2023 to stop the Medical Association strike,²⁷ with a similar ruling against the latter in February 2024.²⁸ Other unions, such as the Palestinian Bar Association²⁹ and the Palestinian Federation of Health Professions Association, also engaged in strikes.³⁰

The PA response to these strikes also involved security and political interventions. This included summoning and suspending teachers who were members of the "Unified Movement,"³¹ a parallel union body opposing the General Union of Palestinian Teachers accused of colluding with the government and used by factions within Fatah for internal score-settling.³² The head of the Palestinian Federation of Health Professions Association, who also served as an assistant undersecretary in the Ministry of Health,³³ was suspended. Additionally,



President ‘Abbas issued a decree dissolving the Medical Association and forming an alternative council.³⁴

The Palestinian Bar Association’s strikes were also influenced by these judicial policies. Their core grievance during the July 2022 strike was against the “decree laws amending procedural and enforcement laws” issued by President ‘Abbas, which they viewed as undermining the right to litigation. They also protested against increased litigation fees, highlighting broader issues within the PA’s judicial and legal system.³⁵

In the same context, the Shtayyeh government concluded agreements with several unions, including the General Union of Palestinian Teachers, Medical Association, PEA, Agricultural Engineers Association, Palestinian Federation of Health Professions Association, and Agricultural Engineers Association, to pay them bonuses.³⁶ However, many unions, including the Medical Association, the General Union of Palestinian Teachers, transport workers and the Pharmacists Association, have since stated that the government is either reneging on these agreements or delaying their implementation.³⁷

2. The PA Presidency and Judiciary

After Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023, the United States (US) renewed its focus on the PA, having previously prioritized Arab-Israeli normalization projects over directly addressing the Palestine issue. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with President Mahmud ‘Abbas multiple times, urging the revitalization of the PA to enable it to govern WB and GS.³⁸ Observers interpreted this as a push to reform the PA’s security forces to be more compliant with Israeli security needs, despite existing accusations that these forces already serve this role.³⁹

There was also talk of US proposals conveyed to President ‘Abbas in light of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, suggesting the need to “inject new blood” into the PA. Reports indicated that US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan proposed that President ‘Abbas appoint a deputy and transfer some of his powers to them. Other sources mentioned that the US aimed to transform the PA elite, possibly making President ‘Abbas an honorary president.⁴⁰

The PA then indeed began discussing a reform plan covering the “judicial, security, administrative and financial systems,” which was presented to various countries and donors, according to Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh in late

January 2024.⁴¹ This indicates that the plan is primarily intended for international stakeholders and is linked to the post-war situation in GS, rather than responding to internal Palestinian needs. President ‘Abbas initiated measures within this framework, such as the unexpected dismissal of 12 out of 16 governors, an action described by observers as a significant shake-up within the PA and Fatah.⁴² ‘Abbas followed this with statements about his intention to “inject new blood” into the PA.⁴³

Given the absence of the PLC as a legislative body, all powers within the PA have thus become concentrated in the presidency. The presidency has effectively assumed legislative powers, issuing over 400 presidential decrees from 2007 to August 2022.⁴⁴ Some of these decrees have fundamentally reshaped the judicial system, part of an ongoing process since the Palestinian schism, exemplified by the establishment of the Supreme Constitutional Court in 2016. This move was criticized by the Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council and the Palestinian NGOs Network, which deemed the court’s formation a violation of the Basic Law, the court’s own law, and the Judicial Authority Law, thus breaching the principle of the Supreme Constitutional Court’s independence and neutrality.⁴⁵ The court later ruled to dissolve the PLC.

The concentration of power within the presidency proceeded from the dissolution of the PLC in 2018 to the dissolution of the Supreme Judicial Council in 2019.⁴⁶ This was followed by a series of decrees in 2020 that reorganized the judiciary, including amendments to the Judicial Authority Law and the establishment of regular and administrative courts. The National Coalition for Judicial Reform and Protection and the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) said these decrees undermine any efforts “to reform the judiciary, subordinating it to the executive authority” and that they “contained legislative texts that fundamentally affect the independence of individual judges. They also stripped judges of the most important guarantees of their independence.”⁴⁷ This trend continued in 2021, with the Palestinian Bar Association criticizing these measures as a manifestation of the “thirst for power” driven by personal interests, posing a threat to civil and social peace and the democratic process, and marking this period as the worst for the Palestinian judiciary.⁴⁸

This policy persisted through 2022 and 2023. In 2022, President ‘Abbas issued a series of decrees regulating judicial affairs and procedures. The ICHR described

these as violating the Basic Law and establishing conditions for violations that would affect the right to a fair trial.⁴⁹ President ‘Abbas also issued a decree reconstituting the Supreme Judicial Council under his chairmanship, naming it the Supreme Council of Judicial Bodies and Authorities (SCJBA). This council included the presidents of the Supreme Constitutional Court, High Judicial Council – Cassation Court, Supreme Administrative Court, Security Forces Judicial Authority, the Sharia Judicial Council, the Minister of Justice, the President’s Legal Advisor and the Attorney General.⁵⁰

Thus, it is evident that power in the PA has become concentrated in the executive branch following the suspension and subsequent PLC dissolution. The judiciary has been consistently subordinated to the executive branch, centered around the presidency, which also oversees the Prime Minister’s Office, whose policies align with President ‘Abbas’s directives. This centralization extends to the security forces, which receives special attention from President ‘Abbas. An example of this is the amendment to the law regarding the head of the General Intelligence Service (GIS), stipulating that the head’s tenure is no longer limited by the previously applicable legal retirement age and that the position holds the rank of minister.⁵¹

President ‘Abbas’ administration was marred by internal conflicts within the Fatah movement or the PLO. This included expelling Fatah members who participated in local elections outside the movement’s official lists and revoking diplomatic passports from former officials, such as former PLO Executive Committee secretary and member Yasser ‘Abed Rabbo and his wife, writer Liana Badr.⁵² ‘Abed Rabbo was once a close associate of President ‘Abbas but was relieved of his duties in 2015. Similarly, President ‘Abbas revoked the diplomatic passport of Bassam Abu Sharif, who was a senior advisor to the late President Yasir ‘Arafat.⁵³ Conversely, President ‘Abbas issued a decree expanding the categories eligible for a Palestinian diplomatic passport, including heads and secretaries-general of PLO factions and members of its leadership bodies, both current and former members of the PLO Executive Committee, and the PNC president. However, the decree did not extend this privilege to leaders of factions not part of the PLO, such as Hamas and PIJ, and it excluded the PLC members elected in 2006 and their predecessors due to the council’s dissolution.⁵⁴

President ‘Abbas also issued a decree reorganizing the Board of Trustees of Al-Istiqlal University—The Palestinian Academy for Security Sciences, previously

chaired by Fatah Central Committee member Major General Tawfiq al-Tirawi. Following this, security guards assigned to protect al-Tirawi were withdrawn. According to media leaks, this decision came after severe disagreements between al-Tirawi and Hussein al-Sheikh.⁵⁵

President ‘Abbas’s policies permeate every aspect of the current Palestinian political, institutional and party landscape. This influence is evident in the administration of the Shtayyeh government, the performance of security forces, the conditions within Fatah and the PLO, national relations with other Palestinian factions, and the management of relations with the Israeli occupation. This comprehensive impact is reflected in various spheres, as detailed in specific sections on these topics. Incidentally, between 73% to 88% of Palestinians consistently called for President ‘Abbas’s resignation throughout 2022 and 2023.⁵⁶

Third: Popularity Indicators and Public Action

1. General Elections

The previous agreement for comprehensive national elections (PLC, Presidency and PLO) was nullified after President ‘Abbas in April 2021 cancelled⁵⁷ the elections that were scheduled sequentially for May 2021 (PLC), July 2021 (Presidency), and August 2021 (completing the formation of the PNC).⁵⁸ Although the cancellation was officially framed as a postponement, citing the Israeli occupation’s refusal to permit elections in Jerusalem—a move that could have galvanized a national push to assert Palestinian options against Israeli control—the matter of elections has not been addressed seriously, resulting in a stalemate in national relations ever since.

2. Local Elections

Other forms of elections did occur in the Palestinian sphere, such as local elections. The first phase began on 11/12/2021, following a decision by the Shtayyeh government on 6/9/2021. Despite objections from Hamas and PIJ stemming from the earlier cancellation of general elections and their criticism of unilateral national decision-making, Hamas informally engaged in some local bodies through its members and associates. Independent lists won 71% of the local bodies during this phase. In the subsequent phase in March 2022, Hamas’s participation in major



local bodies became more apparent, albeit still operating under independent lists. Independent lists secured 64.4% of the seats, while party lists captured 36.6%. Lists supported by Hamas, either independently or in collaboration with the PFLP, secured victories in municipalities such as Hebron, al-Bireh, Tulkarm and Qalqilya. Meanwhile, Fatah emerged victorious in cities like Ramallah, Jenin and Nablus.⁵⁹

Hamas participated in these elections through independent lists, alliances with the PFLP, and collaborations with national and public figures, while the PIJ boycotted them. Despite Fatah claiming victory in these elections,⁶⁰ the Central Elections Commission (CEC) clearly announced that independent lists won 64.4% of the seats.⁶¹ This outcome underscores the complexities of local elections in Palestinian society, where tribal and personal considerations often outweigh political ones. This situation suggests a potential decline in Fatah's influence, despite its significant penetration into Palestinian society in WB as the ruling party and its role as a mediator between the PA and civil society, free from persecution by either the occupation or the PA itself. Additionally, President 'Abbas expelled several Fatah members who participated in these elections outside the party's official lists.⁶²

Local elections were not held simultaneously in GS and WB due to Hamas's objections to the unilateral decision made by the leadership of the PA and Fatah.⁶³ However, in the second phase, Hamas sent a letter to the CEC demanding "written guarantees to hold the elections as previously decided," and other guarantees related to the election law, "more specifically the cancellation of forming the Election Court and returning the mandate of adjudicating appeals to the courts of First instance in the West Bank and Gaza." The CEC chairman saw these as political demands that "require addressing the political level, and that the CEC does not have any mandate to decide on any of the matters."⁶⁴ However, Hamas's stance on holding local elections began to change in the last third of 2023. In August 2023, Hamas invited party figures and civil society representatives to a consultative meeting on holding local elections in GS.⁶⁵ This was followed by a meeting between the CEC chairman, Hanna Nasir, and representatives of Palestinian factions in GS.⁶⁶ They entrusted Nasir with a message to Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh, demanding a decision to hold local elections in GS as soon as possible.⁶⁷ Hamas had declared its readiness for these elections, but the subsequent Israeli war on GS left no room for such elections.

3. Trade Unions

The PEA elections in August 2021 saw Fatah lose the position of the PEA head to an alliance of Hamas and the PFLP, although Fatah secured most of the PEA's seats.⁶⁸ In December 2022, Fatah won the elections for engineering offices and companies. These elections receive little media coverage because many engineers do not work in engineering offices or in the engineering field at all. Additionally, some offices do not participate in these elections, and there is often no competition, making the voter preferences apparent since voting is office-based, revealing the office's political leanings.⁶⁹ This situation highlights the intersection of professional and economic considerations with electoral voting in professional association elections.

While Fatah also won Palestinian Bar Association elections in May 2022,⁷⁰ it lost the Medical Association elections in WB to a bloc supported by Hamas, the left and independents. Fatah similarly lost the Pharmacists Association elections in GS to an alliance of Hamas, PIJ and the PFLP.⁷¹ In WB, Hamas often presents its members on independent lists or support independent lists, reflecting the complex security environment there. Indeed, Hamas is a banned organization by the Israeli occupation, which prosecutes its members simply for their affiliation, let alone for their activities within its frameworks or in its name. This applies to student blocs as well.

4. Student Councils

The Islamic Bloc at Birzeit University, known as the Islamic Loyalty Bloc, affiliated with Hamas, consecutively won in the 2022 and 2023 elections. In the 2022 elections, the Islamic Bloc won 28 out of 51 seats, which constitute the seats of the university's student council, compared to 18 seats for the Martyr Yasir 'Arafat Bloc, the student framework of Fatah, and the Democratic Progressive Student Pole, the student framework of the PFLP, won 5 seats. The Progressive Student Union, the student framework of the Palestinian People's Party (PPP), and the Student Unity Bloc, the student framework of the DFLP, did not secure any seats.⁷²

This result is the best in the history of the Islamic Bloc at Birzeit University. Its previous highest results were in 2015 with 26 seats and in 2004 with 25 seats. Notably, the Islamic Bloc regained its strength in 2015 with that significant



outcome. The bloc, which won most of the elections from 1996 to 2007, began to suffer after the Palestinian schism, and it boycotted the elections in 2010 and 2011. It returned to victory in 2015, a testament to its perseverance and ability to confront the security harassment campaigns of both Israel and the PA. This resurgence in 2015, and the subsequent increase in seats in 2022, cannot be viewed separately from the 2014 war on GS and the Sword of Jerusalem Battle (dubbed by Israel Guardian of the Walls) in 2021, indicating the impact of the resistance in GS on the general mood of the Palestinian society in WB.⁷³

In 2023, the Islamic Bloc won 25 seats, while the Martyr Yasir ‘Arafat Bloc secured 20 seats, and the Democratic Progressive Student Pole won 6 seats. The Unified Left Bloc did not win any seats.⁷⁴ These results indicate the main competition is between the two primary factions, Hamas and Fatah, throughout the years in which elections were held and both blocs participated, regardless of the circumstances faced by these factions. From 1996 to 2023, the lowest number of seats won by the Islamic Bloc was 19, and the highest was 28, which is an exceptional result that defies the norm. The lowest number of seats won by the Student Youth Movement, later named the Martyr Yasir ‘Arafat Bloc, was 17, and the highest was 26. The years 2010 and 2011 are excluded from this comparison because the Islamic Bloc did not participate in those elections. Additionally, no elections were held at Birzeit University in 2020 and 2021.⁷⁵

Birzeit University elections have always garnered special attention due to several factors, including their relative independence from the PA policies, which lends their results a representative significance. This significance is further supported by the university’s central location in WB and its liberal nature.

The 2023 student elections at An-Najah University yielded a surprising outcome. The Islamic Bloc, operating under the name “Muslim Palestine Bloc,” won 40 out of 81 seats, compared to 38 seats won by the Student Youth Movement, known as the Martyrs Bloc. The Student Work Front Bloc, affiliated with the PFLP, obtained 3 seats, while the Democratic Pole Alliance failed to secure any seats.⁷⁶ These elections were particularly significant as they marked the first time since 2017, when the Martyrs Bloc (Fatah) claimed 41 seats, the Muslim Palestine Bloc (Hamas) attained 34 seats, and the Leftist Student Bloc secured 6 seats.⁷⁷

An-Najah University has been described as a security stronghold run by former Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah,⁷⁸ facing severe security challenges, including the

repression of students by the university guards and security forces. In June 2022, Lawyers for Justice described the suppression of student protesters at the university as “bloody events,” stating that it involved “beatings of dozens of university security staff, reaching the point of serious harm.” They reported the use of “sharp tools.... pepper gas [spray] in the face of the students, and the beating of one of the university lecturers while he was among the students,” also they reported the “chasing students in the public streets and shooting from weapons and guns.” They claimed that “the university has become a place of human rights violations and attacks on human dignity.”⁷⁹ Despite the formation of an investigation committee by the university’s Board of Trustees and its recommendations, which the board accepted, including the decision to relieve the security director of his duties, put him on open-ended leave, and dismiss six university security staff members,⁸⁰ the persecution of students by the university administration continued. The university administration expelled a student for a Facebook post.⁸¹ In early 2024, university security again assaulted protesting students.⁸² In July 2022, gunmen shot Nasser al-Din al-Shaer, a lecturer at An-Najah University, after the university security assaulted him the previous month.⁸³ Nasser al-Din al-Shaer had previously served as deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education in Isma‘il Haniyyah’s tenth government and as Minister of Education in the subsequent Unity Government. The shooters were never apprehended.⁸⁴

Moreover, following the Birzeit University elections, the PA security forces arrested the newly elected student council president,⁸⁵ who was later detained by Israeli forces along with several other students from the university.⁸⁶ The president of An-Najah University’s student council was also detained by Israeli forces.⁸⁷ Israel continued to pursue members of the Islamic Bloc in Palestinian universities, as the bloc is considered a banned organization by Israel.

Elections were also held in March 2023 at Hebron University, where the Martyr Yasir ‘Arafat Bloc won 25 seats compared to 16 seats for the Islamic Bloc, with no other blocs achieving any results.⁸⁸ The last elections at Hebron University had been held in 2019, where the Student Youth Movement won 30 seats compared to 11 seats for the Islamic Bloc.⁸⁹ Elections at the Palestine Polytechnic University in March 2023 saw the Student Youth Movement win 21 seats, the Islamic Bloc 19 seats, and the leftist Student Pulse Bloc win 1 seat.⁹⁰ The last elections at the Palestine Polytechnic University before these, were held in 2019, and the last



elections in which the Islamic Bloc participated were in 2017. While the Student Youth Movement lost the 2022 elections at Bethlehem University to the PFLP with 17 seats to 14,⁹¹ they won the 2023 elections with 17 seats to the PFLP's 14.⁹² As for Al-Quds University, the last elections were held in 2019, which the Islamic Bloc boycotted.⁹³ The Islamic Bloc returned in 2023, demanding that elections be held at the university.⁹⁴

The obstacles facing student elections and activities in WB universities include the pursuit of Islamic Bloc activists by both Palestinian and Israeli authorities across all universities without exception,⁹⁵ the delay and prevention of elections for consecutive years in some universities, and accusations of bias against the Islamic Bloc by some university administrations. Despite these challenges, the question of why university elections have not been held in GS universities has persisted. Elections are regularly held at The Islamic University and the University College of Applied Sciences using an individual voting system, with the Islamic Bloc winning unopposed due to boycotts by other blocs. However, elections have been suspended at al-Azhar University since 2007, as well as at al-Aqsa University and al-Quds Open University. The issue of university elections in GS seems to be tied to several complexities, the most significant being the lack of agreement on the criteria for a proportional representation system to be applied across all universities. The Islamic Bloc demands that this system include al-Azhar and al-Aqsa Universities, not just The Islamic University and the University College of Applied Sciences. Meanwhile, leftist forces demand a zero percent electoral threshold, which the major blocs reject. Additionally, the conflict between the faction of the former Fatah leader, Muhammad Dahlan, and the faction of President Mahmud 'Abbas plays a significant role in the refusal of universities dominated by Fatah in GS to hold elections.⁹⁶

Nonetheless, after its victory in the Birzeit University elections, Hamas announced its readiness to hold elections in all GS universities based on a proportional representation system and urged Fatah to agree.⁹⁷ Student blocs were prepared to sign an agreement to hold these elections in all GS universities according to proportional representation. These elections were scheduled to take place over four consecutive weeks in the spring of 2024. The first week was set for The Islamic University and the University College of Science and Technology, the second week for al-Azhar University and its branches, the University College

of Applied Sciences, and the Arab College of Applied Sciences. The third week would involve al-Aqsa University and its branches, Palestine University and Gaza University. The fourth week⁹⁸ was reserved for Israa University, al-Quds Open University and its branches, and the Palestine Technical College. However, the war on GS that began on 7/10/2023, created new circumstances that prevented these elections from happening.

5. Popularity Indicators Based on Opinion Polls

Hamas experienced a surge in popularity following the Sword of Jerusalem Battle in May 2021. A poll conducted on 15–19/9/2021, showed that 71% believe that Hamas came out a winner in its last war with Israel. Two-thirds believe that the launching of rockets by Hamas at Jerusalem and Tel Aviv came in defense of Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* Mosque, and 45% thought Hamas was the most deserving of representing and leading the Palestinian people, compared to only 19% who thought that Fatah under President ‘Abbas is more deserving.⁹⁹

Ten months following the war, in March 2022, the popularity of the Fatah movement experienced a resurgence. Concerning the suitability of representing the Palestinian people, the majority (31%) stated that Hamas is more deserving of representing and leading the Palestinian people compared to 29% who chose Fatah, led by President ‘Abbas. However, support for Fatah increased notably concerning legislative elections, with survey participants anticipating Hamas to secure 36% of the vote, while Fatah was projected to garner 42%.¹⁰⁰

Throughout 2022, public opinion polls indicated a balance between the two movements, Hamas and Fatah. In June 2022, 33% said that “Hamas is more deserving of representing and leading the Palestinian people and only 23% say Fatah under ‘Abbas’ is more deserving.” This time, Hamas was expected to win the PLC with 36% of the popular vote compared to 35% for Fatah.¹⁰¹ In September 2022, Hamas maintained its status as the most deserving representative of the Palestinians, although Fatah edged ahead by two points regarding the likelihood of winning the PLC.¹⁰² By the end of 2022, Hamas continued to be perceived as the foremost candidate for representing and leading the Palestinians, with similar prospects for winning the PLC elections as Fatah.¹⁰³

The findings of the opinion polls in March 2023 closely mirrored these fluctuating percentages, with Hamas being slightly favored as the representative



and leader of the Palestinians over Fatah. Fatah was anticipated to secure victory in the legislative elections by a narrow margin.¹⁰⁴ However, a significant shift occurred in a June 2023 poll by the same pollster, which showed that 31% believed Hamas was worthy of representing and leading the Palestinian people, compared to 21% for Fatah. The poll also predicted that Hamas would secure victory in the legislative elections with 34% of the vote, surpassing Fatah's 31%.¹⁰⁵ This shift was likely influenced by the victory of the Hamas student bloc in the elections at Birzeit and An-Najah universities, as well as the Israeli aggression on the GS in May 2023, which gave Hamas an advantage. However, this gap narrowed again in a September 2023 poll, with Hamas remaining the most deserving of representing and leading the Palestinian people according to 27% of respondents, compared to 24% for Fatah. Fatah was again expected to win the legislative elections with 36% of the vote compared to 34% for Hamas.¹⁰⁶ The significant surge in support for Hamas came after Operation al-Aqsa Flood. In a December 2023 poll, 54% viewed Hamas as the most deserving of representing and leading the Palestinian people, compared to 13% for Fatah. If legislative elections were to be held, Hamas was projected to secure 51% of the vote compared to 19% for Fatah.¹⁰⁷

6. Summary of Popularity and Public Action

The outcomes of elections and opinion surveys indicate a relative equilibrium between Hamas and Fatah. Despite the developments in the Palestine issue and the endeavors of both movements, these two groups maintain dominance over the Palestinian populace, with no third party significantly impacting this dynamic. Palestinian public sentiments fluctuate in response to evolving events and circumstances, such as increased backing for Hamas following major wars, like those in 2014, 2021 and the 2023 Operation al-Aqsa Flood. Notably, Operation al-Aqsa Flood precipitated a notable surge in support for Hamas. However, this endorsement is tempered by the ongoing war in GS and the dire humanitarian crisis stemming from Israeli aggression against Palestinians in GS. Indeed, while the execution of Operation al-Aqsa Flood by Hamas' military wing, Al-Qassam Brigades, initially appeared as a significant triumph in the history of the conflict with the occupation, it cannot singularly dictate support for the movement or serve as the sole determinant in evaluating the various actors and their roles. The true impact will unfold post-war, contingent upon its resolution and the subsequent trajectory of Hamas.

While Hamas continues to be seen as deserving to represent and lead the Palestinian people in public opinion polls, it does not receive the same level of expectation for winning legislative elections. It nearly matches or slightly lags behind Fatah in this regard, highlighting the difference between abstract support for Hamas and the objectives of voting for it, which include various motivations, such as economic concerns. This disparity is also evident in municipal election results, where influential factors are not limited to political aspects but also include tribal and personal factors.

Another factor is the influential actors within the Palestinian forces, as the Palestinian public differentiates between Fatah led by President ‘Abbas and Fatah without his leadership. Indeed, in all the aforementioned opinion polls over two years, the percentage demanding President ‘Abbas’ resignation ranged from 73% at the beginning of 2022 to 88% at the end of 2023. Additionally, the chances of Fatah in any presidential election vary depending on who represents the movement. In all the cited polls, Haniyyah outperforms both President ‘Abbas and Mohammad Shtayyeh if elections were held between Haniyyah and either of them. However, Haniyyah loses to Marwan Barghouthi. This indicates the negative evaluation by the Palestinian public of both President ‘Abbas and Mohammad Shtayyeh, reflecting a negative assessment of the PA itself. It also suggests a personal dimension in this evaluation, as the public attributes the failures of the institution or Fatah to the policies of its leaders without delving into the structural issues of these entities. Therefore, the public’s hope rests on Marwan Barghouthi, who is imprisoned by Israel and not held accountable for the failures of the PA and Fatah.

Fourth: The PLO

The PNC internal regulations stipulate that the council convenes “regularly at the invitation of its president once a year, or in extraordinary sessions at the invitation of its president based on a request from the Executive Committee or from a quarter of the council members.”¹⁰⁸ Despite this, the last sessions of the council were held on 30/4–1/5/2018, after a nine-year gap since the previous session, which was described as a special meeting, held on 26–27/8/2009.¹⁰⁹

Since the PA establishment and its entry into the occupied territories in GS and Jericho in 1994, the PNC has convened only three times, in 1996, 2009 and 2018.¹¹⁰



The purpose of the 1996 session was to amend the provisions of the Palestinian National Charter “by canceling the articles that contradicted the exchanged letters between the PLO and the Government of Israel on 9 and 10 September 1993.”¹¹¹ The 2009 session aimed to fill vacancies in the PLO Executive Committee due to the deaths of six of its members, to prevent the loss of its legitimacy in case of the death of one more member, as stated by President ‘Abbas at the time.¹¹² The 2018 session was particularly significant, as it was convened to reject the US President Donald Trump’s plan for the Palestine issue, commonly known as the “Deal of the Century,” and his actions such as recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, moving the US embassy there, and closing the PLO office in Washington. Apparent important decisions were made, such as declaring that the transitional period stipulated in the agreements signed in Oslo, Cairo and Washington, along with all their obligations, was no longer valid. The PLO Executive Committee was mandated to suspend recognition of Israel, implement the PCC decisions to cease all forms of security coordination, and liberate from the economic dependency established by the Paris Protocol.¹¹³ However, none of these decisions were implemented. Additionally, the session aimed to renew legitimacy for President ‘Abbas and the PLO Executive Committee by re-electing President ‘Abbas and electing a new PLO Executive Committee.¹¹⁴ This session was boycotted by Hamas and PIJ because it contradicted the preparatory committee meetings of the PNC in Beirut,¹¹⁵ and also by the PFLP because it violated the agreements signed regarding the formation of a unifying PNC.¹¹⁶

These events highlight the ongoing disruption of the PNC since the PA establishment. This indicates that leveraging the PLO to benefit the PA policies and its powerful elite predates the current PA leadership. However, this issue has taken on a different dimension since the Palestinian schism in 2007. Furthermore, the numerous decisions made in PLO institutions (PNC, PCC, and PLO Executive Committee) over the past years regarding the reassessment of the relationship with Israel have not been implemented, undermining the credibility and seriousness of these decisions among various partisan and popular factions.

The PCC situation is similarly troubling, despite convening three times in 2018. Indeed, it met in 2018 after a three-year hiatus following its 2015 session, and then twice in 2022, once on 6–7/2/2022 and once in an emergency consultative session with only its Palestine-based members on 9/5/2022. This was all contrary

to the PCC internal regulations of the council, which state that “the council shall meet regularly at the invitation of its president once every three months, or in extraordinary sessions at the invitation of its president based on a request from the PLO Executive Committee or a quarter of the council members.”¹¹⁷ The PNC did not convene for the first time following the establishment of the PA until 1996. Similarly, the PCC did not meet until 1999,¹¹⁸ and its sessions have remained irregular since then. This indicates that the transformation of the PLO into an institution for the emergency use of the PA’s elite began with the establishment of the PA.

The PCC meetings in 2018 were subjects of divisive debate, with some boycotted by Hamas, PIJ and the PFLP, while others saw additional boycotts by the DFLP and PNI.¹¹⁹ The same situation occurred at the PCC meeting held on 6–7/2/2022. Hamas boycotted this meeting, claiming it was convened “unilaterally, away from national consensus,” and was absent along with “the majority of factions and significant and influential Palestinian components.” Hamas rejected any claim of representation of the Palestinian people “without popular mandate through ballot boxes,” and called for the formation of “a single front that prioritizes the reform, rebuilding and activation of the PLO, to be the guardian of the national project in all its components.”¹²⁰

The PIJ also boycotted the meeting for the same reasons, with its leader Muhammad al-Hindi stating that it “does not represent the Palestinian people, nor even the PLO.” According to him, it “only represents those present: Fatah and its affiliated factions, which collectively secured only two out of 132 seats in the PLC elections (last held in 2006),” adding that the meeting was convened “for factional and personal interests within the PA to arrange positions for its men within the PLO institutions.”¹²¹

The PFLP also boycotted the meeting, stating that convening it was a step that “deepens the division and fragmentation within the Palestinian arena and reinforces the approach of exclusivity and dominance within this national institution.” They further asserted that it “bypasses previous national agreements to organize the Palestinian home and conduct comprehensive elections, blocking efforts to end the division and restore unity.”¹²² The PNI also boycotted the meeting “out of respect for the popular will aspiring to reform the PLO,” and called for it to be convened only after a national dialogue.¹²³



The PPP withdrew from the council meetings after participating in the opening session, citing objections to the agenda.¹²⁴ It demanded that the PCC sessions “implement the decisions of previous councils,” arguing that “the Palestinian arena does not need new decisions; what is needed is the implementation of what was agreed upon in the PNC and PCC and the decisions of the meeting of the general secretaries.” Additionally, the PPP objected to the decisions to elect the PNC president and to make the Executive Committee independent of PNC, stating that these actions contradicted the internal regulations of both the PCC and PNC.¹²⁵

The insistence of the DFLP leadership and political bureau to participate in the PCC meetings led to the resignation of dozens of its members in WB. The resigning members viewed the DFLP’s participation as “granting unwarranted legitimacy to President Mahmud ‘Abbas’s policy and strengthening his unilateral control, especially after many previous PCC decisions were not implemented.” While the DFLP in Syria and Lebanon supported participation, opposition was concentrated among its members in WB and GS “due to the practices of the PA and because the Oslo project, which has not ended, is evolving into a security project.” Furthermore, it was mentioned that the DFLP received a commitment from President Mahmud ‘Abbas to pay part of its allocations from the Palestine National Fund (PNF), which had been previously suspended, with a commitment to start monthly payments from the beginning of 2022, amounting to approximately \$70 thousand per month.¹²⁶

The decisions made by the PCC in this session clearly reflect the internal dynamics within the Fatah movement. Hussein al-Sheikh, a member of Fatah Central Committee and the head of the General Authority of Civil Affairs (GACA) in the PA, was promoted to the PLO Executive Committee, replacing Saeb Erekat, who passed away two years earlier. Mohammad Mustafa, chairman of the Palestinian Investment Fund (PIF) and former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Economy (2013–2015), was elected as an independent member of the PLO Executive Committee. Ramzi Rabah was elected to the PLO Executive Committee for the DFLP, replacing Taysir Khaled, who had resigned. Ramzi Khoury was elected as the PNF Chairman, making him a member of the PLO Executive Committee according to its regulations.¹²⁷ Previously, Khoury served as Director General of the office of the late President Yasir ‘Arafat.

During this PCC session, Rawhi Fattouh was elected as the PNC speaker, alongside ‘Ali Faisal and Musa Hadid as deputy speakers and Fahmi al-Za‘arir as secretary. These elections followed the resignations of the previous PNC Speaker Salim Za‘nun, Deputy Speaker Constantine Qarmash, and Secretary Mohammed Sobaih, all tendered during the same session.¹²⁸ The rationale behind these elections was grounded in the assertion that the PNC, during its May 2022 session, had delegated its authority to the PCC. While this claim was reported by news outlets, and it was not explicitly stated in the PCC’s decisions during the aforementioned session.¹²⁹

Regarding the stance towards Israel, the PCC resolved that, in accordance with the conclusion of the transitional phase outlined in signed agreements, including the obligations imposed on the PLO and the PA, all commitments to the occupying state would be terminated. This encompassed the withdrawal of recognition of Israel until it recognizes the State of Palestine within the borders of 4/6/1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and ceases all settlements activities and forms of security coordination.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, similar to previous resolutions, such as the 2015 decision to halt security coordination, these resolutions remained unimplemented.¹³¹ President ‘Abbas’s demands regarding Hamas have consistently contradicted these PCC resolutions. Even during the Israeli war on GS, he demanded that Hamas recognizes what he referred to as “international legitimacy decisions” and fully adhere to them, asserting that “no faction can be part of the organization [PLO] if it rejects international legitimacy.”¹³² These stipulations were reiterated by Riyad al-Maliki, the PA’s Foreign Minister, as prerequisites for Hamas’s inclusion in the PLO,¹³³ suggesting a lack of seriousness in the PCC’s decisions to rescind recognition of Israel. Not only did the leadership of the PA/ PLO fail to implement these decisions both in practice and in principle, but they also continued to act counter to them. Furthermore, they imposed conditions on Hamas for its PLO membership that ran contrary to these decisions, even amid the Israeli war on GS, where some within the PA viewed this war as Hamas’s isolated struggle rather than a collective Palestinian endeavor. At the onset of the war, President ‘Abbas stated, “Hamas’s policies and actions do not reflect the will of the Palestinian people,” although these remarks were later amended by the official Palestine News and Information Agency (WAFA) to omit reference to Hamas.¹³⁴ Similar statements were echoed by the Palestinian presidency spokesperson, Nabil Abu Rudeineh,



who said, “What is happening between Hamas and Israel has nothing to do with us... The coup that occurred removed Hamas from Palestinian legitimacy,”¹³⁵ although he later withdrew these statements.¹³⁶

The PCC session held on 9/5/2022, was termed as an urgent consultative meeting, attended solely by the members present in Palestine. PNC Speaker Rawhi Fattouh called for the session to address “strategies to confront and respond to the aggression on Jerusalem and its holy Islamic and Christian sites, notably *al-Aqsa* Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.” While no extraordinary resolutions were passed, the PCC notably urged the PLO Executive Committee to execute the decisions of both the PNC and PCC, particularly those made during the previous session in February 2022.¹³⁷ These decisions encompassed halting security coordination and rescinding recognition of Israel, underscoring a recurrent rhetorical renewal of such decisions devoid of tangible outcomes, as acknowledged by the councils themselves.

The primary objective of these sessions was mainly to formally renew the legitimacy of PLO institutions, serving the interests of the PA elite amidst internal competition within the Fatah movement, and ongoing rivalry with Hamas. With no legislative body in either the PLO and the PA, power in Palestinian institutions is heavily concentrated in President ‘Abbas’ hands, further compounded by overlapping roles between the PLO and the PA. Illustrating this concentration of power is the decree-law issued by President ‘Abbas, leaked to the media, making the PLO a department of the state.¹³⁸ This decree-law was not published in the official gazette because the leaked version was retracted. Instead, an amended version of the decree-law was later published.¹³⁹ The legal advisor to President ‘Abbas clarified that the decision was made due to misunderstanding circulating on social media regarding certain phrases in the decree-law related to state stipulations, which was not published in the official gazette and is not in effect. The President reissued the decree-law with clarified and rephrased ambiguous phrases to address this.¹⁴⁰ This implies that the leaked version may have been intentionally released to assess public reaction. If officially approved and not retracted, this decree-law would undermine the representative status of the PLO as “the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people,”¹⁴¹ effectively placing the PLO under the authority of the PA. Indeed, the term “state” in this context refers to how the PA institutions designate themselves, following a decree-law issued by President

‘Abbas in February 2022 and published in the official gazette in March 2022. This decree-law mandates that “the term ‘Palestinian National Authority’ wherever it appears in the original law is to be replaced with ‘State of Palestine,’ and the term ‘President of the Palestinian National Authority’ wherever it appears in the original law is to be replaced with ‘President of the State of Palestine.’”¹⁴²

On another front, President ‘Abbas officially abolished the PLC as an institution, following its prior dissolution. He issued a presidential decree in April 2022, published in the official gazette in May 2022, stating that the “General Secretariat of the Legislative Council, with all its employees, components and facilities is placed under the direct responsibility of the President of the Palestinian National Council,” until a new PLC is elected.¹⁴³ This effectively makes the PNC president simultaneously the head of the non-existent PLC, potentially providing a legal cover for temporarily assuming the presidency after President ‘Abbas’s departure. Indeed, the Basic Law of the PA stipulates that if the position of President of the PA becomes vacant, “the President of the Palestinian Legislative Council shall assume the duties of the President of the [Palestinian] National Authority temporarily for no more than 60 days, during which free elections shall be held to elect a new president in accordance with the Palestinian Electoral Law.”¹⁴⁴ If the PA becomes the Palestinian state, the PLO will transform into one of its departments, and the PLC is subordinated to the PNC, an institution of the PLO. This sequence of decisions seems to aim at establishing a legal framework for organizing the succession of President ‘Abbas after his departure by reverting to the PLO institutions that have replaced the PLC. Consequently, this might be a mechanism being explored within the Fatah elite to manage their differences and find an alternative to holding general elections. This mechanism was previously used by the PA in 2009, by renewing the legitimacy of President ‘Abbas and the PLC through the PCC.¹⁴⁵ Since the PLO established the PA, the principle of using the PLO to provide legal cover as an alternative to elections has been on the mind of the PA and Fatah elite, even if the form of legal manipulation changes.

Confirming this context for this sequence of actions—holding PCC sessions and the laws and decrees issued by President ‘Abbas regarding the PLO—is the appointment of Hussein al-Sheikh to the position of secretary-general of the PLO Executive Committee.¹⁴⁶ This position had been vacant since the death of Saeb Erekat in November 2020. Subsequently, in the distribution of tasks within the



PLO Executive Committee, Hussein al-Sheikh was assigned the role of head of the Negotiations Department, a position previously held by Saeb Erekat.¹⁴⁷ These are significant positions within the PLO Executive Committee, although the effectiveness of its departments has diminished since the establishment of the PA. However, assigning Hussein al-Sheikh as secretary-general increases his chances of competing to succeed President ‘Abbas, and the Negotiations Department has remained active. By adding the Negotiations Department to the GACA, al-Sheikh consolidates political and administrative institutions entrusted with communication with the Israelis. Except for the PNF, which was assigned to Ramzi Khoury, the other PLO Executive Committee departments have no actual function.

The effort to deploy and highlight the PLO in the first half of 2022 can be seen as a response to renewed activities perceived by the PLO elite as attempts to challenge the organization’s representative status. These activities include calls to form a national front,¹⁴⁸ a movement that gained momentum after President ‘Abbas cancelled the general election project agreed upon in 2021.¹⁴⁹ Other activities include the PCPA and the Palestinian Popular Conference – 14 Million.

In this context, the statements from the PLO leadership rejecting “undermining the organization and creating alternative entities” and condemning “the movements aimed at undermining the legitimacy of the organization, advocated by parties that do not believe in the organization but work to undermine it” should be understood.¹⁵⁰ These statements were repeated in 2023 by President ‘Abbas¹⁵¹ and Fatah,¹⁵² as 2023 did not witness significant movements from PLO institutions, unlike 2022, which began with the aforementioned PCC session.

Fifth: Other Palestinian Activities

1. Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad

The PCPA convened in Istanbul on 26–27/2/2022. This conference had initially launched on 25–26/2/2017. In its concluding statement, it declared its establishment with the aim of activating the role of Palestinians abroad in the Palestinian national struggle; reaffirming the call for the right of return to the entirety of the historic, usurped land of Palestine; addressing the severe repercussions resulting from the catastrophic Oslo Accords, which were concluded without the Palestinian people’s

input; and calling on various segments of the Palestinian people, with their diverse perspectives and activities, to convene for a comprehensive popular conference.

Although the conference did not position itself as an alternative to the PLO, it emphasized that “the mission of developing the national role of Palestinians abroad and involving them in Palestinian political decision-making should be based on restructuring the PLO as the legitimate representative of all Palestinians.”¹⁵³ However, Fatah criticized the conference, describing it as divisive and “a continuation of the division led by Hamas,” and “an attempt to circumvent and undermine the status of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.” Fatah claimed that Hamas and the parties involved in organizing the conference had initially proposed themselves as alternatives to the PLO and warned that it would “firmly and strongly confront any attempts to undermine the status of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.”¹⁵⁴

Certainly, the threat of countering the PCPA has indeed resulted in a weakening of the outcomes of the conference during the five years between its first and second sessions. This challenge is compounded by the difficulty of organizing Palestinian activities in many countries worldwide, where such activities are often unwelcome, particularly in Arab countries. Furthermore, the conference has become a focal point of polarization due to attacks from the Fatah movement and the leadership of the PLO, leading many individuals and groups to hesitate in participating. Nonetheless, the conference successfully convened over a thousand delegates from fifty countries and elected Munir Shafiq as its chairman. Additionally, a new general assembly, comprising 333 members was elected, headed by Simán Khoury. Subsequently, the general assembly elected Ahmad Muhaisen as chairman of the new secretariat consisting of 45 members.¹⁵⁵

The closing statement of the PCPA second conference called for “the formation of a united national front of Palestinian forces, factions and personalities to assume national responsibility,” citing “the failure of all attempts to end the schism and rebuild Palestinian national institutions and references for more than fifteen years.” The statement criticized President ‘Abbas’s decision, which was perceived as turning the PLO into a department affiliated with the PA, considering it a “diminution of the PLO, a persistence in marginalizing its role and status, and deepening of division and disagreements in the Palestinian arena.”¹⁵⁶



The idea of establishing a national front remained a recurring theme in the PCPA speeches throughout the subsequent period.¹⁵⁷ One of its notable activities was the launch of a forum for Palestinian national dialogue in Beirut on 20/5/2023. This event saw participation of prominent Palestinian figures from abroad, attendees from inside Palestine, and representatives of Palestinian institutions and resistance factions. The Secretary-General of the conference, Ahmad Muhaisen, called for “building a united national front to coordinate Palestinian efforts, enhance coordination between internal and external entities, support the resilience of the Palestinian people, and strengthen Palestinian cohesion in various regions.”¹⁵⁸

2. European Palestinians Conference

The European Palestinians Conference held its twentieth session on 27/5/2023 in the city of Malmö, Sweden, under the slogan “75 Years On... We Will Return.” The inaugural conference took place in 2003 in London, and the nineteenth session was held online in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference typically features cultural, artistic, political and folkloric events, aimed at connecting Palestinians in Europe with Palestine and advocating for the right of return. It organizes convoys from various European countries to the conference venue, and includes parallel conferences such as the Palestinian Engineers in Europe, the Palestinian Women in Europe and other related activities.

This conference was also criticized by the Fatah movement, which stated that it “works to divide the Palestinian ranks.. and bypass legitimate Palestinian frameworks, in a transparent attempt by some to revive plans to dismantle the PLO.”¹⁵⁹ The PLO, through its Secretary-General Hussein al-Sheikh, also condemned the conference as suspicious. Al-Sheikh said, “This conference aims to undermine the unity of the Palestinian people’s representation through the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of our people, and to fracture the Palestinian ranks and divide our communities abroad.”¹⁶⁰ Despite these criticisms, the conference’s closing statement, affirmed that the PLO is one of the most significant achievements of the Palestinian people, and that it belongs to the Palestinian people. It stated, “It is not permissible to confiscate or empty it of its content,” and called for “reforming it on democratic bases to truly be the umbrella under which all Palestinians can unite.”¹⁶¹

The twentieth session of the conference faced criticism from Swedish media, which linked the conference to Hamas and criticized some Swedish politicians who participated. The conference refuted these accusations in a detailed press

conference,¹⁶² emphasizing that “the conference operates within the framework of European laws and is not affiliated with any institution, entity, or faction,” and accusing Swedish media affiliated with the Israel lobby of orchestrating the campaign against it.¹⁶³ Subsequently, in June 2023, Dutch authorities arrested Amin Abu Rashed, president of the European Palestinians Conference Foundation. The foundation accused the Dutch authorities of acting on malicious Israeli information linking Abu Rashed to Hamas, suggesting it was an attempt to hinder humanitarian activities supporting the Palestinian people and political events opposing the occupation.¹⁶⁴

3. Palestinian Popular Conference – 14 Million

The Palestinian Popular Conference – 14 Million emerged as an independent initiative comprising activists, organizations and personalities from both inside and outside Palestine, aiming to restore the prominence and vitality of the Palestine issue by renewing the PLO and electing new Palestinian leadership. The first session of the conference was held on 5/11/2022, in Gaza City. However, the PA security forces, acting on orders from the Minister of Interior, prevented it from being held in Ramallah. They surrounded the headquarters of the Popular Coalition in the city and detained ‘Umar ‘Assaf, the coordinator of the Palestinian Popular Conference – 14 Million, for several hours. The Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council and the NGO’s Network considered this a “very dangerous step for the future of the existing Palestinian political system and social fabric, and it damages Palestine’s image internationally.”¹⁶⁵

The preparatory committee of the conference issued a statement condemning this arrest and demanding his immediate release. Meanwhile, the PNC speaker criticized the conference organizers, accusing them of bypassing the PLO.¹⁶⁶ In contrast, the conference affirmed in its closing statement that it “aims to rebuild, develop and activate the PLO to restore its leadership role in the national struggle to save the national liberation project.” The conference formed a national guidance committee comprising members from the WB, GS, the 1948 occupied territories and the diaspora regions to work on achieving its demands and goals. This required the conference to emphasize “holding national and popular activities to reignite the national liberation movement in Palestine and the diaspora and creating a popular pressure bloc to push towards changing the reality of the Palestinian leadership, both in approach and form, to lead its national struggle.”¹⁶⁷



The experience of the Palestinian Popular Conference – 14 Million with the PA in the WB was repeated the following year (2023). On 1/3/2023, the Palestinian security forces prevented the conference from holding a meeting aimed at calling for Palestinian elections by announcing a memorandum signed by 150 political and social figures calling for the convening of the PNC and conducting comprehensive elections, including for the PNC. They closed the office of the Popular Coalition where the conference was supposed to be held. After the closure of the coalition headquarters, the organizers moved to the offices of Wattan TV in Ramallah, but the security forces followed them and prevented them from meeting there. This action was condemned by the ICHR.¹⁶⁸ Following the Israeli war on GS after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Israeli forces arrested ‘Assaf,¹⁶⁹ on 24/10/2023, as part of a wide and open-ended arrest campaign aimed at curbing the popular uprising of Palestinians in WB in support of the resistance in GS. ‘Assaf was one of the prominent figures in popular activities opposing the Israeli war and supporting Palestinians in GS.

It is observed that at the level of reviewing these three important activities—the level of Palestinians in Europe, the level of PCPA, or the general level embodied by the Palestinian Popular Conference – 14 Million—that the leadership of the PA, the PLO, and the Fatah elite oppose these activities. They work to thwart and prevent them, accusing them of circumventing the PLO and seeking to create an alternative leadership. Regardless of the motives, this results in weakening Palestinian effectiveness, imposing stagnation on the Palestinian scene, and aligning with Israeli efforts to counter such activities. For example, the Netherlands arrested Amin Abu Rashed, head of the European Palestinians Conference Foundation, based on Israeli information, and the Israeli occupation arrested ‘Umar ‘Assaf, coordinator of the Palestinian Popular Conference – 14 Million. This is despite these activities affirming their commitment to the PLO as a crucial achievement for the Palestinian people that must be revived and activated based on elections and a new struggle-oriented foundation to eliminate the Oslo Accords and their repercussions. When considering all of this, along with the disruption of the general elections agreed upon in 2021, the boycott of major national forces of the PCC session in 2022, and the concentration of the Palestinian institution in the presidency after dissolving the PLC and annexing it to the PNC, and restructuring the judiciary, it divides the Palestinian scene beyond

the typical bifurcation between Hamas and Fatah to a broader level. This places the leadership triangle (PLO, PA and Fatah) against a wide spectrum of Palestinians, which became sharply evident in the Israeli war on GS since 7/10/2023.

Sixth: National Internal Relations and the Internal Conditions of Palestinian Factions

1. Palestinian Reconciliation... Two Isolated Steps

The intra-Palestinian national relations and the internal conditions of each faction intricately linked to the broader internal Palestinian situation. There is significant overlap between the policies of the PA with its various institutions, the instrumentalization of the PLO as mentioned in all previous files, and security coordination as will be discussed, and the internal national relations and conditions of Palestinian factions. Therefore, the stagnation characterizing the Palestinian national situation across all these areas, remaining unchanged, with apparent efforts by the elite of the triangle (PLO, PA and Fatah) to suppress any public activity aimed to breaking the stagnation and revitalizing the Palestinian struggle, has inevitably manifested as stagnation in internal national relations.

The Istanbul dialogues on 22/9/2020, and the subsequent discussions were the last seemingly fruitful talks between Hamas and Fatah. After several rounds, both parties agreed to hold general elections, including legislative and presidential elections, and a reformation of the PNC. Hamas conceded its demand for simultaneous elections and accepted Fatah's requirement for elections "according to a unified list and full proportional representation, considering the nation as a single electoral district."¹⁷⁰ There were even political rumors at that time that Hamas and Fatah were considering running in the elections with a joint list.¹⁷¹ However, this entire trajectory ended abruptly with President 'Abbas's decree in late April 2021,¹⁷² canceling the elections under the pretext of postponement due to the Israeli occupation's prevention of holding elections in Jerusalem.

Since April 2021, the reconciliation issue had been dormant until Algeria extended an invitation to convene a national conference for the factions involved. Algeria began publicizing this initiative towards the conclusion of 2021. On 6/12/2021, Algerian President 'Abdelmadjid Tebboune, during a press conference



with President ‘Abbas, announced his country’s intention to host a comprehensive conference for Palestinian factions.¹⁷³ Subsequently, on 16/1/2022, Algeria hosted representatives of six Palestinian factions— Hamas, Fatah, PIJ, PFLP, DFLP and PFLP–General Command (PFLP-GC)—for separate discussions aimed at exploring the potential for progress in the Palestinian reconciliation efforts.¹⁷⁴

Algeria’s efforts yielded results after a considerable period, marked by the convening of the “Reunification Conference for Achieving Palestinian National Unity,” on 11–12/10/2022. The conference involved 12 factions from the PLO, along with Hamas and PIJ.¹⁷⁵ Ultimately, on 13/10/2022, the “Algiers Declaration” concluded these discussions, following disputes arising from President ‘Abbas’s insistence, conveyed through Fatah’s representative in the dialogue, ‘Azzam al-Ahmad, on mandating the proposed national unity government in the draft “Algiers Declaration” to adhere to the so-called “international legitimacy resolutions.” Hamas, PIJ and PFLP-GC objected to this demand, resulting in the complete removal of the national unity government clause to resolve the impasse.¹⁷⁶

The “Algiers Declaration” provisions were notably vague, aligning them more closely with general principles that are theoretically undisputed. These principles underscored the significance of national unity, political collaboration through electoral processes, the implementation of unspecified practical measures to reconcile divisions, the empowerment and activation of the PLO, the restructuring of the PNC via elections based on full proportional representation wherever feasible, the consolidation of Palestinian institutions, the activation of the mechanism involving general secretaries, and the urgent organization of general presidential and legislative elections in GS and WB, including Jerusalem, the recognized capital of the Palestinian state, in accordance with established laws, with a timeframe of one year from the date of signing.¹⁷⁷ Notably, this latter clause was the most specific, establishing a deadline of one year for these elections, a provision consistent with previous agreements among national stakeholders. Furthermore, the Constitutional Court, in its ruling to dissolve the PLC, urged President ‘Abbas to declare legislative elections within six months of the decision’s publication in the official gazette.¹⁷⁸

Despite the Algiers Declaration, which outlined the establishment of a joint Algerian-Arab team to oversee the implementation of the agreement’s provisions in collaboration with the Palestinian side, there has been no tangible progress on a practical level. Prior developments indicated that achieving success in this

regard was improbable, particularly following President ‘Abbas’s cancellation of elections, unilateral convening of PCC sessions, and restructuring of the frameworks and structures of the PLO without regard for previous national agreements. Subsequent decrees and laws altered the status of the PLO and PLC. Furthermore, President ‘Abbas’s insistence on imposing his political preferences by requiring national forces participating in authority institutions to adhere to what he terms “international legitimacy” contradicts the reviews that PLO institutions are supposed to conduct regarding recognition of Israel, security coordination and commitment to agreements with Israel. This indicates that the failure to achieve reconciliation over recent years stems not from lack of ideas, understandings, or agreements—of which the Palestinians have signed many—but rather due to a lack of political willpower.¹⁷⁹

It was apparent that neither Fatah nor Hamas could reject the Algerian invitation. This was not only to avoid the accusation of obstructing reconciliation but also to demonstrate respect for Algeria. Algeria, which, despite its deep-rooted ties to the Palestinian struggle, has its own dispute with Morocco concerning Western Sahara. Morocco’s normalization agreement with Israel led to US recognition of its sovereignty over Western Sahara. In 2021, Algeria was the only Arab state to support the PA’s budget, providing 53% of external aid. Other contributors included the World Bank, the US (for supporting Jerusalem hospitals), and the Palestinian-European Socio-Economic Management Assistance Mechanism (*Mecanisme Palestino-Européen de Gestion et d’Aide Socio-Economique*—PEGASE).¹⁸⁰ Therefore, Algeria stood as the sole Arab state to offer support to the PA during that period. Moreover, President ‘Abbas is committed to maintaining positive relations with Arab states, while Hamas viewed the Algerian invitation as a significant opportunity to enhance its Arab relations with a prominent Arab country that has a historical connection to the Palestine issue.

The second step commenced with a gathering of the secretaries-general of the Palestinian factions in the newly established city of El Alamein, Egypt. President Mahmud ‘Abbas presided over the meeting, which was convened at his invitation following consultations with Cairo.¹⁸¹ Eleven Palestinian factions, along with the PNC speaker, participated in the event. Notably, Hamas was represented by a sizable delegation led by its leader Isma‘il Haniyyah. However, the PIJ abstained from attendance, citing the PA’s refusal to release its detainees as the reason for their boycott.¹⁸²

The circumstances surrounding the meeting in Egypt did not suggest the likelihood of significant breakthroughs this time. Held amidst a backdrop of heightened political arrests in WB, a situation the PIJ's decision to boycott the conference underscored the tense atmosphere. The PIJ, perceiving itself as a prominent figure in resistance efforts, particularly in Jenin Refugee Camp (RC) and other northern WB regions, reacted to the PA's crackdown on its members in these regions.¹⁸³ Consequently, the meeting of the secretaries-general ended without issuing a formal statement. Instead, President Mahmud 'Abbas delivered a speech advocating for the establishment of a committee to sustain "dialogue on the various issues and topics that were addressed."¹⁸⁴

Previously, 'Abbas met with Hamas leader Isma'il Haniyyah in Ankara on 26/7/2023, where he declined to release Palestinian detainees held by the PA in the WB.¹⁸⁵ Following the factions' meeting, 'Abbas and Haniyyah had a phone call to emphasize the "prompt formation of the follow-up committee for the meeting of the secretaries-general,"¹⁸⁶ Musa Abu Marzuq, a member of Hamas' political bureau, stated that 'Abbas intended for the meeting to be purely ceremonial, devoid of any substantive outcomes. Hamas' participation, according to Abu Marzuq, was in response to the Egyptian invitation,¹⁸⁷ signifying Hamas' desire not to upset Egypt, particularly in light of Algeria's assumption of the lead role in the reconciliation project the previous year, a role traditionally held by Egypt.

The idea of holding a meeting of the secretaries-general of the factions was proposed by President 'Abbas amid rising resistance in WB, particularly in its northern areas, where the PA was targeting resistance cadres. This tension risked igniting a broader conflict in WB, underscored by the expulsion of senior Fatah leaders, including Deputy Fatah Chairperson Mahmud al-'Aloul, Sabri Saidam and 'Azzam al-Ahmad, by Palestinian youth during the funeral of 12 killed in Jenin RC. Eight of these belonged to the Jenin Brigade of al-Quds Brigades, the PIJ military wing,¹⁸⁸ and were killed during the largest Israeli invasion of the camp since the second *Intifadah* (uprising) on 3/7/2023. In response, some factions within Fatah blamed Hamas for the expulsion of their leaders and criticized some of its members and their business interests.¹⁸⁹ This situation prompted President 'Abbas to visit the RC for the first time in 11 years.¹⁹⁰ 'Abbas's call for the meeting of the secretaries-general can be seen as an attempt to defuse the unprecedented popular anger towards Fatah and the PA, as vividly demonstrated by the expulsion of Fatah leaders from the funeral procession in Jenin RC.

2. Fatah Movement.. Incomplete Arrangements

In November 2021, Fatah, through Central Committee member Jibril Rajoub announced, that its eighth conference would be held on 21/3/2022.¹⁹¹ However, the conference did not take place and was postponed several times. Initially rescheduled for the second half of May 2022 by President Mahmud ‘Abbas,¹⁹² it was delayed again without a set date.¹⁹³ The latest proposed date, suggested by President ‘Abbas and unanimously adopted by the Revolutionary Council of Fatah, was 17/12/2023.¹⁹⁴ This decision was described by some Fatah leaders as decisive and strategic, highlighting ‘Abbas’s commitment to renewing the movement’s leadership and continuing its historical role in leading the Palestinian people towards independence and statehood.¹⁹⁵ However, on 31/1/2024, the movement announced another postponement of the eighth conference due to the Israeli war on GS, which prevented participation from GS.¹⁹⁶

Various sources indicate that Fatah’s failure to adhere to the scheduled dates for the eighth conference stems from internal power struggles. These conflicts are evident in efforts by some factions to exclude Marwan Barghouti, a current Fatah Central Committee member and prisoner in Israeli jails, whose supporters, both inside and outside the prisons, were denied important positions within Fatah’s structure. Additionally, some individuals, including Fadwa Barghouti, Marwan Barghouti’s wife, were not invited to attend the Revolutionary Council meetings despite being council member.¹⁹⁷ Certain power centers within Fatah opposed the representation of prisoners at the conference citing logistical difficulties as a pretext.¹⁹⁸

Unlike other Palestinian organizations, Fatah does not have a fixed schedule for its general conferences or internal elections. According to Fatah’s internal charter, the general conference should be convened every five years by the invitation of Fatah Central Committee. This schedule can be postponed due to compelling circumstances by a decision of the Revolutionary Council. Additionally, an extraordinary session must be called within two weeks upon requests by more than one-third of its members, more than half of the Revolutionary Council members, or the Fatah Central Committee.¹⁹⁹ However, Fatah has historically not adhered to this regular schedule. For instance, the sixth conference in 2009 occurred 21 years after the fifth conference in 1988. This period saw significant regional transformations and changes in the conflict with the Israeli occupation,



including Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and Fatah's position on it, Fatah's participation in Madrid Peace Conference, the signing of the Oslo Accords, the establishment of the PA, and the death of President Yasir 'Arafat. Despite these major events, Fatah did not convene its general conference until 2009, amidst a conflict with Hamas and under new policies towards the occupation established by President 'Abbas, which redefined Fatah as a party of the PA. This shift became more evident in the seventh conference held in 2016.²⁰⁰

Fatah's internal arrangements were reflected in those within the PLO, as previously mentioned. Among the key actions was the elevation of Hussein al-Sheikh to the PLO Executive Committee, his appointment as the secretary-general of the Committee, and the head of the Negotiations Department, while Rawhi Fattouh was appointed as the PNC head. Additionally, Fatah assigned Muhammad al-Madani, a Fatah Central Committee member, as the General Commissioner for Mobilization and Organization in the northern regions (WB), succeeding the late leader Jamal Muhaisen, who passed away after a period of illness.²⁰¹ Al-Madani also chairs the "Committee for Interaction with Israeli Society," a PLO offshoot, from which he submitted his resignation to President 'Abbas in 2020 in protest against accusations by Fatah leaders of encouraging normalization with Israel. However, President 'Abbas did not accept his resignation.²⁰²

Later, Fatah tasked Mahmud al-'Aloul, the deputy head of the movement, with the Mobilization and Organization department, while al-Madani was given the Popular Organizations portfolio, succeeding Tawfiq al-Tirawi.²⁰³ In 2022, Fatah experienced deep internal conflicts, highlighted by al-Tirawi's dismissal as the head of the Board of Trustees of Al-Istiqlal University—The Palestinian Academy for Security Sciences. The security guards assigned to protect him were withdrawn,²⁰⁴ and he was also removed from his responsibility over the Popular Organizations within the movement. Media sources reported that these actions were driven by rival factions within Fatah seeking to exclude al-Tirawi in the context of the struggle for President 'Abbas's succession.²⁰⁵ This coincided with the leak of documents from the committee investigating the death of former President Yasir 'Arafat, which was led by al-Tirawi.²⁰⁶ Concurrently, there were leaks attributed to al-Tirawi attacking Fatah Central Committee members Hussein al-Sheikh²⁰⁷ and Jibril Rajoub, and General Intelligence Service (GIS) Chief Majid Faraj.²⁰⁸ Other leaks attributed to Hussein al-Sheikh criticized President 'Abbas.²⁰⁹ Observers saw

these incidents as reflections of the internal power struggle within Fatah over the leadership and succession.

Over the past two years, Fatah has faced confrontations with national factions, reflecting the PA's response to the resistance in WB. This was exemplified by the expulsion of senior Fatah leaders from a memorial of those killed during the Jenin RC invasion in July 2023,²¹⁰ which escalated tensions between Fatah and Hamas in WB.²¹¹

Earlier, various factions had expressed their disapproval of the participation of PA leaders in the 'Aqaba security summit in February 2023, attended by Egyptian, Jordanian and Israeli officials. The Palestinian delegation included Secretary-General of the PLO Executive Committee Hussein al-Sheikh, GIS Chief Majid Faraj and President 'Abbas's diplomatic advisor Majdi al-Khaldi. The primary goal of the meeting was to implement a Palestinian security plan devised by US Security Coordinator General Michael Fenzel, aimed at "restoring PA control over the northern West Bank," pursuing Palestinian armed groups, and dissuading the PA from presenting a Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlements.²¹²

The participation of Palestinian representatives in this meeting was widely criticized by the resistance factions, including Hamas, PPP, DFLP, the resistance factions in Jenin,²¹³ PNI, PFLP²¹⁴ and PIJ.²¹⁵ This disapproval was reiterated in March 2023 concerning the Sharm El-Sheikh summit, a continuation of the 'Aqaba security summit, involving the same countries and aiming to de-escalate the WB.²¹⁶ This summit was also condemned by Palestinian factions including Hamas, PIJ, PFLP, DFLP, PPP and the Palestinian Democratic Union (Fida).²¹⁷

Following Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the subsequent Israeli war on GS, factions such as Hamas, PIJ, PFLP, DFLP and PFLP-GC formulated a national solution initiative in Beirut, in December 2023. This initiative called for "rejecting all solutions and scenarios regarding GS's future, and presenting a national Palestinian solution based on forming a national unity government stemming from comprehensive national Palestinian consensus."²¹⁸ This initiative was endorsed by 12 Palestinian factions, but observers noted that Fatah's leadership seemed distant from this consensus.²¹⁹

The strife within Fatah extended to the Lebanese arena, where Hamas accused elements of the National Security affiliated with Fatah in the WB of opening fire at the funeral of its member Hamza Shahin, who was said to have died in the



line of duty.²²⁰ The shooting during Shahin's funeral in the Burj al-Shamali RC near Tyre, Lebanon, resulted in three fatalities,²²¹ marking the beginning of 2022. Hamas demanded the surrender of those responsible for the shooting,²²² and Fatah later agreed to Hamas's demands, including "condemning the crime at Burj al-Shamali RC, recognizing the three deceased as martyrs of the Palestinian people, determining criminal responsibility based on Lebanese judicial findings, and facilitating the work of the judiciary by both movements to uncover the truth."²²³

In 'Ain al-Hilweh RC in southern Lebanon, clashes erupted between Fatah and elements of extremist Islamist organizations, excluding 'Osbat al-Ansar, as they announced.²²⁴ The clashes were later contained after 11 people were killed and 40 others injured.²²⁵

3. Hamas.. Nothing New Except Operation al-Aqsa Flood

Hamas conducted its periodic elections in 2021, which are held every four years. Consequently, there was no significant internal activity within the movement throughout 2022 and 2023. However, one of the challenges faced by the movement, besides the ongoing tension with Fatah, was two Israeli assaults on GS, the first in August 2022 and the second in May 2023. PIJ was at the forefront of these confrontations, while Hamas did not participate in the wars, raising questions among skeptics about the movement's commitment to its resistance program,²²⁶ its relationship with PIJ, and whether it was aiming to improve the economic conditions for Palestinians in GS or entrench itself as the governing authority in the Strip under implicit agreements with Israel. Nonetheless, it became clear that Hamas was preparing for a major operation characterized by strategic deception, which it executed on the morning of 7/10/2023, naming it Operation al-Aqsa Flood and linking it to the Sword of Jerusalem Battle. The movement's military spokesperson for Al-Qassam Brigades stated that preparations for October 7 had begun at the end of that battle.²²⁷

Operation al-Aqsa Flood, followed by an unprecedentedly intense and prolonged Israeli war on GS, placed Hamas at the forefront of the Palestinian scene and atop the regional and international political agenda. As the war, described as a genocide, continued for an unprecedented duration in the history of Israeli wars, and as Hamas persisted, the movement continued to hold a significant number of Israeli captives as a result of Operation al-Aqsa Flood. The war created a humanitarian catastrophe inflicted by Israel on Palestinians,

resulting in tens of thousands of deaths and injuries, internal displacement of the entire population of GS, and imminent starvation for the northern residents who remained in their areas. A serious project for the transfer of Palestinians from GS also emerged. The most pressing plan on the international, especially US, and regional agenda became “the day after” and “Gaza without Hamas.” Meanwhile, Hamas sought to build national consensus to thwart such projects,²²⁸ while the PA and Fatah appeared to be awaiting the outcome of the war. Elements within the PLO, Fatah and the PA expressed unsympathetic views towards Hamas in its confrontation with the Israeli war on GS. President ‘Abbas was quoted saying that Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people, and similar statements were made by Palestinian presidency spokesperson, Nabil Abu Rudeineh. Additionally, they demanded adherence to “international legitimacy decisions.” Hussein al-Sheikh vowed to hold Hamas accountable after the war,²²⁹ and Chief Justice and Presidential Advisor Mahmud al-Habbash said that President ‘Abbas condemned Hamas in all his calls and meetings with world leaders and that the PA was ready to manage GS post-war, even accepting the presence of an international or Arab force to assist in this.²³⁰ Al-Habbash also pledged to hold Hamas accountable,²³¹ while PLO Executive Committee member Ahmad Majdalani described Hamas as a “terrorist organization.”²³² These statements were often retracted or modified to soften problematic phrases.

Experts argue that it is impossible for Israel to eliminate Hamas, as its existence is not tied to governing GS or maintaining large military formations. However, the movement’s position within the Palestinian national movement, its popular support, and its regional and international relations will depend on how the Israeli war on GS concludes and Hamas’s ability to secure a prisoner exchange deal that could impact the national elite, especially Fatah. Indeed, Hamas aims to secure the release of prominent prisoners like Marwan Barghouthi, a Fatah Central Committee member, and Ahmad Sa‘adat, the PFLP Secretary-General.²³³

At the level of Hamas’s internal structure, Israel assassinated Hamas’ deputy head and the head of its WB region, Saleh al-‘Aruri, in Lebanon, along with military leaders of the movement in Lebanon.²³⁴ This left Zaher Jabarin, al-‘Aruri’s deputy, in charge of the WB region. Israel announced a joint intelligence mission among its various security arms to pursue Hamas leaders abroad.²³⁵ In any case, the Israeli war on GS will likely lead to extensive internal discussions within Hamas about its structures, frameworks, internal organization and decision-making processes.



4. PIJ's Elections... For the Second Time

PIJ completed its internal elections in March 2023, marking the second such experience since its founding, following the 2018 elections, which were the first in the movement's history.²³⁶ These elections occurred after the former Secretary-General Ramadan Abdullah Shallah fell into a coma and was unable to lead. The recent elections reconfirmed Ziad Nakhleh as the Secretary-General by acclamation and renewed Akram al-'Ajouri's responsibility for the movement's military operations from Damascus. Representing GS, the elected political bureau members were Nafeth 'Azzam, Yusuf al-Hasayneh, Muhammad Hamid, Walid al-Qutati and Ahmad al-Mudallal. Representing the diaspora, alongside al-'Ajouri, were Muhammad al-Hindi, 'Ali Shahin and Ihsan 'Ataya. However, the movement did not announce the election results for the WB due to the security conditions there. This raises questions about the ability of resistance movements to establish leadership structures in a highly complex and sensitive security environment like the WB and the effectiveness of the organizational alternatives adopted by some resistance movements to address this issue. The most recent PIJ elections went through several stages, with the first stage concluding in GS in June 2022.²³⁷

PIJ led two significant battles from GS. The first called Unity of the Arenas Battle, occurred in August 2022. This battle followed a series of events triggered by the Israeli forces' arrest of the movement's leader in Jenin, Bassam al-Saadi, on 1/8/2022, in a deliberately humiliating manner.²³⁸ Given that PIJ's projects in WB included establishing the Jenin Battalion in Jenin RC, which had become a symbol of resistance in the northern WB after the Sword of Jerusalem Battle, the Unity of the Arenas Battle aimed to protect and strengthen this experience.

The second battle led by PIJ took place in May 2023 and was called the Revenge of the Free Battle. It was a response to Israeli aggression on GS, and in both battles, several senior military PIJ leaders were killed.²³⁹ There was debate surrounding Hamas's decision not to directly participate in these battles, but rather to operate through the joint operations room of the resistance factions and provide logistical support. This sparked controversy regarding the relationship between the two movements. This issue was clarified during Operation al-Aqsa Flood, carried out by Hamas. Prior to this operation, Hamas aimed to streamline the numerous military groups in GS, which had numbered 40, into 10 cohesive military factions.

This strategy was articulated by Ayman Nofal, a member of the military council of Al-Qassam Brigades,²⁴⁰ who later was killed in the war during Operation al-Aqsa Flood.

5. PFLP... Reappointment of the Secretary-General

The PFLP concluded its Eighth National Conference in May 2022, under the slogan: “The Eighth National Conference – A Significant Step Towards Strengthening Internal Unity, Unity of Will and Action, Democracy, Reviving the Front and Enhancing its Popular, National and Struggle Presence.” PFLP held its eighth conference nine years after its seventh national conference in 2013, despite internal regulations stipulating that the national conference should be held every five years. According to these regulations, the national conference is the highest authority in the party, tasked with discussing and deciding on reports from the General Central Committee and the central control committee, approving and amending the party program and internal regulations, addressing all major issues concerning the party, the revolution and the nation, and electing the General Central Committee and the central control committee.²⁴¹

In its eighth conference, the PFLP re-elected its Secretary-General Ahmad Sa’adat for an exceptional third term, honoring the sacrifices of prisoners, as the internal regulations do not allow for a third term.²⁴² Jamil Mezher was elected as Sa’adat’s deputy, replacing Daud Muragha (aka Abu Ahmad Fuad), and the political bureau was elected. The renewal rate in the General Central Committee was 53%, and in the political bureau, it was 75%, with many leaders stepping down from their positions in adherence to the internal regulations and prioritizing democratic practices.²⁴³ The PFLP emphasized the unique challenges faced by WB, which endures ongoing persecution. Therefore, the conference directed the elected leadership to take necessary actions to ensure full representation of WB in all elected leadership bodies.²⁴⁴

The General Central Committee is the highest organizational body after the National Council and the Party Conference (the General National Council), acting on behalf of the National Conference between its sessions, meeting every four months at the invitation of the political bureau, and electing the Secretary-General, the deputy Secretary-General, and the political bureau. The political bureau is responsible for the party’s duties between the General Central Committee sessions.²⁴⁵

Since its inception, the PFLP adopted Marxist-Leninist ideology, aiming to evolve into a Marxist-Leninist party. However, following global shifts, particularly the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the PFLP's commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideology gradually waned. In its recent eighth conference, the PFLP adopted the following statement to define its ideological foundation in its internal regulations: "The PFLP is guided by Marxist thought and its core, the dialectical materialist historical method, alongside all progressive, democratic and humanistic elements within the intellectual and cultural heritage of our Palestinian people, the Arab nation, and humanity at large."²⁴⁶ This formulation expands the movement's ideological framework, positioning Marxism as just one aspect of its broader reference.

Politically, the PFLP has reverted to its earlier literature advocating for a "democratic state of Palestine across the entire national Palestinian land" within the context of "liberating all of Palestine from the river to the sea."²⁴⁷ This stance omits the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, which it had endorsed at the 19th PNC session in Algiers in 1988 and had remained present in the PFLP's subsequent conferences.²⁴⁸

6. The DFLP Conferences and Resignations

In 2018, the DFLP held its Seventh General National Conference, the highest political and legislative authority within the organization. This session resulted in the election of a new Central Committee, which subsequently elected a new political bureau. This bureau is headed by Secretary-General Nayef Hawatmeh, with Qais 'Abdul Karim and Fahd Suleiman serving as his deputies, and includes 25 members representing the Front's regions and organizations across WB, GS, Lebanon, Syria, Europe, the Americas, Arab countries, Asia and Africa.²⁴⁹ According to the Front's internal regulations, the eighth conference is to be held every 4–5 years.

The DFLP Tenth National Conference in GS was held in July 2023, preparing for the Eighth General National Conference. Delegates from the GS region were elected for the upcoming event.²⁵⁰

Similarly, the DFLP's organizations in Syria held the first session of the Eighth General National Conference and voted on candidates for the DFLP Central Committee, which will be elected in the upcoming sessions. The DFLP's organizations in Syria also held their 21st regional conference, electing a new leadership for the Front's organizations in Syria and a daily executive leadership.²⁵¹

The DFLP in Lebanon concluded its 15th conference, electing a new leadership, which in turn elected a regional leader, a deputy and a daily executive leadership.²⁵²

Previously, in April 2022, Qais ‘Abdul Karim “Abu Leila” resigned from his position as the Secretary-General of the DFLP in WB, while retaining his position as Deputy Secretary-General to Nayef Hawatmeh, and head of the political bureau and DFLP Central Committee in WB. Majida al-Masry, a member of the political bureau, was elected to fill the position of Secretary-General of the region.²⁵³ Later, in February 2023, Qais ‘Abdul Karim resigned from all his leadership positions while maintaining his DFLP membership.²⁵⁴ It was previously noted that dozens of members of the DFLP in WB resigned due to the leadership’s insistence on attending the PCC session of the PLO held in February 2022. The DFLP also witnessed resignations in March 2021 due to disagreements over the Front’s list for the legislative elections,²⁵⁵ which were later cancelled by President ‘Abbas.

7. The PNI... The General National Conference

The PNI concluded its General National Conference on 14/1/2023, electing its general leadership body and Secretary-General Mustafa Barghouti. Leadership bodies in all governorates were also elected after holding 61 branch conferences, including governorate and sector conferences for women and youth.²⁵⁶

Secretary-General Mustafa Barghouti highlighted the PNI new programs, which include the national liberation program, the strategy of struggle and resistance to end the occupation and apartheid system, the democratic program advocating for the separation of powers and democratic elections for the PNC, PLC and the presidency, as well as the social justice program, national resilience, defense of women’s rights, and combating poverty and discrimination in all its forms.²⁵⁷

Seventh: Security Coordination – A Constant in PA’s Policies

The Bennett-Lapid government, which lasted from 13/6/2021 to 29/12/2022, placed special emphasis on continuous security and economic coordination with the PA through then-Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz, without any political component. This reminds us of a series of decisions taken by various PLO institutions to halt security coordination without adhering to them, recalling



President ‘Abbas’s declaration on 19/5/2020, of the PLO and the State of Palestine withdrawing from all agreements and understandings with the US and Israeli governments, including security commitments.²⁵⁸ This stance appeared rhetorical during the strained relationship between the PA and the Trump administration but was later reversed on 17/11/2020, by Hussein al-Sheikh, the GPCA head in the PA, who announced the resumption of relations with Israel.²⁵⁹

The PA continued this path with the Bennett-Lapid government, as explained by then-Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, who stated that 90% of the relationship with the PA concerns security coordination.²⁶⁰ This is consistent with the security perspective expressed by the Israel Security Agency—ISA (*Shabak*) through its then-head Nadav Argaman, who said, “The stability of the PA is an Israeli interest to ensure continued security coordination and to keep Israel from managing and funding the needs of millions of Palestinians.”²⁶¹ The PA maintained this course throughout 2022 under the Bennett-Lapid government, without any practical effects of the PCC’s decision in February 2022 to halt security coordination.²⁶² President Mahmud ‘Abbas declared towards the end of 2022 that “the agreements with Israel are in place and will not be withdrawn,” and announced at the same time that the PA would also deal with Benjamin Netanyahu.²⁶³

The PA began 2022 with meetings at various levels with Israeli officials, including a meeting between Hussein al-Sheikh and Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid in January.²⁶⁴ These meetings prompted a statement from then-Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz, emphasizing the importance of maintaining such dialogues with PA leadership, including President Mahmud ‘Abbas. Gantz expressed his concern that weakening the PA could result in Hamas gaining strength.²⁶⁵ He clearly stated that his government had decided “to strengthen ties with the Palestinian Authority, thus also weakening Hamas.”²⁶⁶

Despite Israeli incursions into Palestinian city centers leading to numerous casualties, security meetings between the PA leadership and Israeli security services continued. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades – Nidal al-Amoudi Brigade blamed Israel’s ability to reach its fighters in Nablus on this security coordination.²⁶⁷ Media sources reported a meeting between Hussein al-Sheikh, Maayan Israeli (Israeli Defense Minister’s chief of staff), and Ghassan Alian (Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories—COGAT),²⁶⁸ and another meeting in Tel Aviv with Omer Barlev (Israeli Minister of Public Security). These sources indicated that

one of the goals of these meetings was to prevent escalation during Ramadan at *al-Aqsa* Mosque.²⁶⁹ Israeli media claimed that President ‘Abbas instructed Fatah activists in Jerusalem to prevent any escalation at *al-Aqsa* Mosque, even with their bodies.²⁷⁰ The month of Ramadan in 2022 posed a significant challenge to Israeli plans for *al-Aqsa* Mosque, especially with Religious Zionism parties’ plans coinciding with Jewish Passover. Israeli forces and settlers’ incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque continued throughout the month, some of which were violent. For instance, the incursion on 15/4/2022, resulted in over 160 injuries and more than 400 Palestinians arrested.²⁷¹

The events at *al-Aqsa* Mosque in 2022 were reflected in security-related meetings, such as President Mahmud ‘Abbas’s meeting with the new Shabak Chief Ronen Bar, in Ramallah. Israeli media claimed the meeting was “in the context of recent events at *al-Aqsa* Mosque and the security tension in the West Bank.”²⁷² This was the second meeting of its kind between President ‘Abbas and Ronen Bar, the first being in Ramallah in November 2021 to discuss the PA’s economic conditions and security coordination.²⁷³

Meetings related to economic facilitations and security arrangements continued at other levels, such as President ‘Abbas’s meeting in Ramallah with then-Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz in July 2022. “The two agreed to continue security coordination and to avoid unilateral measures,” Gantz’s office said.²⁷⁴

Security coordination persisted despite a severe economic crisis for the PA, which struggled to pay its employees’ salaries in full. This crisis was partly due to Israel’s periodic deductions from Palestinian clearance funds. As Israeli incursions into WB areas escalated, both the PA and the Bennett-Lapid government sought middle-ground solutions. These efforts represented a continuation of policies initiated by the Bennett-Lapid government since its formation. Such policies included economic and logistical facilitation, highlighted by a meeting between Gantz and President ‘Abbas at the end of 2021.²⁷⁵ In a related development, it was revealed that Israeli security agencies managed a financial fund to transfer money to the PA in coordination with the Israeli Civil Administration or COGAT, and with the agreement of the Israeli Ministry of Finance.²⁷⁶ This action reflects the Israeli security establishment’s view that maintaining the stability of the PA is beneficial and necessary to circumvent measures imposed by Israeli politicians on the PA. However, this also undermines the PA in the eyes of Palestinian society.



Despite the Israeli security establishment's keen interest in the stability of the PA and viewing its support as an Israeli security interest, as stated by the head of the Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate (Aman),²⁷⁷ it remains stringent in retaining unrestricted control over the PA's vital areas. Indeed, the Israeli Shabak has consistently refused to reduce the Israeli army's powers within Area A, which should be under the PA's sole security responsibility. Ariel Sharon effectively annulled this during Operation Defensive Shield in 2002. Since then, Israeli forces have had free movement in Area A for raids, arrests and assassinations, while some Israeli circles believe that the PA can be relied upon for part of the tasks carried out by the Israeli army.²⁷⁸ This has been a longstanding position of the Shabak, which proposed imposing a blockade on the northern WB as resistance there increased in 2022.²⁷⁹

This Israeli approach places the PA in a complex situation. The entities most involved with it, such as the security establishment, are characterized by extremism and intolerance in strategic security issues or addressing immediate security pressures that the PA cannot handle promptly. Meanwhile, Israel continues its open operation to eliminate resistance in WB, dubbed "Break the Wave," which began on 31/3/2022, following a series of significant operations in March that resulted in the deaths of 11 Israelis and the injury of 27 others.²⁸⁰

These circumstances necessitated attempts to devise approaches to reduce Israeli security pressure in favor of giving the PA a chance to contain the growing armed resistance in the northern WB. One proposal by the PA was to halt Israeli incursions into Area A for four months as a "testing period to calm the situation," which Israel did not accept.²⁸¹ However, Israel indicated it was considering limiting its operations in WB and seeking other steps to enhance the Palestinian security forces' capabilities. This included allowing military training for Palestinian forces in Jordan under US supervision, and approving the transfer of weapons and ammunition to Palestinian forces to strengthen their power against armed resistance factions, including the possibility of forming special Palestinian forces trained and armed to operate in the northern WB.²⁸² Additionally, Israel agreed to let the PA own two helicopters for senior officials' travel.²⁸³

These approaches continued through direct communication between PA officials and Israeli security officials,²⁸⁴ under clear US management.²⁸⁵ The political promise from the Bennett-Lapid government conveyed through Israeli

Defense Minister Gantz, who had extensive contact with the PA leadership, was limited to recognizing a Palestinian entity that falls short of statehood.²⁸⁶

These arrangements led the PA to attempt to dismantle armed resistance formations in the northern WB, achieving notable success against the “Lions’ Den” formation based in Nablus. These efforts included persuasive measures to encourage members of the formation to surrender to the PA security forces,²⁸⁷ as well as more aggressive actions such as the arrest of key leaders, particularly those associated with Hamas, such as Mus‘ab Shtayyeh.²⁸⁸ These actions led to confrontations with the public and local residents in Nablus,²⁸⁹ while the Israeli forces targeted and killed many fighters from the formation.²⁹⁰ The management of the “Lions’ Den” formation served as a prototype for assessing its applicability to broader resistance groups in the northern WB,²⁹¹ especially in Jenin RC. Reports indicated that the PA developed a strategy to contain the armed formations in Jenin RC²⁹² and successfully thwarted several operations planned by the PIJ against the Israeli occupation.²⁹³ Thus, 2022 ended with over 500 political arrests and summons issued by the PA targeting activists from various resistance factions in WB.²⁹⁴

Israeli security policies towards the WB continued in 2023, marked by extensive incursions and significant casualties among residents and resistance fighters. These actions prompted President ‘Abbas to publicly announce the cessation of security coordination in response to a massacre committed by the Israeli occupation in January 2023, which claimed the lives of nine Palestinians from the Jenin RC alone.²⁹⁵ However, this declaration had little practical effect, as reports indicated that President ‘Abbas privately informed the US administration that parts of the security coordination between the PA and Israel remained ongoing without interruption.²⁹⁶ Leaked US documents confirmed that the PA indeed maintained security coordination with the occupation during the period it publicly announced its cessation.²⁹⁷

Since President ‘Abbas announced the cessation of security coordination in January 2023, US efforts to draw the PA and Israel closer have been ongoing and overt, according to sources within the PLO.²⁹⁸ A security plan from the Biden administration presented to President ‘Abbas by Secretary of State Blinken proposed “training a special Palestinian force to confront militants.”²⁹⁹



The PA's contacts with the Benjamin Netanyahu government, which succeeded the Bennett-Lapid government, continued despite Netanyahu's declared intentions to annex parts of WB. This intention took on a practical dimension with his government that included religious Zionist parties and the appointment of Bezalel Smotrich as an additional minister in the Ministry of Defense, in addition to his role as Minister of Finance. Smotrich was granted extensive authority over numerous responsibilities of COGAT and the Civil Administration, the executive tool managing Palestinian affairs in WB, which is subordinate to the Ministry of Defense, and led by a military-ranked official. As part of the new arrangement, a Settlements Administration will be established within the Defense Ministry under Smotrich's authority, who would have control over enforcement of "illegal construction" in WB.³⁰⁰ According to Israeli researchers, this effectively means annexing the WB by transferring parts of the responsibility from the army and its Civil Administration to a civilian authority. This civilian authority, led by Smotrich, is responsible for Israeli settlers in WB, while Palestinians would remain under Israeli military rule.³⁰¹

Despite Israel's practical shift towards annexing the WB and Netanyahu's persistent anti-PA rhetoric, which includes accusations of the PA failing to "fulfil its security role" and his commitment to maintaining Israeli security responsibility over WB,³⁰² sources indicate there were early sustained secret contacts between the PA and the Netanyahu's government. A clandestine communication channel was established between Netanyahu's office and the PA leadership. This initiative began with a letter from PLO Executive Committee Secretary-General Hussein al-Sheikh to Netanyahu's office, delivered through the US administration weeks before Netanyahu's sixth government was formed, indicating that "despite deep differences, the PA is ready to work with the new Prime Minister." Netanyahu appointed his National Security Advisor, Tzachi Hanegbi, to oversee the Palestinian file and authorized him to conduct talks aimed at preventing escalation during the early weeks of the government's tenure through regular contacts. These discussions resulted in actual meetings between al-Sheikh and Hanegbi and led to the postponement of a UN Security Council vote on a resolution condemning settlements in WB.³⁰³

The clearest embodiment of continued security coordination and US plans to develop this coordination was the 'Aqaba security summit held on 26/2/2023, in 'Aqaba, Jordan, with the participation of PA, Israel, the US, Jordan and Egypt,

followed by the Sharm El-Sheikh summit in Egypt on 19/3/2023, involving the same parties to further the understandings reached in ‘Aqaba. These discussions centered on an American security plan overseen by US General Michael Fenzel, aimed at training Palestinian forces to regain control over the Jenin and Nablus areas. Under this plan, five thousand Palestinian security personnel serving in the National Security Force would receive training in Jordan through a specialized program supervised by the US.³⁰⁴

After a major Israeli army invasion of Jenin RC on 3/7/2023, President ‘Abbas re-announced the cessation of security coordination.³⁰⁵ However, this announcement contradicted the actual security and political practices of the PA in reality. Following the invasion, the PA targeted PIJ cadres with widespread arrests in Jenin governorate.³⁰⁶ The events in the camp and the expulsion of some Fatah leaders from the RC’s funerals escalated tensions with Hamas, under the guise of formations attributed to Fatah.³⁰⁷ The focus then shifted to an Israeli-Palestinian agreement to suspend Israeli military operations in Jenin to give the PA an opportunity to impose its control there.³⁰⁸ These understandings align somewhat with the security views of some levels within the Israeli establishment. The Israeli Security Cabinet adopted a proposal from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to prevent the collapse of the PA in exchange for several conditions, including stopping “incitement” in Palestinian media and education systems, halting accusations against Israel in international courts and organizations, cutting salaries to families of martyrs and prisoners, and preventing construction in Area C.³⁰⁹ This aligns with the Israeli security vision expressed by Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who stated that when the PA is effective and the Palestinian security forces do their job, it is considered an Israeli security interest.³¹⁰

The situation remained unchanged, with continued security coordination governed by an exclusively Israeli security vision and no real political horizon. According to the “Lawyers for Justice” group, the total number of political arrests by the PA from the beginning of 2023 until August of the same year reached 726 cases.³¹¹ Despite the Israeli war on GS after 7/10/2023, political arrests continued,³¹² and the PA suppressed some demonstrations supporting Palestinians in GS,³¹³ who were experiencing an unprecedented Israeli war in the conflict’s history. The PA’s suppression of these demonstrations resulted in the deaths of several protesters.³¹⁴ Thus, amidst the unprecedented violence, brutality and genocidal intent of the war on GS, and the PA’s adherence to its approach, particularly security coordination,



Palestinians transitioned into 2024 in the same situation while entering an entirely new phase, the features of which will become clear only after some time following this war.

Conclusion

In 2022 and 2023, internal Palestinian stagnation and deadlock persisted, despite the significant challenge posed by Benjamin Netanyahu's government, reinforced by religious Zionist parties. This government maintained a declared ideological stance against any political representation for Palestinians, including at the level of the PA. Efforts were made to transform the occupation into civilian form implicitly, exacerbate the PA's economic crisis, deprive it of economic revenue capabilities, and deny it a political project. The PA evolved into a totalitarian security authority centered around the presidency, relying on security forces for its maintenance. Despite this, the PA retained a political stance that made it useful to regional and international powers, including many Israeli circles that advocate for maintaining the PA for Israeli security purposes and to create the illusion of a political process.

Despite the escalating challenges in WB, and the Israeli wars on GS in August 2022 and May 2023, the year 2023 ended with an unprecedentedly destructive war that included genocidal practices against Palestinians, displacing them and destroying urban life in GS. Despite these immense challenges, which necessitate a fundamental change in the positioning and performance of the PA, it remained committed to its security agreements and did not implement any of the decisions made by PLO institutions to stop security coordination.

The only effectiveness in national relations was the reconciliation conference in Algeria in October 2022 and the meeting of faction secretaries-general in Egypt in July 2023, both of which failed to produce any tangible results. The PCC convened in February 2022 in a divisive context, opposed by Hamas, PIJ and some PLO factions. Meanwhile the PLO leadership criticized any popular attempts to mobilize Palestinians abroad or fill the gaps created by the PLO's inactivity. The PA's leadership continued to consolidate power in the presidency through decrees and judicial amendments, using the PLO as needed to manage internal contradictions within Fatah or to prevent vacancies that might undermine the legal "legitimacy" of the organization's institutions.

Given all this, no positive changes in the internal Palestinian situation were expected, as in previous years, until the Israeli war on GS began. Characterized by genocidal intent, destruction, displacement and deliberate starvation, with unprecedented levels of violence and duration, and its repercussions on Jerusalem and WB, the occupation immediately activated all its checkpoints in WB, complicating Palestinian movement, and intensified its bloody incursions into WB areas. The number of killed in WB from 7/10/2023 to 18/2/2024, was nearly 400.³¹⁵ The number of detainees in WB since the beginning of the war until 3/2/2024, exceeded 6,500 Palestinian detainees,³¹⁶ which still had no impact on the political directions or security behavior of the PA. It continued its same approach of political arrests and clashes with the public, whether with armed formations in the northern WB or with demonstrations in support of GS, resulting in Palestinian casualties.

On the other hand, the exceptional nature of the Israeli war on GS might change the internal Palestinian situation, depending on how the war ends, without expecting significant changes in the current PA elite. A large prisoner exchange deal, if Hamas secures the release of prominent organizational figures, this could affect the Fatah elite and renew Hamas's popularity. As this chapter is being written during the war, future projections are based on the general trajectory of the previous period, including the two years under review, and the war and its outcomes. The following general frameworks can be considered:

First: Hamas recognizes that continuing to manage GS alone will not be feasible, regardless of how the war ends, due to the need to lift the blockade and undertake reconstruction. This requires an agreement on a national mechanism, such as a technocratic government or a national unity government, to counter Israeli plans to impose a client administration in GS or an administration of families and clans, similar to the village leagues attempted in WB in the 1970s.

Second: Hamas understands that the significant results it achieved in Operation al-Aqsa Flood are now being countered by an Israeli war aiming to nullify those results, shift turns Hamas from an offensive strategic position to a defensive one, and raise questions among the Palestinian and Arab public about the operation's usefulness. Therefore, Hamas needs to restore its popularity, which could happen through a large prisoner exchange deal or changes in the course of the war.

Third: Hamas and its allies in the resistance factions might work on developing a national front to counter the policy of monopolizing the PLO and using it to



serve the PA elite, excluding Hamas and PIJ. This effort could be reinforced if the PA remains negative towards post-war requirements and if Hamas succeeds in achieving a large prisoner exchange deal.

Fourth: The release of Marwan Barghouthi, a member of Fatah Central Committee could influence the current Fatah elite's structure and positions, improving relations between the two movements. Similarly, the release of the PFLP Secretary-General Ahmad Sa'adat could strengthen Hamas-PFLP relations, establishing Hamas as a leading movement in the Palestinian national movement.

Fifth: The apparent outcomes of this war will not be its final ones, regardless of how it ends. The performance of the resistance in GS and the genocide committed by the Israeli occupation will destabilize the situation in WB, if not in the short term, then in the medium term, especially given the PA's weakness and its refusal to renew its legitimacy either popularly, nationally, or through collective national positions. Ongoing challenges and radicalization factors in WB, such as settlements, *al-Aqsa* Mosque, multiple Israeli violations, and the conditions of prisoners in jails, reinforce this instability.

Sixth: There is vague US talk about activating the PA to be ready to take over GS after Hamas, primarily focusing on security rehabilitation. This is accompanied by vague discussions about recognizing a Palestinian state and efforts aimed at imposing a "reasonable" Palestinian alternative acceptable to the West, suitable for Fatah and the PA leadership. This alternative is intended to fit the post-war phase and is covered with political legitimacy by reopening the blocked peace process without a serious final horizon, despite opposition from the Netanyahu government to these US proposals.

Seventh: The PA is not expected to remain unchanged, considering President 'Abbas's health, the complete blockage of its economic capacity in WB, and the facts imposed by the war on GS. Therefore, there will be escalating power struggles within the PA between the Fatah elite, with the immediate result being the dismissal of the Shtayyeh government. The level of transformation depends on the war's outcomes, which may lead to recalling the PLO, engaging in a political conference or plan proposed by the US for the post-war period or to resume the political process, or proposing a technocratic or national unity government, with potential overlaps between all these steps, without overlooking the Israeli stance on all this.

Endnotes

¹ See for example:

In 2010: Pierce: Israel and US agree on plan to return withheld Palestinian Authority funds, site of Arab 48, 31/10/2010, <https://www.arab48.com>

In 2011: Israel intends to transfer withheld Palestinian tax money, Arab 48, 15/5/2011.

In 2015: ‘Abbas wants arbitration over funds withheld from Israel, Arab 48, 1/4/2015.

² *Israel Hayom* newspaper, 3/7/2018, <https://www.israelhayom.com> (in Hebrew)

³ Site of Aljazeera.net, 19/1/2014, <http://www.aljazeera.net> (in Arabic)

⁴ *Alquds* newspaper, Jerusalem, 21/1/2024, <https://www.alquds.com/ar/> (in Arabic)

The exchange rate of the dollar against the Israeli shekel was based on the Bank of Israel data on 19/1/2024, which was 3.751.

⁵ Site of Sky News Arabia, 23/1/2024, <https://www.skynewsarabia.com>

⁶ Ma’an News Agency, 28/12/2023, <https://www.maannews.net/>

⁷ Aljazeera.net, 11/2/2024. (in Arabic)

The exchange rate of the dollar against the Israeli shekel was based on the Bank of Israel data on 9/2/2024, which was 3.684.

⁸ Site of Al Arabiya News, 6/2/2024, <https://www.alarabiya.net/> (in Arabic)

⁹ Anadolu Agency, 28/12/2022, <http://aa.com.tr/ar> (in Arabic)

¹⁰ Sari ‘Orabi, Academic Paper: The Transformations of the Pillars of Legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority: From the Political Promise to the External Factor, site of al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 11/10/2021, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2021/10/11/academic-paper-the-transformations-of-the-pillars-of-legitimacy-of-the-palestinian-authority-from-the-political-promise-to-the-external-factor/#.YWPothxRWUk>

¹¹ Aljazeera.net, 5/2/2018. (in Arabic)

¹² Palestinian News and Information Agency (WAFA), 31/3/2022, <https://www.wafa.ps/> (in Arabic)

¹³ “Report Series No. 253: Budget Performance Report 2022,” site of The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN), 31/5/2023, <https://www.aman-palestine.org/> (in Arabic)

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Palestinian Cabinet Session No. 155, site of State of Palestine – Council of Ministers, 4/4/2022, <http://www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps/portal/news/details/51984> (in Arabic)

¹⁶ “Report Series No. 253: Budget Performance Report 2022,” AMAN, 31/5/2023. (in Arabic)

¹⁷ Ibid.

The exchange rate of the dollar against the Israeli shekel was based on the Bank of Israel data on 31/5/2023, which was 3.715.

¹⁸ WAFA, 3/4/2023. (in Arabic)

¹⁹ Position Paper on the Government Policy towards Budget Management in 2023 Civil Society Team for Enhancing Public Budget Transparency, AMAN, 29/5/2023, <https://www.aman-palestine.org/en/activities/20510.html>

²⁰ WAFA, 3/1/2023. (in Arabic)

²¹ *Asharq al-Awsat* newspaper, London, 7/1/2023, <https://aawsat.com/> (in Arabic)

²² Aljazeera.net, 8/1/2023. (in Arabic)

²³ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 10/1/2023. (in Arabic)

- ²⁴ The Supreme Administrative Court decided to stop the teachers’ strike, and the movement confirms the continuation of the strike, *Alquds*, 13/3/2023, <https://www.alquds.com/en/posts/54441?language=en>
- ²⁵ Quds Press International News Agency, 14/3/2023, <http://www.qudspress.com>
- ²⁶ Site of Quds News Network, 10/8/2022, <https://qudsn.net> (in Arabic)
- ²⁷ WAFA, 7/9/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸ *Al-Hadath* newspaper, Ramallah, 11/2/2024, <https://www.alhadath.ps>
- ²⁹ WAFA, 5/3/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁰ Wattan News Agency, 13/9/2023, <https://www.wattan.net/ar/>
- ³¹ Arab 48, 6/9/2023.
- ³² Site of Metras, 27/2/2023, <https://metras.co/>
- ³³ Wattan News Agency, 13/9/2023.
- ³⁴ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid* newspaper (The New Arab), London, 26/10/2022, <https://www.alaraby.co.uk>
- ³⁵ Aya Shabaneh, Situation Assessment: The Bar Association faces laws without the Legislative Council, site of Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies—Masarat, 18/1/2024, <https://www.masarat.ps/>
- ³⁶ *Al-Ayyam* newspaper, Ramallah, 10/3/2023, <https://www.al-ayyam.ps/ar>
- ³⁷ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 14/6/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁸ Aljazeera.net, 7/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁹ See site of The Intercept, 24/1/2024, <https://theintercept.com>
- ⁴⁰ *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* newspaper, London, 19/12/2023, <https://www.alquds.co.uk/>
- ⁴¹ Aljazeera.net, 31/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ⁴² *Asharq al-Awsat*, 10/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁴³ WAFA, 24/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁴⁴ Shatha Hammad, Suppressing the Lawyers’ Movement with the “Initiative,” not the Baton, Metras, 10/8/2022; and see also “Annual Summary Report on the Status of Human Rights and the Palestinian People in 2022,” site of International Commission to Support Palestinians’ Rights (ICSPR), 16/1/2023, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WToM5jE9wNrsitRdK4Y3CDEkdCFWnkY0/view>
- ⁴⁵ Press release issued by the Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council and the NGO Network, site of Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights (Hurriyat), 8/11/2016, <https://hurriyat.net/>
- ⁴⁶ *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 18/7/2019.
- ⁴⁷ Statement by ICHR and the National Coalition for Judicial Reform and Protection, site of Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), 2022, <https://www.ichr.ps/en/statements/3025.html>
- ⁴⁸ Wattan News Agency, 18/1/2021.
- ⁴⁹ Statement on the publication of legal decisions on judicial affairs in the Palestinian Chronicle, ICHR, 7/3/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁰ *Al-Ayyam*, Ramallah, 29/10/2022.
- ⁵¹ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 28/3/2023.
- ⁵² *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 28/2/2022.
- ⁵³ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 28/2/2022.
- ⁵⁴ Aljazeera.net, 18/2/2022. (in Arabic)

- ⁵⁵ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 8/8/2022.
- ⁵⁶ As will be seen in the Popularity Indicators section below.
- ⁵⁷ WAFA, 30/4/2021. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁸ WAFA, 15/1/2021. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁹ *Al-Akhbar* newspaper, Beirut, 28/3/2022, <https://www.al-akhbar.com/>
- ⁶⁰ WAFA, 26/3/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁶¹ CEC announces the results for the Second Phase of the Local Elections, site of Central Elections Commission-Palestine (CEC), 27/3/2022, <https://www.elections.ps/TabId/1069/ArtMID/8994/ArticleID/4008/CEC-announces-the-results-for-the-Second-Phase-of-the-Local-Elections.aspx>
- ⁶² Quds Press, 5/5/2022.
- ⁶³ Site of The Palestinian Information Center (PIC), 22/9/2021, <https://www.palinfo.com> (in Arabic)
- ⁶⁴ CEC received a reply from Hamas regarding the Local Elections, CEC, 2/1/2022, <https://www.elections.ps/TabId/1083/ArtMID/9183/ArticleID/2925/CEC-received-a-reply-from-Hamas-regarding-the-Local-Elections.aspx>
- ⁶⁵ *Felesteen* newspaper, Gaza, 15/8/2023.
- ⁶⁶ *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 28/9/2023.
- ⁶⁷ *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 4/10/2023.
- ⁶⁸ Ma‘an, 27/8/2021.
- ⁶⁹ Israa Lafi, Elections of Engineering Offices and Companies. The Engineers Association Again, site of Etar, 25/1/2023, <https://etar.info/>
- ⁷⁰ WAFA, 16/5/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁷¹ Site of Arabi21, 4/6/2022, <https://arabi21.com>
- ⁷² Al Wafaa’ Islamic Bloc gains majority in 2022 Birzeit University Student Council election with 28 seats, site of Birzeit University, 18/5/2022, <https://www.birzeit.edu/en/news/al-wafaa-islamic-bloc-gains-majority-2022-birzeit-university-student-council-election-28-seats>
- ⁷³ Sari ‘Orabi, A Reading of the Islamic Bloc’s Victory in the Birzeit University Elections 2022, site of Alquds Center for Studies, 19/5/2022, <https://alqudscenter.info/storage/uploads/2022/05/ork-1652987961X5RdM.pdf>
- ⁷⁴ Results of the Student Council Conference Elections for the 2023–2024 Session, Birzeit University, 24/5/2023, <https://www.birzeit.edu/ar/news/ntyj-ntkhbt-mwtmr-mjls-ltlb-ldwr-2023-2024> (in Arabic)
- ⁷⁵ Sari ‘Orabi, A Reading of the Islamic Bloc’s Victory in the Birzeit University Elections 2022, Alquds Center for Studies, 19/5/2022.
- ⁷⁶ An-Najah National University Finalizes the Elections of its Student Union Council for the Academic Year 2022/2023, site of An-Najah National University, 16/5/2023, <https://www.najah.edu/ar>
- ⁷⁷ Aljazeera.net, 16/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁷⁸ Mu‘ath Hamid, An-Najah University.. Hamdallah’s Security Kingdom, Metras, 11/8/2018.
- ⁷⁹ A Public Statement to the Public on the Suppression of the Sit-In at An-Najah University, site of Lawyers for Justice, 15/6/2022, <https://lawyers4justice.ps/a-public-statement-on-the-suppression-of-the-protest-by-an-najah-university-students/>
- ⁸⁰ Arab 48, 20/6/2022.
- ⁸¹ Site of Felesteen Online, 26/2/2023, <http://www.felesteen.news>
- ⁸² Quds News Network, 19/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ⁸³ Arab 48, 22/7/2022.



- ⁸⁴ Felesteen Online, 29/7/2022.
- ⁸⁵ PIC, 18/6/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁶ WAFA, 24/9/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁷ An-Najah National University, 9/11/2023.
- ⁸⁸ Hebron University Student Union Council Elections, site of Hebron University, 2/3/2023, <https://www.hebron.edu/index.php/facilities-3/news-archive/13415-news-2-3-03.html>
- ⁸⁹ PIC, 2/3/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁹⁰ WAFA, 14/3/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁹¹ Results of the Student Union Council Elections for the Year 2022, site of Bethlehem University, 24/3/2022, <https://www.bethlehem.edu/ar/2022/03/24/student-senate-elections-2022-ar/>
- ⁹² Bethlehem University Student Council Election Results Released, Bethlehem University, 10/5/2023, <https://www.bethlehem.edu/ar/2023/05/10/bu-student-senate-elections-safa/>
- ⁹³ Final Results of the Al-Quds University Student Council Elections, site of al-Quds University, 9/4/2019, <https://www.alquds.edu/ar>
- ⁹⁴ Site of the Islamic Bloc, 15/4/2023.
- ⁹⁵ Quds News Network, 7/9/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁹⁶ Ma'mun Abu Jrad, Gaza University Elections: Who Hid the Ballot Box?, Metras, 6/10/2022.
- ⁹⁷ Ma'an, 25/5/2023.
- ⁹⁸ Quds News Network, 23/9/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁹⁹ Public Opinion Poll No (81), site of Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR), 15–18/9/2021, <https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/858>
- ¹⁰⁰ Public Opinion Poll No (83), PSR, 16–20/3/2022, <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/906>
- ¹⁰¹ Public Opinion Poll No (84), PSR, 22–25/6/2022, <https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/912>
- ¹⁰² Public Opinion Poll No (85), PSR, 13–17/9/2022, <https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/920>
- ¹⁰³ Public Opinion Poll No (86), PSR, 7–10/12/2022, <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/926>
- ¹⁰⁴ Public Opinion Poll No (87), PSR, 8–11/3/2023, <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/938>
- ¹⁰⁵ Public Opinion Poll No (88), PSR, 7–11/6/2023, <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/944>
- ¹⁰⁶ Public Opinion Poll No (89), PSR, 6–9/9/2023, <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/955>
- ¹⁰⁷ Public Opinion Poll No (90), PSR, 22/11–2/12/2023, <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/963>
- ¹⁰⁸ Internal Regulations of the Palestine National Council, site of Palestine National Council (PNC), 1/6/2017, <https://palestinepnc.org/2017-06-01-10-15-32>
- ¹⁰⁹ Palestinian National Council Sessions 1964–2018, PNC, <https://www.palestinepnc.org/component/k2/item/45-1964-1996>
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹¹ The Palestine National Council Resolution, Twenty-First Session, site of WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=3793 (in Arabic)
- ¹¹² The Palestine National Council Resolution, Twenty-Second Session, WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=bZWUqQa27478060863abZWUqQ (in Arabic)
- ¹¹³ The Palestine National Council Resolution, Twenty-Third Session, WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=rzWgnya27479012616arzWgny (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁴ Aljazeera.net, 4/5/2018. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁵ Aljazeera.net, 18/1/2018. (in Arabic)

- ¹¹⁶ Press Release. The Popular Front Decides not to Participate in the National Council Session Scheduled for April 30, site of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), 19/4/2018, <https://pflp.ps>
- ¹¹⁷ Internal Regulations of the Palestinian Central Council (PCC), WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=3774 (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁸ Palestinian Central Council Sessions, WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=9322 (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁹ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestine Strategic Report 2018–2019* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2021), pp. 48–51.
- ¹²⁰ Anadolu Agency, 4/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹²¹ Anadolu Agency, 8/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹²² Arab 48, 30/1/2022.
- ¹²³ Anadolu Agency, 4/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁴ PIC, 6/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁵ PIC, 7/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁶ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 5/2/2022.
- ¹²⁷ The Thirty-First Session – The Session of Developing and Activating the Palestinian Central Council, Protecting the National Project and Popular Resistance – The Session of The Martyr and National Leader Jamal Muhaisen, The Palestinian Central Council Resolutions, WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=gk2vD6a28054823181agk2vD6 (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁸ WAFA, 7/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁹ Rashad Tawam, The Central Council’s delegation of the PNC’s powers: Does legitimacy trumps legitimacy? *Al-Hadath*, 5/2/2022.
- ¹³⁰ Ibid.
- ¹³¹ The Twenty-Seventh Session “The Session of Steadfastness and Popular Resistance,” The Palestinian Central Council Resolutions, WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=9570 (in Arabic)
- ¹³² Site of Asharq News, 27/12/2023.
- ¹³³ Site of Euronews, 22/1/2024, <https://arabic.euronews.com> (in Arabic)
- ¹³⁴ Aljazeera.net, 16/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹³⁵ Site of Alhurra, 22/11/2023, <https://www.alhurra.com>
- ¹³⁶ Al Arabiya News, 22/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹³⁷ Communiqué Issued by the Meeting of the Members of the Palestinian Central Council Present in the State of Palestine on 9 May 2022 – Emergency Meeting, The Palestinian Central Council Resolutions, WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=Ts5SZ1a28104314337aTs5SZ1 (in Arabic)
- ¹³⁸ Ma’an, 17/2/2022.
- ¹³⁹ *Al-Waqa’i’ al-Filastiniyyah* newspaper (Official Gazette), premium issue 26, 6/3/2022, Fatwa and Legislation Bureau, site of Official Gazette Bureau, Palestine State, <https://ogb.gov.ps/ar>
- ¹⁴⁰ WAFA, 18/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴¹ Site of Qanon, 18/2/2022, <http://www.qanon.ps/>
- ¹⁴² *Al-Waqa’i’ al-Filastiniyyah* (Official Gazette), premium issue 26, 6/3/2022.
- ¹⁴³ *Al-Waqa’i’ al-Filastiniyyah* (Official Gazette), issue 191, 25/5/2022, Fatwa and Legislation Bureau, Official Gazette Bureau, Palestine State.

- ¹⁴⁴ The Amended Basic Law 2003, WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=2645 (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁵ Twenty-third Session Constitutional Legitimacy Session, The Palestinian Central Council Resolutions, WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=9295 (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁶ WAFA, 26/5/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁷ WAFA, 25/6/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁸ PIC, 15/3/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁹ Research and Situation Assessment Unit, The Possibility of Forming a Palestinian National Front, site of Palestine Dialogue Group, April 2022, <https://paldg.co/?p=1695>
- ¹⁵⁰ WAFA, 15/11/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵¹ WAFA, 27/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵² WAFA, 27/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵³ Final Communiqué of the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad, 25 and 26 February 2017, site of the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad (PCPA), 26/2/2017, <https://palabroad.org/ar> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁴ Arab 48, 26/2/2017.
- ¹⁵⁵ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, A Reading on the Second Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad, al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 14/3/2022, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2022/03/14/political-analysis-a-reading-on-the-second-popular-conference-for-palestinians-abroad/>
- ¹⁵⁶ Final Communiqué of the Second General Conference of the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad, PCPA, 27/2/2022, <https://palabroad.org/ar/post/mQkr> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁷ PIC, 13/1/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁸ PCPA Launches the Palestinian National Dialogue Forum in Beirut, PCPA, 20/5/2023, <https://palabroad.org/ar/post/r8zW> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁹ WAFA, 5/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶⁰ WAFA, 30/4/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶¹ PIC, 27/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶² Palestinians in Europe Conference Foundation Slams Some Swedish Newspapers' Propaganda Machine Against 20th Conference in Malmö, site of European Palestinians Conference, 29/5/2023, <https://alawdah.eu/en/3401/>
- ¹⁶³ A press conference was held to discuss the latest developments regarding the severe attack on the Malmö conference and its organizers, European Palestinians Conference, 6/6/2023, <https://alawdah.eu/en/3436/>
- ¹⁶⁴ European Palestinians Conference, 28/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶⁵ *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 5/11/2022.
- ¹⁶⁶ *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 5/11/2022.
- ¹⁶⁷ *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 5/11/2022.
- ¹⁶⁸ *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 1/3/2023.
- ¹⁶⁹ Site of al-Hadaf, 24/10/2023, <https://hadfnews.ps>
- ¹⁷⁰ Arab 48, 2/1/2021.
- ¹⁷¹ Site of al-Mayadeen Channel, 22/3/2021, <https://www.almayadeen.net> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁷² WAFA, 30/4/2021. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁷³ Anadolu Agency, 6/12/2021. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁷⁴ Arab 48, 16/1/2022.

- ¹⁷⁵ Arab 48, 8/10/2022.
- ¹⁷⁶ Site of Paltimes.ps, 14/10/2022.
- ¹⁷⁷ Anadolu Agency, 13/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁷⁸ WAFA, 24/12/2018. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁷⁹ Hani al-Masri, The Winners and Losers of the Algiers Declaration, Masarat, 18/10/2022.
- ¹⁸⁰ "Report Series No. 253: Budget Performance Report 2022," AMAN, 31/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸¹ Anadolu Agency, 10/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸² *Al- 'Arabi al-Jadid*, 29/7/2023.
- ¹⁸³ Aljazeera.net, 17/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸⁴ WAFA, 30/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸⁵ Aljazeera.net, 26/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸⁶ Site of Hamas, 10/8/2023, <http://hamas.ps/ar> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸⁷ Site of Al-Aqsa Channel, 10/8/2023.
- ¹⁸⁸ Site of Aljazeera.net Live, 6/7/2023, <https://www.aljazeera.net/live> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸⁹ Quds Press, 6/7/2023.
- ¹⁹⁰ Aljazeera.net, 12/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁹¹ Ma'an, 4/11/2021.
- ¹⁹² Wattan News Agency, 8/3/2022.
- ¹⁹³ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 29/8/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁹⁴ WAFA, 26/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁹⁵ WAFA, 27/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁹⁶ WAFA, 31/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁹⁷ Site of Independent Arabia, 15/9/2023, <https://www.independentarabia.com>
- ¹⁹⁸ *Al-Akhbar*, 11/3/2022.
- ¹⁹⁹ Palestine National Liberation Movement, Fatah, Internal Charter, site of Fatah National Relations Commission, <https://fatehwatan.ps/functions.php?action=files&table=files&ID=44> (in Arabic)
- ²⁰⁰ Sari 'Orabi, The Seventh Fatah Conference.. Preludes and Endings, Aljazeera.net, 5/12/2016. (in Arabic)
- ²⁰¹ Ma'an, 16/2/2022.
- ²⁰² Site of Al-Ghad TV, 25/2/2020, <https://www.alghad.tv>
- ²⁰³ Wattan News Agency, 9/11/2022.
- ²⁰⁴ Site of National Press Agency, 9/8/2022, <https://npa.ps>
- ²⁰⁵ *Al-Akhbar*, 30/8/2022.
- ²⁰⁶ *Al-Akhbar*, 11/11/2022.
- ²⁰⁷ Paltimes.ps, 27/7/2022.
- ²⁰⁸ Paltimes.ps, 21/7/2022.
- ²⁰⁹ Quds News Network, 27/12/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²¹⁰ Arabi21, 6/7/2023.
- ²¹¹ Paltimes.ps, 5/7/2023.
- ²¹² Arab 48, 23/2/2023.
- ²¹³ Aljazeera.net, 25/2/2023. (in Arabic)



- ²¹⁴ *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 26/2/2023.
- ²¹⁵ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 26/2/2023.
- ²¹⁶ Site of CNN Arabic, 19/3/2023, <https://arabic.cnn.com>
- ²¹⁷ Aljazeera.net, 19/3/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²¹⁸ Anadolu Agency, 28/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²¹⁹ Hani al-Masri, Is the Moscow Meeting a Sign of Hope?, Arab 48, 20/2/2024.
- ²²⁰ Wattan News Agency, 11/12/2021.
- ²²¹ *Al-Akhbar*, 12/12/2021.
- ²²² Felesteen Online, 21/1/2022.
- ²²³ Felesteen Online, 19/4/2022.
- ²²⁴ *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 30/7/2023.
- ²²⁵ *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 31/7/2023.
- ²²⁶ CNN Arabic, 9/8/2022.
- ²²⁷ Aljazeera.net, 12/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²²⁸ Anadolu Agency, 28/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²²⁹ Aljazeera.net, 17/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²³⁰ Aljazeera.net, 8/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²³¹ Al Arabiya News, 18/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²³² PIC, 18/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ²³³ Sari ‘Orabi, Hamas’ Position: War and Its Repercussions on the Movement and Its Future, site of Institute for Palestine Studies, 12/2/2024, <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1655202> (in Arabic)
- ²³⁴ Aljazeera.net, 3/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ²³⁵ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 7/1/2024.
- ²³⁶ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 5/3/2023.
- ²³⁷ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 5/3/2023.
- ²³⁸ Husam al-Dajani, The Battle over the Unity of the Fields: A Political Reading, *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya*, Institute for Palestine Studies, issue 132, Autumn 2022, https://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/mdf-articles/012-017_1.pdf (in Arabic)
- ²³⁹ Aljazeera.net, 12/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁴⁰ Aljazeera.net, 16/6/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁴¹ “PFLP - Internal Regulations,” The Sixth National Conference, July 2000.
- ²⁴² Final statement issued by the PFLP Eighth National Conference, “Conference of Loyalty to Martyrs and Prisoners,” PFLP, 25/5/2022.
- ²⁴³ Ibid.
- ²⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁴⁵ “PFLP - Internal Regulations,” The Sixth National Conference, July 2000.
- ²⁴⁶ Hasan Shaheen, “An Interpretation of the Popular Front Congress: Silent Ideological Transformation,” *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya*, Institute for Palestine Studies, issue 132, Autumn 2022, <https://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/mdf-articles/107-113.pdf> (in Arabic)
- ²⁴⁷ Final statement issued by the PFLP Eighth National Conference, “Conference of Loyalty to Martyrs and Prisoners,” PFLP, 25/5/2022.

- ²⁴⁸ Hasan Shaheen, “An Interpretation of the Popular Front Congress: Silent Ideological Transformation,” *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya*, issue 132, Autumn 2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁴⁹ Communiqué of the Seventh General National Congress of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), DFLP, 28/7/2018.
- ²⁵⁰ DFLP Communiqué - Gaza Strip Region, DFLP, 17/7/2023.
- ²⁵¹ Ma'an, 30/9/2023.
- ²⁵² National News Agency (NNA), Lebanon, 5/9/2023, <https://www.nna-leb.gov.lb/ar>
- ²⁵³ Arab 48, 12/4/2022.
- ²⁵⁴ Ma'an, 14/2/2023.
- ²⁵⁵ *Al-Arabi al-Jadid*, 9/3/2021.
- ²⁵⁶ Wattan News Agency, 14/1/2023.
- ²⁵⁷ Wattan News Agency, 14/1/2023.
- ²⁵⁸ *Al-Ayyam*, Ramallah, 20/5/2020.
- ²⁵⁹ Aljazeera.net, 17/11/2020. (in Arabic)
- ²⁶⁰ Arab 48, 3/9/2021.
- ²⁶¹ Ma'an, 20/1/2020.
- ²⁶² WAFA, 9/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁶³ Al Arabiya News, 6/12/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁶⁴ *Alquds*, 23/1/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁶⁵ *Alquds*, 31/1/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁶⁶ Closing Address | Lt. Gen. (ret.) Benny Gantz, Israeli Minister of Defense: Israel's Security Challenges, INSS 15th Annual International Conference, site of Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), 2/2/2022, <https://www.inss.org.il/february-2-2022/>
- ²⁶⁷ Quds Press, 8/2/2022.
- ²⁶⁸ Arab 48, 7/3/2022.
- ²⁶⁹ Quds Press, 23/3/2022.
- ²⁷⁰ Felesteen Online, 4/4/2022.
- ²⁷¹ Violations against Al-Aqsa Mosque during April 2022, WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=94sxKQa28099555572a94sxKQ (in Arabic)
- ²⁷² Aljazeera.net, 29/4/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁷³ Ma'an, 16/11/2021.
- ²⁷⁴ Gantz meets PA's Abbas to discuss security coordination ahead of Biden visit, site of The Times of Israel, 8/7/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/gantz-meets-pas-abbas-to-discuss-security-coordination-ahead-of-biden-visit/>
- ²⁷⁵ Anadolu Agency, 29/12/2021. (in Arabic)
- ²⁷⁶ Raialyoum electronic newspaper, London, 17/7/2022, <https://www.raialyoum.com>
- ²⁷⁷ Arabi21, 13/9/2022.
- ²⁷⁸ Raya Media Network, 18/4/2016, <https://www.raya.ps>
- ²⁷⁹ Aljazeera.net, 14/9/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸⁰ Monthly Summary, March 2022, site of Israel Security Agency—ISA (*Shabak*), <https://www.shabak.gov.il/media/hllhib0g/032022.pdf>
- ²⁸¹ Sama News Agency, 8/9/2022, <http://www.samanews.com/ar>
- ²⁸² *Asharq al-Awsat*, 14/9/2022. (in Arabic)



- ²⁸³ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 22/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸⁴ Raialyoun, 13/9/2022.
- ²⁸⁵ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 1/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸⁶ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 19/9/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸⁷ Independent Arabia, 6/10/2022.
- ²⁸⁸ Aljazeera.net, 19/9/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸⁹ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 22/9/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹⁰ Aljazeera.net, 10/3/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹¹ *Al-Akhbar*, 20/6/2023.
- ²⁹² Quds Press, 27/11/2022.
- ²⁹³ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 29/11/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹⁴ PIC, 9/12/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹⁵ WAFA, 26/1/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹⁶ The Times of Israel, 31/1/2023, <https://ar.timesofisrael.com> (in Arabic)
- ²⁹⁷ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 9/4/2023.
- ²⁹⁸ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 1/2/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹⁹ Barak Ravid, Scoop: Blinken pressed Abbas to accept U.S. security plan for Jenin, site of Axios, 1/2/2023, <https://www.axios.com/2023/02/01/bliken-abbas-palestinian-authority-jenin-nablus>
- ³⁰⁰ Jeremy Sharon, Smotrich handed sweeping powers over West Bank, control over settlement planning, The Times of Israel, 23/2/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/smotrich-handed-sweeping-powers-over-west-bank-control-over-settlement-planning/>
- ³⁰¹ Dahlia Scheindlin and Yael Berda, Israel’s Annexation of the West Bank Has Already Begun, *Foreign Affairs* magazine, 9/6/2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/israel/israels-annexation-west-bank-has-already-begun>
- ³⁰² Arab 48, 7/2/2023.
- ³⁰³ Arab 48, 20/2/2023.
- ³⁰⁴ *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 26/2/2023; and Barak Ravid, Scoop: Blinken pressed Abbas to accept U.S. security plan for Jenin, Axios, 1/2/2023.
- ³⁰⁵ WAFA, 3/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁰⁶ Aljazeera.net, 17/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁰⁷ Paltimes.ps, 5/7/2023.
- ³⁰⁸ Anadolu Agency, 13/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁰⁹ TOI Staff, Security cabinet approves steps to ‘prevent collapse’ of Palestinian Authority, The Times of Israel, 9/7/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog-july-9-2023/>
- ³¹⁰ Anadolu Agency, 5/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³¹¹ PIC, 18/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³¹² Aljazeera.net, 25/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³¹³ Site of TRT Arabi, 18/10/2023, <https://www.trtarabi.com/issues> (in Arabic)
- ³¹⁴ Site of 7iber, 24/10/2023, <https://www.7iber.com>
- ³¹⁵ Site of Al-Qahera News, 18/2/2024, <https://alqaheranews.net>
- ³¹⁶ Anadolu Agency, 3/2/2024. (in Arabic)

Chapter Two

Palestinian Demographic and Economic Indicators

Palestinian Demographic and Economic Indicators

Introduction

The Palestinian population in GS endured a genocidal war initiated by Israel following Operation al-Aqsa Flood. This war was accompanied by an extensive campaign aimed at inflicting comprehensive destruction within the Strip. Similarly, WB faced a relentless offensive campaign seeking to confiscate the land, holy sites and livelihoods of the Palestinians, exacerbating their living conditions to the point of emergency. Furthermore, the residents have been subjected to suppression and a deprivation of their fundamental freedoms.

This chapter aims to provide general statistics regarding the Palestinian people both within their homeland and abroad. However, this endeavor encounters significant challenges, as approximately half of the Palestinian population resides under occupation and siege in their historical land, while the other half are refugees dispersed across different regions of the world. Nevertheless, by employing academic methodologies, the available information and data have been leveraged to attain the most precise results possible.

The second part of this chapter delves into an examination of the economic conditions in WB and GS, where a substantial amount of information and data is available, notably sourced from the official institutions of the PA.

First: Demographic Indicators

1. The Palestinian Population Worldwide

According to figures provided by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the global Palestinian population reached 14.63 million in 2023 up from 14.32 million in 2022, representing a 2.2% increase (see table 1/2).

As of 2023 estimates, Palestinians in historic Palestine are approximated at 7.297 million, constituting 49.9% of the global Palestinian population. Within the

1967 occupied territories, the Palestinian population is estimated at 5.548 million, comprising 37.9% of the global Palestinian population, while Palestinians residing in territories occupied in 1948 (Israel) are estimated at 1.749 million, accounting for approximately 12% of Palestinians worldwide (see table 1/2).

In the Diaspora, the Palestinian population was estimated at 7.337 million by the close of 2023, comprising 50.1% of the global Palestinian community. According to data sourced by researchers at al-Zaytouna Centre, the Palestinians in Jordan (most of whom hold Jordanian nationality) are estimated at 4.697 million by the end of 2023, constituting 32% of Palestinians globally (approximately 64% of Palestinian Diaspora). In other Arab countries, the Palestinian population is estimated at 1.868 million, representing 12.8% of Palestinians worldwide, with a majority residing in neighboring Arab countries: Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and the Gulf countries (see table 1/2).

According to PCBS, Palestinians in foreign countries are approximated at 772 thousand, accounting for 5.3% of the global Palestinian population, with the majority residing in the US, Latin America, Canada, United Kingdom (UK) and other European Union (EU) countries.

It is important to note that these estimates may be outdated, and subject to inaccuracies. When considering the emigration of Palestinians from Arab countries over the past three decades (including countries surrounding Israel, the Gulf states and Libya), along with movements from Palestine to other regions, discrepancies in previous global Palestinian population estimates become apparent. For example, some estimates suggest that there are over 600 thousand Palestinians in South America, with at least 300 thousand residing in Chile. Additionally, the Palestinian population in Europe is estimated to be not less than 350–400 thousand, while in North America there are approximately 300–350 thousand Palestinians, with at least 100 thousand in other countries. Based on these revised estimates, the global Palestinian population (excluding Palestine and the Arab world) is estimated to be between 1.35 million to 1.45 million, exceeding PCBS estimates by roughly 580–680 thousand. This underscores the challenging yet crucial task for researchers and specialists to provide more precise estimates.

By the end of 2022, according to PCBS statistics, the global Palestinian population stood at 14.32 million, with 5.419 million residing in WB and GS, and around 1.71 million in the territories occupied in 1948 (Israel), compared to 7.19 million living abroad; specifically 4.596 million in Jordan, 1.834 million in other Arab countries and 761 thousand in foreign countries (see table 1/2).

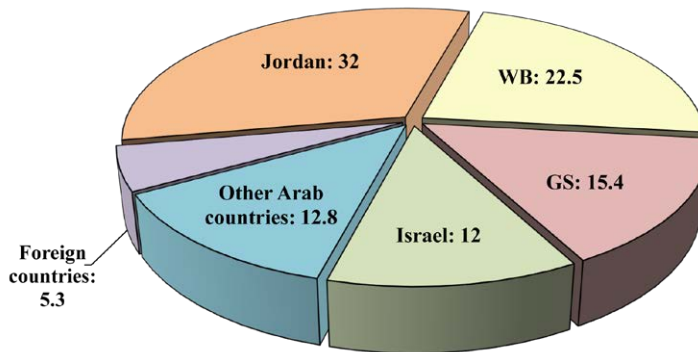
Table 1/2: Palestinian Population Worldwide Estimate by Place of Residence at the End of 2022 and 2023 (thousands)¹

Place of residence		2022		2023	
		Population estimates	Percentage (%)	Population estimates	Percentage (%)
Palestinian territories occupied in 1967	WB	3,222.6	22.5	3,291.4	22.5
	GS	2,196.4	15.3	2,257	15.4
Palestinian territories occupied in 1948 (Israel) *		1,709.8	12	1,748.8	12
Palestinians in historic Palestine		7,128.8	49.8	7,297.2	49.9
Jordan **		4,596.3	32.1	4,697.4	32
Other Arab countries		1,834.5	12.8	1,867.5	12.8
Foreign countries		760.7	5.3	772.1	5.3
Palestinians in diaspora		7,191.5	50.2	7,337	50.1
Total		14,320.3	100	14,634.2	100

* For the Palestinian population in the 1948 occupied territories, the count excludes Palestinians in the 1967 occupied territories, which includes the Jerusalem governorate, Arab Syrians, Lebanese, non-Arab Christians and individuals classified as “Others.” Israeli statistics present figures that deviate from those of the PCBS, indicating that the number of Arab Palestinians in the 1948 occupied territories amounted to approximately 2.079 million in 2023. When subtracting the 389 thousand East Jerusalem residents and approximately 25 thousand individuals in the Golan Heights, the adjusted total stands at around 1.665 million.

** The Palestinian population in Jordan is based on 2009 PCBS statistics, which reported a figure of 3,240,473. Subsequent calculations take into account the annual growth rates spanning from 2009 to 2022, as provided by the Jordanian Department of Statistics, Population and Housing, Demographic Statistics, ranging between 3.1% and 2.2%.
For more information, refer to <https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/>

Palestinian Population Worldwide Estimate by Place of Residence at the End of 2023 (%)



2. The Demographic Characteristics of the Palestinians

a. The WB and GS

By the conclusion of 2023, the Palestinian population in WB and GS was estimated at 5.55 million, with approximately 3.29 million residing in WB (59.3%) and 2.26 million (40.7%) in GS. This reflects an annual growth rate of 2.4%, considering that the combined Palestinian population in WB and GS stood at 5.42 million at the end of 2022.

In terms of population distribution by governorate for the year 2023, Hebron boasted the highest population with 832,702 individuals (15% of the WB and GS population), followed by the Gaza Governorate with 758,134 residents (13.7% of the WB and GS population), and then the Jerusalem Governorate with a population of 497,483 (9% of the WB and GS population). Conversely the Jericho and Rift Valley Governorate reported the lowest population share at 1% of the WB and GS population. Table 2/2 shows the estimated population count in the WB and GS governorates based on PCBS estimates.

The Palestinian community in WB and GS is young with over a third of its individuals (37.1%) aged under 15, exhibiting a notable contrast between WB and GS, standing at 35% and 40.2%, respectively. Statistics indicate that the median age (the age dividing the population into two numerically equal groups, i.e., half of the population is below that age and half is older) in the WB and GS has increased throughout 2010–2023 from 18.5 years to 21.3 years. A separate analysis for the

WB and GS during the same period indicates an increase in median age from 19.4 years in 2010 to 22.5 years in 2023 for the WB, and from 17.2 years in 2010 to 19.5 years in 2023 for the GS.²

**Table 2/2: Estimated Population Count in WB and GS by Governorate
2022–2023 (thousands)³**

Governorate	2022		2023	
	Estimates	Percentage (%)	Estimates	Percentage (%)
WB	3,222.6	59.5	3,291.4	59.3
Jenin	349.4	6.4	365.4	6.4
Tubas and Northern Rift Valley	68.1	1.3	69.5	1.3
Tulkarm	204.2	3.8	207.7	3.7
Nablus	427.6	7.9	435.6	7.9
Qalqilya	125.7	2.3	128.4	2.3
Salfit	85	1.6	86.9	1.6
Ramallah and al-Bireh	366.3	6.8	373.7	6.7
Jericho and Rift Valley	54.8	1	55.8	1
Jerusalem	487.2	9	497.5	9
Bethlehem	242.2	4.5	247.2	4.4
Hebron	812.3	15	832.7	15
GS	2,196.4	40.5	2,257	40.7
North Gaza	437.5	8.1	451.5	8.2
Gaza	740.2	13.7	758.1	13.7
Dayr al-Balah	315	5.8	323.4	5.8
Khan Yunis	432.3	8	444.9	8
Rafah	271.5	5	279.1	5
Total (WB & GS)	5,419	100	5,548.4	100

As for the elderly (60 years and over), they constitute a minority within the total population. As of mid-2023, approximately 313 thousand elderly individuals resided in Palestine, accounting for about 6% of the total population. Of this group, around 206 thousand lived in WB, constituting about 6% of that population, while the remaining 107 thousand individuals were in GS, making up about 5% of its population.⁴

In 2022, 24% of households were headed by an elderly person (60 years and over), 25% in WB and 21% in GS. Also, the average size of households headed by an elderly person was usually relatively small reaching 3.4 individuals (3 in WB and 4.4 in GS).

Approximately 71% of the elderly suffer from chronic diseases, with 72% in the WB compared to 69% in the GS. This condition affects about 66% of elderly men and 76% of elderly women.⁵

Educational status data for the year 2022 showed that 30% of the elderly in WB and GS did not complete any educational stage (19% males and 41% females), while the elderly who completed diploma degrees and higher did not exceed 17%. In terms of labor force participation, about 15% of the elderly were engaged in the workforce during 2022, with 20% in the WB and 6% in the GS.⁶

In terms of gender distribution, the male population in WB and GS reached 2.82 million at the end of 2023, compared to 2.73 million females, resulting in a sex ratio of 103.2 males per 100 females. In GS, the male population reached 1.14 million males compared to 1.11 million females with a sex ratio of 102.7, while in WB, the male population reached 1.68 million compared to 1.62 million females with a sex ratio of 103.7.⁷

Data illustrated a decline in the dependency rate (the number of dependents per 100 individuals of working age, 15–64 years) in WB and GS from 78.7 in 2010 to 68.6 in 2023. Notably, there was a significant difference in the dependency rate between the two regions, with rates dropping from 73.7 to 63.9 in WB and from 87.4 to 75.9 in GS between 2010 and 2023.⁸ Additionally, in 2022, 12% of households were headed by females in both WB and GS, with a slight increase noted in WB compared to GS.⁹

As for Life expectancy, it has increased in WB and GS, from 70.7 years in 2000 to 73.3 years in 2023 for males, and from 72.2 years in 2000 to 75.5 years in 2023

for females. In GS, life expectancy stood at 74 years (72.9 years for males and 75.1 years for females), while in WB, it reached 74.7 years (73.6 years for males and 75.8 years for females) in 2023. The rise in life expectancy primarily stemmed from improved healthcare, and lower infant mortality rates (see table 3/2).

Available data indicated a decline in Crude Death Rate (CDR) in WB and GS, where it decreased from 4.5 deaths per thousand population in 2000 to 3.7 deaths per thousand population in 2023. A slight discrepancy in CDR was observed between WB (3.9 deaths per thousand) and GS (3.7 deaths per thousand) in 2023 (see table 3/2).

The natural population growth rate (the difference between birth and death rates) in the WB and GS declined from 3.6% in 2000 to 2.4% in 2023. In 2023, the natural population growth rate decreased to 2.7% in GS and 2.1% in WB (see table 3/2).

There were indications of a decreasing fertility rate among Palestinian women, though it remained higher in the short and medium term compared to their Jewish counterparts. Based on the results of the Palestinian Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (PMICS) 2019–2020, the total fertility rate in WB and GS has decreased, with 3.8 births per woman recorded during 2017–2019 compared to 5.9 in 1999. Comparing the two regions, the fertility in GS was slightly higher, with 3.9 births per woman compared to 3.8 births during 2017–2019. This rate was also higher in GS compared to WB in 1999, where it reached 5.8 births in GS compared to 4.1 births in WB.¹⁰

In 2022, there was a decrease in the average household size in WB and GS compared to 2010, with the average number of persons per household declining from 5.5 to 5 in 2022. The average household size in WB declined from 5.2 persons in 2010 to 4.7 in 2022, while in GS it dropped from 6.4 persons to 5.5 during the same period (see table 3/2).

Moreover, a reduction in the Crude Birth Rate (CBR) was observed in WB and GS, declining from 40.9 births per thousand in 2000 to 28.8 in 2023. An obvious difference is noted regarding the CBR rate between the two regions, with WB recording 26.6 births per thousand compared to 32 in GS in 2023 (see table 3/2).

As for housing density (persons per room), the figure for 2022 was higher in GS compared to WB, with 1.7 persons/room in GS compared to 1.4 in WB,

resulting in a total average housing density of 1.5 persons/room in both regions. Approximately 81% of Palestinian households had a family member who owned a housing unit, with ownership rates at 87.3% in WB and 69.8% in GS.¹¹

The number of registered marriages in 2022 indicated a decline compared to 2021, with marriage contracts dropping from 45,018 in 2021 to 43,430 in 2022. The general marriage rate declined to 8.1 marriages per thousand in 2022 (7.6 cases in WB and 8.8 cases in GS) compared to 10 marriages per thousand in 2017.¹²

Regarding population characteristics related to education, the 2022 data revealed that 22.1% of the population (15 years and above) in WB and GS had completed high school. The overall illiteracy rate for individuals aged 15 years and over stood at 2.2%.¹³

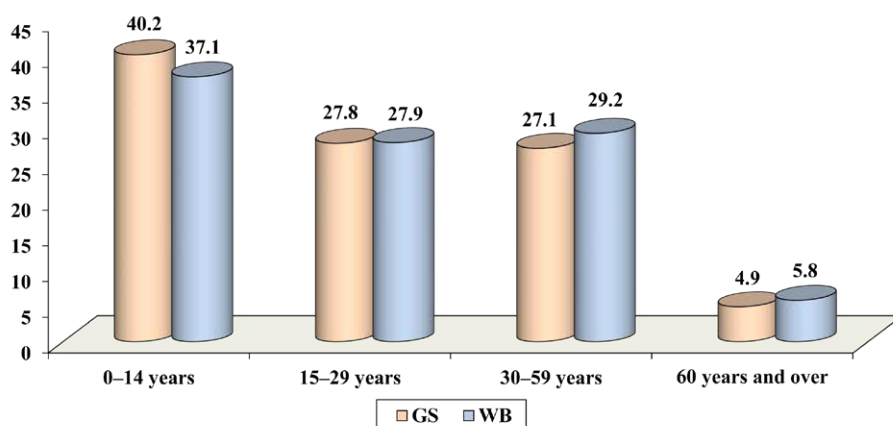
The illiteracy rate for both males and females has significantly declined over a 25-year period, particularly among females. From 1997 to 2022, the overall illiteracy rate dropped from 13.9% to 2.2%. Among males, the rate fell from 7.8% in 1997 to 1.1% in 2022, while for females, it decreased from 20.3% to 3.3%. Regionally, the illiteracy rate among the Palestinian population aged 15 and older was 2.4% in WB and 1% in GS in 2022.¹⁴

These rates are among the lowest in the world. The illiteracy rates for individuals aged 15 years and above in West Asia and North Africa reached 19.5% in 2020, according to data from the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, with rates of 14.2% among males, compared to 25.1% among females. Globally, in 2020, the rate was 13.3% for individuals in the same age group, with rates 9.9% among males compared to 16.7% among females.¹⁵

Table 3/2: Selected Demographic Indicators of Palestinians in WB and GS¹⁶

Indicator		WB	GS	WB & GS
Population density (persons/ km2) (2023)		582	6,185	921
Population growth (2023)		2.1	2.7	2.4
Average family size (2022)		4.7	5.5	5
Life expectancy at birth (males) (years) (2023)		73.6	72.9	73.3
Life expectancy at birth (females) (years) (2023)		75.8	75.1	75.5
CBR (births per thousand population) (2023)		26.6	32	28.8
CDR (deaths per thousand population) (2023)		3.9	3.7	3.7
Infant mortality rate (deaths per thousand live births) (2015–2019)		11.7	12.7	12.1
Average number of rooms in the housing unit (2022)		3.5	3.5	3.5
Age structure (%) (2023)	0–14 years	37.1	40.2	35
	15–29 years	27.9	27.8	27.9
	30–59 years	29.2	27.1	30.5
	60 years and over	5.8	4.9	6.6
Average housing density (persons/ room) (2022)		1.4	1.7	1.5

Age Structure in WB and GS 2023 (%)



b. The Palestinian Territories Occupied in 1948 (Israel)

PCBS has indicated that Palestinians living in Israel at the end of 2023 were estimated at 1.75 million compared to 1.71 million in 2022. Available data shows that they are a young community, with individuals aged under 15 representing 31.4% of males and 30.3% of females, while those aged 65 years and over amounted to 4.9% of males and 6% of females (see table 4/2).

Available estimates for 2022 indicate that the fertility rate for Palestinians residing in Israel was 2.9 births per woman, almost equal to the fertility rate of Jewish women, noting that the fertility of religious Jews women is 7 births. As for the average Palestinian household size, it was 4.2 persons. The CBR and CDR reached 21.6 births and 3.2 deaths per thousand respectively, while infant mortality rate was 5.1 deaths per thousand live births. Notably, these figures exclude Arab citizens in the Syrian Golan Heights, citizens in J1 of the Jerusalem governorate, as well as, Lebanese Arabs who have moved to live temporarily in Israel, as they are considered part of the Arab population as a whole (see table 4/2).

The number of homicides among Arab Palestinians in the 1948 occupied territories is rising at an unprecedented rate. A study by the Taub Center examining homicides in Israel found that the number of homicides in 2023 increased consistently each month within the Arab population. In 2023, there were 233 homicides,¹⁷ compared to 109 in 2022, which included 12 women. The year 2021 was also deadly for the Arab sector, with 126 murders recorded.¹⁸

According to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) data at the end of 2022 (which also include East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights), Muslims in the 1948 occupied territories counted for 1.747 million, comprising 85.7% of the population, while Druze counted for 150 thousand and Christians 139.8 thousand, comprising 7.4% and 6.9% respectively.¹⁹

c. Jordan

Palestinians living in Jordan at the end of 2023 were estimated at 4.7 million up from 4.6 million at the end of 2022, most of whom hold Jordanian citizenship (Jordanian citizens of Palestinian descent) (see table 1/2).

According to the Jordanian Department of Statistics, annual population growth was 2.2% in 2022, a percentage that included Jordanian citizens of Palestinian descent as well. Statistics also reveal that from 2020 to 2023, the total fertility

rate in Jordan was 2.6 children per woman, the infant mortality was 14 deaths per thousand live births, and the under-5 mortality rate is 15 deaths per thousand live births. These statistics include all Jordanians.²⁰ Jordanian citizens of Palestinian descent most likely have similar rates.

According to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), there were 2,562,628 Registered Persons (RPs) in Jordan as of mid-2023, compared to 2,519,306 RPs in mid-2022.²¹

d. Syria

According to UNRWA figures, the total RPs in Syria was 678,679 as of mid-2023 compared to 670,266 in mid-2022. It is worth noting that these are estimated figures due to the unstable situation of Syria, as many refugees who have left the country are still listed in the records.²²

According to UNRWA Figures as of July 2022, prior to the outbreak of events in Syria in 2011, there were over 570 thousand Palestinians living in Syria, with approximately 280 thousand displaced within the country. Additionally, more than 265 families reside in tents in northern Syria.²³

The number of Palestinian refugees with Syrian documents in Türkiye is estimated to be between 10 and 12 thousand, located in the provinces of Hatay, Kilis, Mersin and Istanbul. According to Action Group for Palestinians of Syria (AGPS), approximately 150 thousand Palestinian-Syrian refugees had arrived in Europe by the end of November 2023.²⁴ Moreover, an unknown number of refugees have sought asylum in Arab countries, the Americas and Australia.

In 2023, Palestinian refugees in Syria faced a significant worsening of humanitarian and living conditions compared to 2022. More than 91% of the refugees are enduring extreme poverty, while 40% remain in a state of protracted displacement due to the destruction of their homes amid the internal conflict in Syria.²⁵

Palestinian Syrians are struggling with high prices and a shortage of medicines, negatively impacting their lives, particularly for those who are sick, as support from UNRWA for medications has declined. Meanwhile, displaced Palestinians in northern Syria are being deprived of healthcare, education, financial aid and food assistance by the agency, under the pretext of residing in unsafe areas.²⁶

In northern Syria, approximately 1,500 Palestinian families have been forced to leave their homes in al-Yarmouk, Khan Eshieh, Handarat, Dera'a and southern Damascus RCs. These families are facing harsh living conditions, worsened by the earthquake that struck Syria and Türkiye in February 2023, claiming the lives of 51 Palestinian refugees injuring dozens more.²⁷

Palestinian families in northern Syria are distributed across three main areas: Idlib and its countryside, Afrin (Olive Branch) and northern Aleppo countryside (Euphrates Shield). The city of Idlib hosts the largest number of Palestinian refugees, with 819 families residing in various areas, including 226 families in the city itself. These refugees face extremely difficult humanitarian conditions due to the scarcity of aid, high poverty and unemployment rates and the collapse of the Turkish lira against the US dollar, limiting their purchasing power and job opportunities.²⁸

AGPS has documented the deaths of 4,261 Palestinian refugees in Syria from March 2011 to December 2023, including 111 victims in 2023. Of the total casualties, 59% were males and 41% were females, with the majority being civilians.²⁹

Additionally, AGPS reported a total of 3,087 Palestinian detainees in Syria by the end of 2023, including 11 individuals during that year. The Group also recorded the disappearance of 333 individuals, including 40 women and several children.³⁰

As of March 2023, UNRWA records show a total of 31,400 Palestine refugees migrating from Syria to Lebanon, residing in various regions across the country.³¹

The year 2023 witnessed a significant increase in the number of Palestinian refugees migrating from Syria to Lebanon, driven by the collapse of the Syrian economy, the sharp decline of the Syrian pound against the US dollar, a lack of basic living necessities, widespread unemployment and high prices. These challenges have compelled many to seek refuge in Lebanon.³²

e. Lebanon

According to UNRWA figures, RPs residing in Lebanon as of mid-2023 constituted a total of 564,072, compared to 553,218 in mid-2022.³³ However, the census in Palestinian RCs and gatherings in Lebanon for 2017 revealed that there are only 174 thousand refugees residing in Lebanon.³⁴ Even if we assume that there is a higher margin of error in this census, the estimates that most researchers agree

on are 200–250 thousand, with a significant portion of the rest willing to immigrate if given the opportunity. This means that the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have been suffering from a high rate of migration, which has increased in recent years due to the ongoing work restrictions on Palestinians and the escalation of political and economic crises in Lebanon. ‘Abdelnasser el Ayi, the office director of the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) stated that “the wave of Palestinian immigration from Lebanon has been on the rise since 2005, but the numbers doubled in the last two years, 2020 and 2021, both through legal and illegal immigration.” He added that in 2020 between 6 and 8 thousand Palestinians left Lebanon without returning, while in 2021 up to the end of October, 12 thousand Palestinian travelers were recorded who did not return to Lebanon. This number surpasses the average of previous years.³⁵

According to UNRWA’s Annual Operational Report 2022, there were 30,134 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) registered with the Agency in Lebanon. The report highlighted that a high-frequency crisis monitoring survey conducted by UNRWA in September 2022 indicated that 93% of Palestine refugees were living below the poverty line, compared to 73% and 86% recorded in July 2021 and March 2022, respectively, representing a 20% increase over 14 months. Underlining the fragility of living conditions, the report revealed that in October 2022 the first cases of cholera were identified. By the end of the year, 5,105 suspected and confirmed cases had been recorded in 20 of the country’s 26 districts, resulting in 23 deaths.³⁶

The Palestinian Association for Human Rights “Witness,” conducted a study in May 2023, concerning the Lebanese crisis and its impact on the Palestinian refugees. The study revealed that 80–85% of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are unemployed, a situation primarily caused by the restrictive Lebanese laws and decisions that deprive them of their right to work and civil rights. Additionally, the Lebanese economic crisis and currency collapse have exacerbated this issue. The study further noted a rapid increase in unemployment rates, with a significant number of the unemployed individuals being university graduates or holders of vocational certificates, many of whom are young. Furthermore, the study also highlighted a growing trend of turning to informal sources of income, such as operating small coffee stands, as dozens of young people in the camps turned to this idea due to the lack of real job opportunities, providing them with a modest income but still falling short of effectively addressing the unemployment problem.³⁷

According to UNRWA, poverty rates among Palestine Refugees are high with 80% reported to be living below the national poverty line (adjusted for inflation) as of March 2023. Data modeling confirmed that without the distribution of quarterly cash assistance (amounting to a total of \$18 million in two rounds since December 2022), the poverty rate would stand at 93%.³⁸

According to the Population and Housing Census in the Palestinian RCs and Gatherings in Lebanon for 2017 (which has not yet been updated), individuals aged under 15 accounted for 29% while those aged 65 years and older comprised 6.4% of the population. On average, Palestinian households in Lebanon consisted of four members, with families headed by women comprised 17.5% of the total. On the other hand, the fertility rate among Palestinian women living in the Palestinian RCs and gatherings in Lebanon was recorded at 2.7 births per woman.

f. General Comparisons Among Palestinians

Before comparing the major demographic indicators summarized in table 4/2, it's important to note that, some data may pertain to different years, potentially affecting the comparison process. Nevertheless, these data remain valuable as general indicators based on the latest available statistics. The following are the key observations:

- The highest percentage of Palestinians under the age of 15 is in GS, while it is lowest in Lebanon.
- The percentage of Palestinians aged 65 and over is highest in Lebanon, followed by the territories occupied in 1948 (Israel) and Syria, with the lowest in GS.
- CBRs are highest in GS, followed by Jordan and Syria, then WB with Lebanon following, and lowest in the territories occupied in 1948 (Israel). This trend aligns with past years, where GS consistently maintained the highest CBRs, contributing to demographic pressures on the besieged strip with limited capacity.
- CDR remained high in WB and GS reaching 3.7 deaths per thousand in 2023. This was primarily attributed to Israeli policies pursued over decades, particularly the killing of Palestinians.

Table 4/2: Selected Demographic Indicators of Palestinians by Residence³⁹

Indicator	WB 2023	GS 2023	WB & GS 2023	Israel 2022	Jordan 2011	Syria (2009–2010)	Lebanon 2017
% of individuals under 15 years	35	40.2	37.1	31.4 males 30.3 females	39.9	33.1	29
% of individuals 65 years and over	4.1	3	3.6	4.9 males 6 females	4.3	4.4	6.4
Sex ratio (males per 100 females)	103.7	102.7	103.2	103.1	–	100.4	102
CBR (births per 1,000 population)	26.6	32	28.8	21.6	29.2 (2010)	29.2	25.8 (2010)
CDR (deaths per 1,000 population)	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.2	–	2.8 (2006)	–
Total fertility rate (births per woman)	3.8 (2017–2019)	3.9 (2017–2019)	3.8 (2017–2019)	2.9	2.6 (2020–2023)	2.5	2.7
Average household size (individuals per house)	4.7 (2022)	5.5 (2022)	5 (2022)	4.2	5.1	4.1 (2010)	4

3. Palestinian Refugees

Determining the precise number of Palestinian refugees worldwide poses a challenge, yet utilizing available data allows for approximations.

According to PCBS, approximately 7.337 million Palestinians were residing abroad by the close of 2023. Concurrently, the Palestinian refugees in the WB and GS were estimated at 42.2% of the population based on 2017 data, totaling around 2.356 million individuals by the end of 2023, with 865 thousand in the WB, and 1.491 million in the GS, representing 26.3% and 66.1% of their respective populations.⁴⁰ These figures are closely align with those reported by UNRWA, which indicated approximately 905 thousand registered refugees in the WB, and about 1.578 million in the GS by the mid of 2023. Discrepancies in numbers may arise from refugees relocating from the WB and GS (see table 5/2). Moreover, a number of Palestinians residing abroad possess Palestinian “citizenship” and originate from the WB and GS, retaining the option to return and settle there Furthermore, an estimated 150 thousand Palestinians from the 1948 occupied territories, who

were displaced from their historical cities and villages, yet remained within the geographical borders of occupied Palestine in 1948. Thus, the total tally of Palestinian refugees by the end of 2023, is projected at 9.843 million, constituting 67.3% of the global Palestinians population.

Challenges related to replications may arise due to changes of residency status or passport details, primarily affecting only a limited segment of the large proportion of refugees.

It's worth noting that UNRWA's data is limited to registered refugees within its five areas of operation: WB, GS, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Therefore, these statistics do not comprehensively capture the global refugee population, as they exclude many refugees residing outside UNRWA's operation areas, and even those within its operational areas who have not enlisted with the agency to benefit from its services.

Additionally, UNRWA's figures exclude the Palestinian refugees who took refuge post the 1967 war. Besides, there are refugees who had to flee Palestine under different circumstances (other than war) and were prevented from returning. Hence, UNRWA statistics, except to a limited extent in Syria and Lebanon, are incomplete and should not be considered definitive figures reflecting the reality of the 1948 refugee population. These figures only represent registrants with UNRWA eligible for its assistance and services, rather than all Palestinian refugees.

The count of registered refugees across UNRWA's operational areas as of 30/6/2023 is estimated at 6.718 million, with around 2.563 million residing in Jordan (38.1%); 2.913 million in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 (43.4%), 1.784 million in the GS (26.6%) and 1.129 million in the WB (16.8%); and the remaining constitute 1.24 million (18.5%), who are registered in Syria and Lebanon. The total number of families registered in UNRWA's operational areas reached 1.6 million, with an average household size of 4.2 persons.⁴¹

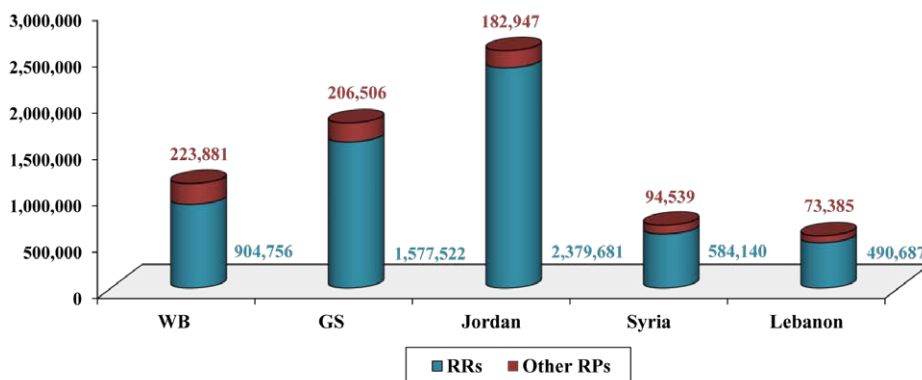
Refugee figures persist as estimations, particularly concerning Palestinians abroad, beyond UNRWA's operational reach, lacking official statistics and precise knowledge of growth rates. Additionally, challenges arise in addressing replication issues due to changes in country of residence or citizenship, especially concerning Palestinians in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, as well as Palestinians in historic Palestine residing abroad.

Table 5/2: UNRWA-RPs According to Their Area of Operation as of 30/6/2023⁴²

Indicator	WB	GS	Jordan	Syria	Lebanon	Total
Registered Refugee (RRs)	904,756	1,577,522	2,379,681	584,140	490,687	5,936,786
Other RPs*	223,881	206,506	182,947	94,539	73,385	781,258
Total RPs	1,128,637	1,784,028	2,562,628	678,679	564,072	6,718,044
Families	288,257	390,190	573,606	199,707	148,583	1,600,343
Official camps	19	8	10	9	12	58
Schools	96	284	161	102	63	706
Pupil enrolment	46,022	294,086	113,485	49,500	39,982	543,075
Primary health-care facilities	43	22	25	23	27	140

* Other RPs: include non-refugee wives, non-refugee husbands, non-refugee children, Jerusalem poor, Gaza poor, etc.

UNRWA's Figures as of 30/6/2023



UNRWA-Total RPs by Area as of 30/6/2023

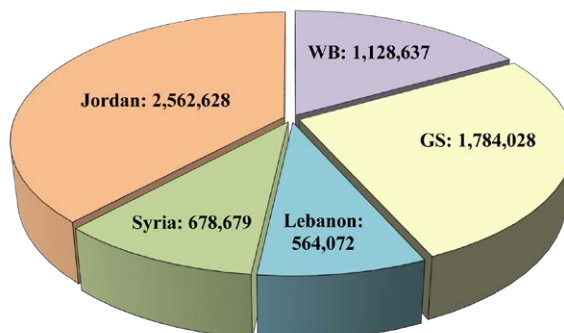


Table 6/2 indicates that UNRWA refugee communities, much like the general Palestinian population, are young, with 29% of Agency-registered refugees are children under the age of 18, with highest proportion in the GS (40.7%) and lowest in Lebanon (21.6%).

The data reveals that fertility rates among refugees in the WB and GS are the highest across UNRWA's five operation areas (3.6 births per woman), as reflected in the average family size in these areas (5.6 individuals per household). The dependency ratio (the number of dependents per 100 individuals of working age, 15–64 years) among registered refugees is notably high in the GS (70 years) primarily attributable to the significant percentage of individuals under 15 years old. This situation could pose challenges given the high levels of unemployment and worsening economic conditions.

Table 6/2: Selected Demographic Indicators of UNRWA-RPs According to Their Area of Operation 2022⁴³

Indicator	GS	WB	Jordan	Syria	Lebanon
Children below 18 years (%)	40.7	26.5	24.2	26.8	21.6
Average household size (individual per house)	5.6	5.6	5.2	4.8	4.7
Fertility rate (births per woman)	3.6	3.6	3.2	2.7	2.7
Dependency ratio	70	48.6	43.3	46.5	47.9

Regarding education, figures reveal that refugees in the WB and GS are more educated than non-refugees. The illiteracy rate among refugees (15 years and over) stands at 2.5%, compared to 3% among non-refugees. Moreover, individuals holding a bachelor's degree or higher comprise 16% for refugees and 14% for non-refugees.⁴⁴

4. Demographic Growth Trends

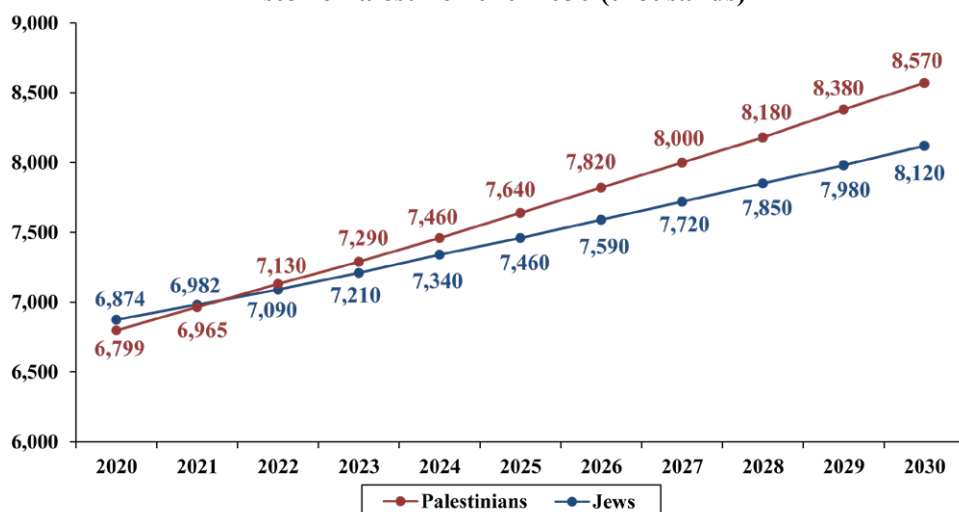
Despite the relative decline in the rate of natural population growth among Palestinians, the rate remains notably high compared to other populations, including Israelis. According to PCBS, the Palestinian population in historic Palestine had reached 7.3 million by the close of 2023, while CBS estimated the Jews population at 7.2 million.⁴⁵

In 2022, Palestinians outnumbered Jews for the first time in many years by approximately 40 thousand, and Palestinians are expected to outnumber Jews in historic Palestine in 2030 by about 450 thousand.

Table 7/2: Estimated Population Count of Palestinians and Jews in Historic Palestine 2020–2030 (thousands)⁴⁶

Year	Palestinians in historic Palestine	Jews
2020	6,799	6,874
2021	6,965	6,982
2022	7,130	7,090
2023	7,290	7,210
2024	7,460	7,340
2025	7,640	7,460
2026	7,820	7,590
2027	8,000	7,720
2028	8,180	7,850
2029	8,380	7,980
2030	8,570	8,120

Estimated Population Count of Palestinians and Jews in Historic Palestine 2020–2030 (thousands)



From a Palestinian perspective, the optimistic reading of these projections, confirms that despite enduring oppression, displacement and occupation, the Palestinian people stand resolute on their land. It also underscores a significant shift: after 125 years since the establishment of the World Zionist Organization, and 74 years since the founding of Israel, the Zionist project faces the reality that the Palestinian population within Palestine now surpasses the Jews population—a gathering from over a hundred countries throughout these years. This demographic reality undoubtedly unsettles Israel. However, while the notion of a Palestinian “demographic bomb” is significant, should not lead Palestinians into complacency or premature celebration. While Palestinian endurance and population growth are vital, they alone are not insufficient. History has shown that colonial powers have often navigated and overcome such challenges.

On the other hand, Israelis are acutely aware of the risks posed by this demographic reality and have been strategizing for decades to address it. Hence, their disengagement from GS in 2005. In the WB, their tactics have involved annexing the largest area of land with minimal population density to create conditions conducive to Palestinian displacement. Moreover, the specter of displacement and “transfer” remains a pressing agenda for Israeli decision-makers’, with past attempts to implement these plans, particularly during the war against GS following Operation al-Aqsa Flood. However, these attempts have thus far been unsuccessful.

5. Palestinians Abroad and the Right of Return

The Palestinian communities abroad play a crucial role in raising awareness about the issue of Palestine and fostering a deep connection among the younger generations with Palestine, emphasizing the significance of the right of return and the bond to the homeland. Despite political marginalization, these communities have spearheaded numerous initiatives independent of existing factions and affiliated institutions.

Continuing a long-standing tradition, the 20th “Palestinians in Europe” conference took place on 27/5/2023, in the Swedish city of Malmö, under the slogan “75 Years On.. We Will Return.” The event drew thousands of Palestinians from various European nations, alongside prominent Palestinian, Arab and European figures. The conference was attended by 11 lawmakers from the

Swedish parliament along with parliamentarians from Ireland, Italy and Spain.⁴⁷ The conference advocated for PLO reform and the restoration of national unity.⁴⁸

As part of the “Our Wound is One” relief campaign, initiated by the European-Palestinians Initiative for National Action in May 2021 to support hospitals and health centers in GS with essential medical equipment and supplies, the initiative’s medical committee announced the successful completion of the third project in September 2022. This project involved the providing an advanced Ultrasound device to the Department of Vascular Surgery at al-Shifa Medical Complex in GS.⁴⁹

On 29/10/2022, the inaugural European Conference for Jerusalem, themed “Jerusalem is Ours” commenced in the Italian city of Milan to spotlight ongoing Israeli aggressions on Islamic and Christian Palestinian holy sites in Jerusalem. Participants highlighted diverse European initiatives aimed at bolstering support for Palestinian endeavors on the continent and fostering stronger communication with the Palestinian territories. The conference stressed the importance of enhancing the resilience of the Palestinian community in Europe.⁵⁰

The Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad (PCPA), active in approximately fifty countries worldwide, hosted the “Palestinian Situation in 2022, Future Prospects, and the Required Role of Palestinians Abroad” conference on 5/3/2023. This conference coincided with the second General Assembly meeting of the Popular Conference, conducted via the Zoom platform. The event featured the participation of national figures from both the Palestinian territories and abroad, emphasizing the importance of rebuilding the Palestinian national project as the cornerstone for liberation and mobilizing the potential of Palestinians within and outside Palestine. It underscored the necessity of establishing a national front grounded in resistance and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.⁵¹

The Palestinian Return Center (PRC) has actively engaged in various initiatives abroad. On 14/3/2022, in collaboration with the AGPS, the center urged the release of Palestinian women detained in Syrian prisons during its oral intervention at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.⁵²

Latin America is witnessing growing solidarity with the Palestine issue, owing to persistent efforts by the Arab and Muslim community, notably the Palestinian community, in raising awareness about the suffering the Palestinians under Israeli occupation, while emphasizing the right of return.

The second conference of the Union of Palestinian Communities of Latin America (UPAL) concluded on 19/3/2023, after three days of deliberations in the Colombian city of Barranquilla. The conference was attended by Palestinian delegations from various Latin American countries, including Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Honduras, Guatemala, Colombia and El Salvador. Discussions focused on pertinent issues affecting Palestinian communities in Latin America, with a specific emphasis on expanding the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel and influencing the domestic policies of these nations in support of the issue of Palestine. The conference adopted a final statement reaffirming the participants' deep-rooted connection to the Palestinian people.⁵³

Palestinian communities in Europe, the US and South America have remained steadfast in advocating for Palestinian rights through a series of events, activities, demonstrations and vigils. These gatherings aim to underscore Palestinians' rightful claim to their land and the return of refugees to their original homes from which they were forcibly displaced. They also seek to denounce the Judaization and displacement in Jerusalem and WB, in addition to condemning Israeli war on GS. Following Operation al-Aqsa Flood, and subsequent unprecedented Israeli aggression against GS, Palestinian communities, peace activists and supporters of Palestinian rights have organized numerous demonstrations in various capital cities across these regions.⁵⁴

In Latin America, Palestinian communities have taken a leading role in organizing and participating in demonstrations and events in solidarity with GS across several capitals and cities. The Federation of Palestinian Institutions in Brazil (VIBAL) highlighted that the Palestinian resistance launched an operation of self-defense in response to occupation, colonization and violations of international agreements and norms. Furthermore, the Palestinian Club in Chile, hosted a public lecture on "the truth of Israel's claims of peace versus the reality of its killing and extermination of Palestinians in GS."⁵⁵

Experts from the Palestinian American Organizations Network (PAON), alongside dedicated volunteers from Palestinian communities in the US, played a significant role in establishing the South American Preparatory Committee against Israeli Apartheid. This pivotal committee was officially announced in October 2023, during a gathering in Mexico City, comprising representatives from various political parties and parliamentarians from most Latin American countries.⁵⁶

In the US, the Palestinian community, along with Palestinian youth organizations and networks, has been actively involved in organizing vigils, demonstrations and activities. Notably, the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) and the US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN) have emerged as leading organizations.⁵⁷

In Vienna, around 10 thousand individuals from the Palestinian and Arab communities, alongside European supporters, convened on 4/11/2023, to denounce the ongoing Israeli war on GS. Similarly, countries like Britain, Germany, Italy and other European nations, saw significant demonstrations expressing solidarity with Palestine and condemning the war on Gaza.⁵⁸

Second: Economic Indicators in WB and GS

The recent events—Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the Israeli war on GS—have had devastating effects on the already struggling Palestinian economy, particularly in GS. These events have exacerbated the ongoing hardships faced by Palestinians due to oppressive Israeli policies and measures. These policies not only exploit Palestinian resources but also hinder the development of the Palestinian economy, effectively making it dependent on the Israeli economy.

During the prolonged Israeli aggression on GS, which has persisted through land, sea and air operations since 7/10/2023, the strip has suffered extensive devastation. In an update covering 200 days (23/4/2024) of Israel's war on GS, it was reported that 3,025 massacres were committed against Palestinians, and 75 thousand tons of explosives were dropped on the enclave. Of the 34,183 fatalities recorded at hospitals, 14,778 were children and 9,752 were women, with a total of 77,143 injured. Children and women accounted for 72% of the victims. Furthermore, 7 thousand remain missing. The report highlighted the loss of 485 medical staff, 67 civil defense crews and 140 journalists. The health sector in GS has collapsed, with 32 hospitals and 53 health centers now out of service due to attacks targeting 160 healthcare facilities and 126 ambulances. Additionally, the war has displaced two million people, with 86 thousand residential units completely destroyed and 294 thousand partially damaged. Moreover, the Israeli forces have demolished 181 governmental buildings and 103 educational institutions, partially damaging



309 others. Places of worship have also been targeted, with 239 mosques destroyed and 317 partially damaged, and destroying three churches struck. Cultural heritage has not been spared, as 206 archaeological and heritage sites in GS have been destroyed.⁵⁹

On 30/12/2023, PCBS presented a report on the Palestinian economic repercussions of the Israeli war on GS, leading to a sharp contraction in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Strip, accompanied by a significant rise in unemployment rate. The WB experienced a decline in GDP by 22%, with an unemployment rate of 29%, resulting in a decline in GDP in both the WB and GS during Q4 2023 by up to 33%. This also led to a sharp decline in the level of consumption in PA areas by more than 33%, with prices rising by more than 30% during the same period, affecting poverty levels in Palestine, which rose to unprecedented levels.⁶⁰

During the first two months of the Israeli war on GS, the estimated direct losses surpassed \$12 billion. After six months of war, the Government Media Office reported that the total damage caused was approximately \$30 billion, with 80% of Gaza City's buildings destroyed. The destruction extended to residential buildings, economic facilities and critical infrastructure such as roads, electricity networks, water pipes and sewage systems.⁶¹

On 17/4/2024, The United Nations (UN) appealed for \$2.8 billion in funding to assist more than three million people in GS and the WB until the end of the year, helping to ease food shortages and prevent looming famine in the strip. The flash appeal published by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) specified that \$782.1 million would be allocated for food aid for 2.2 million people in GS and 400 thousand people in the WB.⁶²

In 2022–2023, GS has endured two major wars with the first one known as Unity of the Arenas Battle, occurring throughout the 5–7/8/2022 period. This aggression resulted in the loss of 46 Palestinian lives and left 360 individuals injured. Additionally, 1,761 housing units in GS sustained damages, with 18 completely destroyed and 68 severely damaged.⁶³

According to the official in charge of the reconstruction file at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in GS, the estimated direct losses exceeded \$3 million, while indirect losses were estimated at more than \$10 million.⁶⁴

The second war, known as Revenge of the Free Battle during the period 9–13/5/2023, resulting in the loss of 33 Palestinian lives. The Ministry of Public Works and Housing in Gaza reported that a total of 2,943 housing units sustained damage, while the agricultural sector incurred losses estimated at \$3 million. The estimated total direct and indirect losses reached approximately \$50 million.⁶⁵

1. GDP in PA Territories (WB and GS)

GDP reflects the overall economic activity carried out by all institutions producing goods and services in the public, private and other sectors in a country over one year. It is a widely used indicator employed locally, regionally and internationally at different levels. It indicates the state of economic development and growth, and the PCBS periodically measures and presents its current data and future forecasts.

a. GDP Growth Rate

The years 2021–2022 witnessed significant economic growth, with growth rates of 7% and 4.1% respectively. While the first three quarters of 2023 showed a 3% increase in GDP compared to the same period in 2022, the Israeli war on GS in October 2023 led to a decline in GDP in GS during Q4 to more than 80% compared to Q4 2022. Economic activities were almost completely disrupted, and most production components were destroyed. In the WB, GDP declined by 22% in Q4 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. Consequently, the GDP in the WB and GS, which was expected to grow by 3% in 2023, actually dropped by approximately 6%.⁶⁶

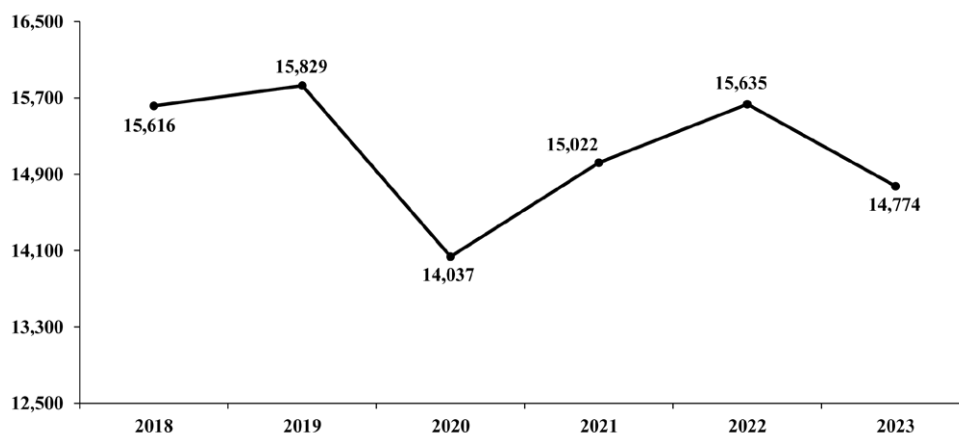
On 31/1/2024, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) published a report highlighting the social and economic deterioration in Gaza. Through the utilization of innovative satellite imagery and official data, the report revealed that the ongoing military operation has greatly accelerated the decline and precipitated a 24% GDP contraction for the year 2023. If the current military operation were to end immediately with reconstruction starting right away, and the 2007–2022 growth trend persists with an average growth rate of 0.4%, it would take GS (approximately 70 years) until 2092 just to restore the GDP levels of 2022.⁶⁷

Table 8/2: GDP in PA Territories 2018–2023 at Constant Prices (\$ million)⁶⁸

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
GDP	15,616	15,829	14,037	15,022	15,635	14,774
Average annual growth (%)	+1.2	+1.4	−11.3	+7	+4.1	−5.5

Note: The data based on PCBS statistics excludes the parts of Jerusalem annexed by Israel in 1967. The base year is 2015. This exclusion will be applied to all the following tables in this chapter.

GDP in PA Territories 2018–2023 at Constant Prices (\$ million)



b. GDP Growth in WB and GS

There was significant variation in GDP growth rates between WB and GS in 2021 and 2022. In GS, GDP increased by 4.2% in 2021 and by 5.2% in 2022, compared with growth in WB by 7.6% and 3.8% for the same years, respectively. However, the gap between the two regions widened further, due to the Israeli war. Preliminary estimates suggest that GDP in GS will decline by 22.6% in 2023, compared to a decline of 1.9% in WB during the same period. In terms of their contributions to the overall GDP, GS's share continues to diminish. It decreased to 17.2% in 2021, 17.4% in 2022, and is anticipated to drop to no more than 14% in 2023. Conversely, WB accounted for 82.6% of total output in 2022, despite the fact that its share of the total population is estimated at 60% compared to 40% for GS. These statistics are not surprising given the challenging conditions

GS has endured over the past 16 years, including a suffocating siege, resistance against Israeli occupation, casualties, injuries, destruction of homes, property and infrastructure, as well as impediments to economic development.

Table 9/2: GDP in WB and GS 2018–2023 at Constant Prices (\$ million)⁶⁹

Year	WB		GS		WB and GS	
	GDP	Percentage (%)	GDP	Percentage (%)	GDP	Percentage (%)
2018	12,797.3	81.9	2,818.9	18.1	15,616.2	100
2019	12,998.8	82.1	2,830.2	17.9	15,829	100
2020	11,564.1	82.4	2,473.3	17.6	14,037.4	100
2021	12,443.6	82.8	2,578.1	17.2	15,021.7	100
2022	12,921.7	82.6	2,713.3	17.4	15,635	100
2023*	12,673.3	85.8	2,100.4	14.2	14,773.7	100

* Preliminary estimates.

GDP in WB and GS 2018–2023 at Constant Prices (\$ million)

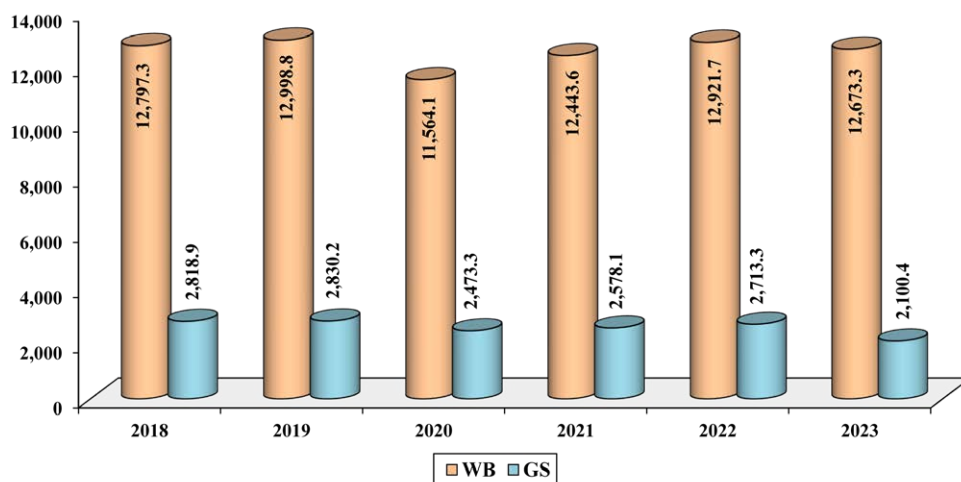


Table 10/2: GDP Growth in the WB and GS 2018–2023
at Constant Prices (\$ million)⁷⁰

		Actual					Preliminary estimates
		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
WB	GDP	12,797.3	12,998.8	11,564.1	12,443.6	12,921.7	12,673.3
	Average annual growth or deterioration (%)	+2.3	+1.6	–11	+7.6	+3.8	–1.9
GS	GDP	2,818.9	2,830.2	2,473.3	2,578.1	2,713.3	2,100.4
	Average annual growth or deterioration (%)	–3.5	+0.4	–12.6	+4.2	+5.2	–22.6

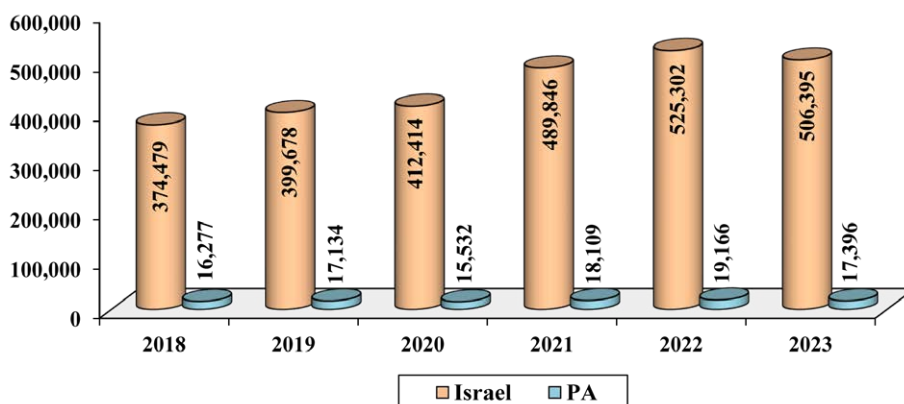
c. GDP in PA Territories and Israel

When considering the Israeli GDP at current prices, which stood at \$506 billion in 2023 and \$525 billion in 2022, it becomes evident that it surpasses its Palestinian counterpart by more than 29 times in both years. This stark contrast underscores the nature of the Israeli occupation and its profound impact on the Palestinian economy, highlighting how it exploits Palestinian resources and hinders their ability to fully utilize their energies and potentials. It's crucial to acknowledge the demographic differences, with Israel's population reaching 9.84 million in 2023 compared to 5.55 million in WB and GS.

Table 11/2: GDP in PA Territories and Israel 2018–2023
at Current Prices (\$ million)⁷¹

Year	PA	Israel	% Palestinian GDP to Israeli GDP
2018	16,277	374,479	4.3
2019	17,134	399,678	4.3
2020	15,532	412,414	3.8
2021	18,109	489,846	3.7
2022	19,166	525,302	3.6
2023	17,396	506,395	3.4

GDP in PA Territories and Israel 2018–2023 at Current Prices (\$ million)



2. GDP per Capita

This indicator reflects the overall development and growth of GDP at constant prices, after excluding inflation rates and population growth rates. It represents the average share of GDP per capita over time, which is being reformulated as an average per capita income or disposable income that reflects as a purchasing power per person. This value is influenced by remittances from abroad and deductions at the individual level.

a. Average Growth of GDP per Capita

The GDP per capita improved by an average of 3% between 2021 and 2022, as shown in table 12/2, reaching around \$3,100 in 2022 compared to \$3,052 in 2021.

Based on preliminary PCBS estimates, despite a 0.5% increase in GDP per capita in WB and GS during Q3 2023 compared to the preceding quarter, the Israeli war on GS in October 2023 resulted in a decline of approximately 8% in GDP per capita for the year 2023.⁷²

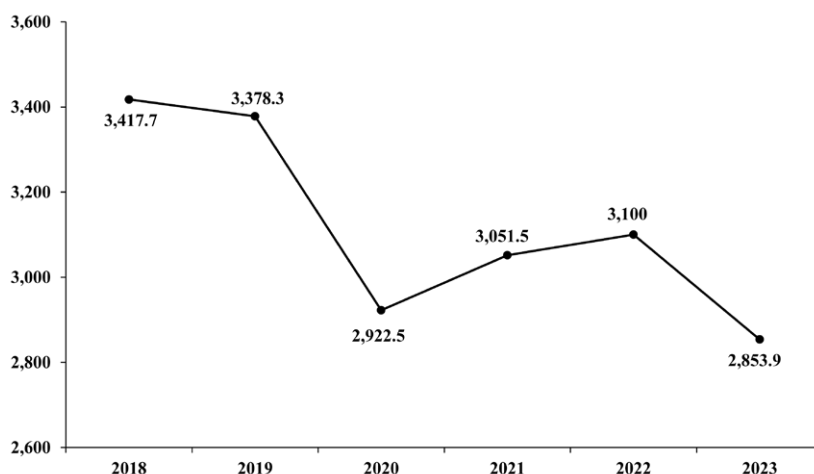
On the other hand, UNCTAD report on 31/1/2024, indicated a 26.1% reduction in GDP per capita in 2023 due to the war. Even with the most optimistic scenario, Gaza's GDP per capita is not anticipated to return to its 2006 pre-blockade levels until 2035.⁷³

Table 12/2: GDP per Capita in PA Territories 2018–2023
at Constant Prices (\$) ⁷⁴

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*
GDP per capita	3,417.7	3,378.3	2,922.5	3,051.5	3,100	2,853.9
Average annual growth or deterioration (%)	-1.3	-1.2	-13.5	+4.4	+1.6	-7.9

* Preliminary estimates.

GDP per Capita in PA Territories 2018–2023 at Constant Prices (\$)



b. Average GDP per Capita in WB and GS

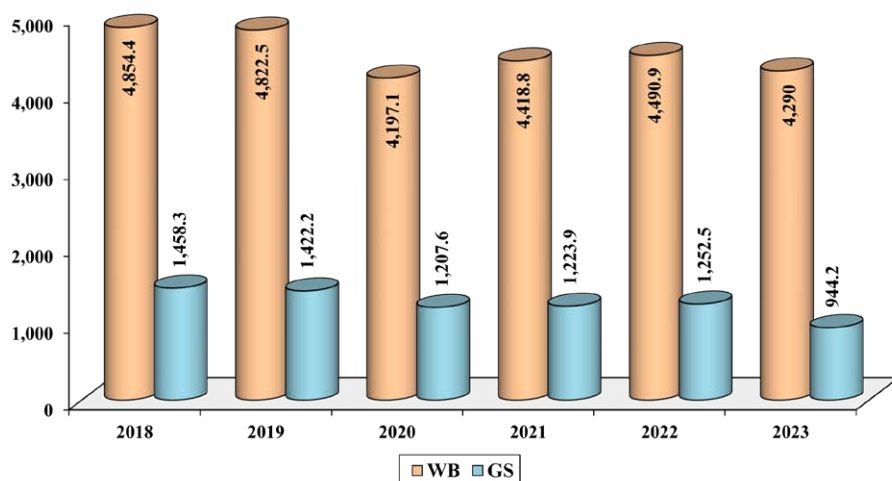
In 2022, the GDP per capita in WB exceeded that of GS, standing at \$4,491 in WB compared to \$1,253 in GS. Following the Israeli war on GS in October 2023, it is estimated that the GDP per capita in WB will decrease to around \$4,290 in 2023, reflecting a 4.5% decline from 2022. Conversely, the GDP per capita in GS is anticipated to plummet to approximately \$944 in 2023, representing a sharp decline of 24.6% due to the impact of the Israeli war.

The GDP per capita in WB was 3.6 times higher than that of GS in 2022. However, following the Israeli war at the end of 2023, this ratio increased to 4.5 times, underscoring the widening gap between WB and GS in terms of GDP per capita (see table 13/2).

**Table 13/2: Average GDP per Capita in the WB and GS 2018–2023
at Constant Prices (\$) ⁷⁵**

		Actual					Preliminary estimates
		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
WB	GDP per capita	4,854.4	4,822.5	4,197.1	4,418.8	4,490.9	4,290
	Average annual growth or deterioration (%)	+0.1	−0.7	−13	+5.3	+1.6	−4.5
GS	GDP per capita	1,458.3	1,422.2	1,207.6	1,223.9	1,252.5	944.2
	Average annual growth or deterioration (%)	−6.3	−2.5	−15.1	+1.3	+2.3	−24.6

GDP per Capita in the WB and GS 2018–2023 at Constant Prices (\$)



c. Comparison of GDP per Capita Between PA Territories and Israel

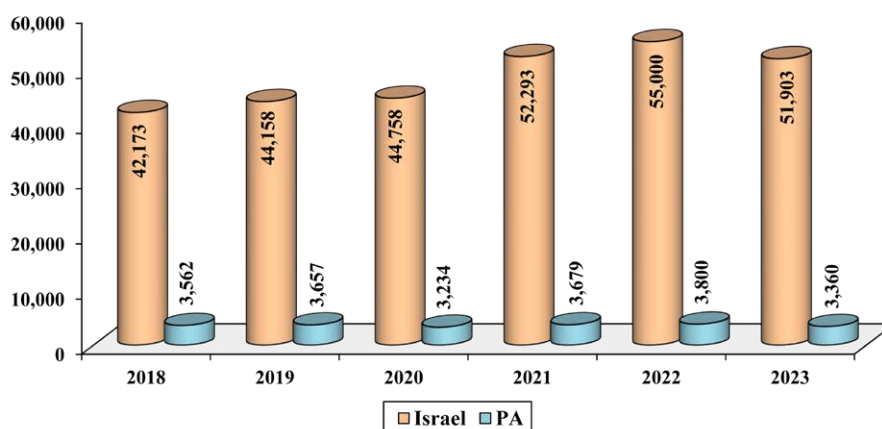
There is a significant gap between GDP per capita in PA territories and Israel. In 2022 and 2023, at current prices, it stood at \$3,800 and \$3,360 in the PA territories, respectively, while in Israel (at current prices) it reached \$55 thousand and \$51,903 for the same period. This contrast highlights that the average Israeli GDP per capita surpasses that of Palestinians by 15.4 times. This discrepancy is largely attributed to the Israeli occupation and its policies that hinder the normal growth of the Palestinian economy, resulting in a decline in Palestinian GDP.

Meanwhile, Palestinians experienced higher rates of population growth compared to the Israeli side and worked under more challenging conditions due to the occupation, leading to adverse effects on wages, living standards and savings. Furthermore, the huge gap between the two regions has enabled Israelis to enjoy a notably superior standard of living compared to Palestinians.

**Table 14/2: GDP per Capita in the PA Territories and Israel 2018–2023
at Current Prices (\$) ⁷⁶**

Year	PA	Israel	% Palestinian GDP per capita of Israeli GDP per capita
2018	3,562	42,173	8.4
2019	3,657	44,158	8.3
2020	3,234	44,758	7.2
2021	3,679	52,293	7
2022	3,800	55,000	6.9
2023	3,360	51,903	6.5

**GDP per Capita in the PA Territories and Israel 2018–2023
at Current Prices (\$)**



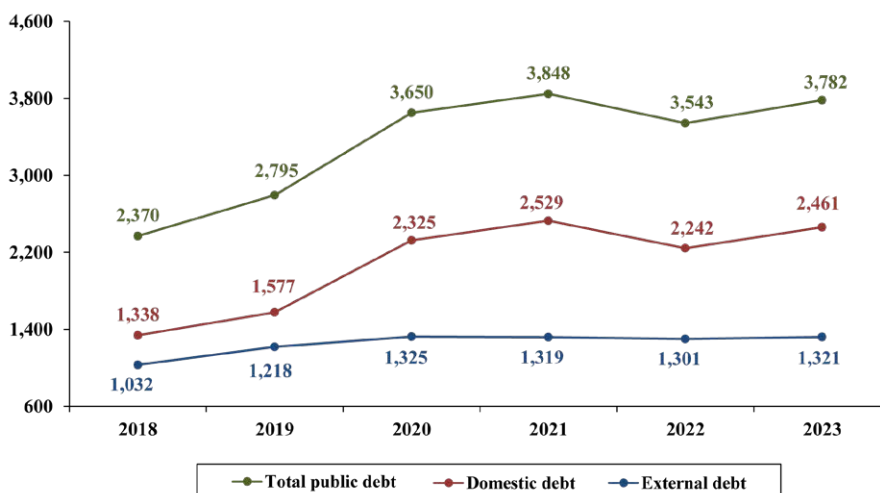
3. Public Debt

Public debt, both domestic and external, was associated with the great expansion of government expenditures and, consequently, the persistent budget deficit. A significant decline in unstable external aid was also noticed since 2009, followed by an increased obligations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside unjust Israeli deductions. Consequently, the PA resorted to borrowing, particularly from local sources, such as the banking system and public entities, including the Palestinian Pension Agency.

Table 15/2: PA Government Public Debt 2018–2023 (\$ million)⁷⁷

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Domestic debt	1,338	1,577	2,325	2,529	2,242	2,461
Annual growth rate (%)	−10.9	+17.9	+47.4	+8.8	−11.3	+9.8
External debt	1,032	1,218	1,325	1,319	1,301	1,321
Annual growth rate (%)	−1	+18	+8.8	−0.4	−1.4	+1.5
Total public debt	2,370	2,795	3,650	3,848	3,543	3,782
GDP at current prices	16,276.6	17,133.5	15,531.7	18,109	19,165.5	17,396.3
Total public debt as % of GDP	14.6	16.3	23.5	21.2	18.5	21.7

PA Government Public Debt 2018–2023 (\$ million)



It is worth noting that public debt followed various trajectories throughout 2015–2023, initially declining until 2018, and then rising during 2019–2021, and subsequently declining by approximately 8% in 2022.

Data released by the Ministry of Finance at the end of 2023 indicated that public debt increased by 6.7% compared to 2022, reaching \$3.78 billion, or 21.7% of GDP. However, despite fluctuation in the size of the debt, it remains at high levels compared to previous periods due to the ongoing crisis in clearing revenues, Israeli deductions, withholdings from funds and the sharp decline in the volume of foreign grants and aid, which has reached its lowest levels. The government's public debt was divided between domestic debt, constituting approximately 65%, and external debt, approximating 35%.

In 2023, general government debt accounted for about 80% of net public revenues and grants, and approximately 87% of net public revenues, compared to approximately 70% and 76%, respectively, in the previous year. These figures demonstrate the government's financial instability and fragility, dependent on economic and political developments internally and externally, i.e., in the donor countries. The increase in this ratio indicates the government's inadequate repayment capacity and a growing number of years overdue for repayment, demonstrating that the government's financial resources have been depleted. It is worth noting that when the accumulated arrears on the government are considered liabilities due for payment, these ratios surpass the permitted limit under the Public Debt Law (40% of GDP).⁷⁸ At the time of writing this report, specific data on the impact of Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the Israeli war on GS on the PA economy in WB and GS was not available.

In recent years, domestic debt has constituted the majority of the total public debt, reaching 65% in 2023. The banking system has been the primary source of this debt due to its excess liquidity and willingness to lend, given the government's commitment to meet these debts and their usurious interest payments on time. This borrowing is conducted in local currency, enabling local banks to maintain sufficient liquidity. This approach helps the PA avoid the risk of currency exchange rate fluctuations. Additionally, it mitigates the risk of currency exchange rate fluctuations. Another aspect of indebtedness is the so-called "arrears," which represent additional public debts for which no binding repayment period has been set, reflecting unilateral government behavior. This practice is utilized by the PA

to conceal the true extent of its debts, by exceeding the legally permitted public borrowing ratio of 40%. Additionally, these arrears have negative implications for service providers needed by the Authority, including hospitalization expenses,⁷⁹ rights of goods suppliers, contracting companies and others.

Throughout 2022, the government amassed a total of arrears nearing 3.5 billion shekels (about \$960 million). Concurrently, the government successfully discharged approximately 1.9 billion shekels (about \$520 million), from the residual arrears of preceding years, rendering the 2022 net arrears to hover around 1.6 billion shekels (about \$440 million).

The total arrears were primarily distributed between nonwage arrears at about 49.7% equivalent to 1.7 billion shekels (about \$466 million), wage and salary arrears at about 35.9%, approximately 1.2 billion shekels (about \$330 million), development expenditure arrears at nearly 8.7%, around 0.3 billion shekels (about \$82 million), earmarked payment arrears at 3.3%, approximately 0.1 billion shekels (about \$27 million), and tax refund arrears at 2.4% of the total arrears in 2022.⁸⁰

In a statement released in May 2023, the Civil Society Team for Enhancing Public Budget Transparency highlighted that the PA government is submerged in both internal and external debts, totaling approximately 12.5 billion shekels (around \$3.4 billion) by the conclusion of 2022, marking an unprecedented level since the establishment of the PA. The team emphasized that the accrued net arrears amounted to 11.2 billion shekels (about \$3 billion) by the end of 2022. Furthermore, the salaries and wages bill increased from 2018 to 2022 by around 2 billion shekels (about \$540 million). Moreover, the commitment-based wages and salaries bill exceeded the appropriations in 2022 budget by 7%.⁸¹

4. The PA's General Budget

The general budget reflects the government's financial activity in a country during a given year. It includes revenues and expenditures in various forms, the state of the total balance in terms of surplus or deficit, how the surplus is utilized and methods to cover the deficit. The data presented pertains to the period preceding the devastating Israeli war on GS, which significantly impacted the Palestinian economy and the PA's general budget. This period also saw a halt in the transfer of clearance funds, accompanied by unjust piracy and deductions.

Table 16/2: PA Fiscal Operations 2018–2023 Cash Basis (\$ million)⁸²

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*
– Domestic revenues	1,346	1,210	1,210	1,539	1,776	1,639
– Clearance revenues	2,255	2,219	2,400	2,777	3,146	2,730
– Tax returns	–138	–138	–84	–91	–237	–11
Total net revenue	3,463	3,291	3,526	4,225	4,685	4,358
Annual growth rate (%)	–5.2	–5	+7.1	+19.8	+10.9	–7
– Salaries and wages	1,658	1,678	1,891	1,988	2,048	1,892
– Non-wage expenditure	1,688	1,590	1,659	1,624	1,614	1,611
– Net lending	268	320	351	373	366	365
– Earmarked payments	46	73	54	50	131	154
Total expenditures	3,660	3,660	3,955	4,035	4,158	4,022
Annual growth rate (%)	–3.5	0	+8.1	+2	+3	–3.3
Current balance	–197	–370	–429	190	527	336
Development expenditures	277	200	169	168	178	215
Overall balance excluding grants and foreign aid (deficit)	–474	–570	–598	22	349	121
Grants and aid	665	492	464	321	345	358
Overall balance including grants and foreign aid	191	–77	–133	343	694	479

* Non-final figures, as they are supposed to change significantly due to the Israeli war on GS.

PA Fiscal Operations 2018–2023 Cash Basis (\$ million)

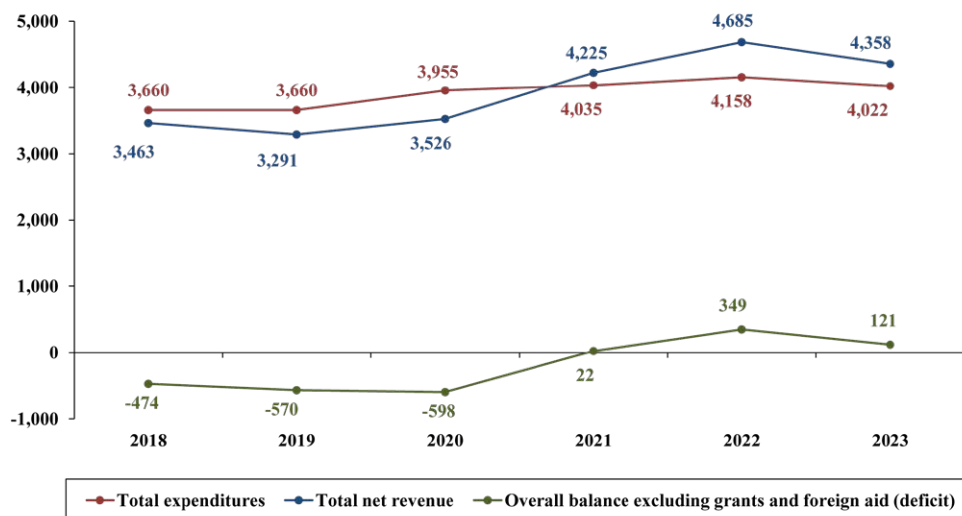


Table 16/2 shows that the government's finances have experienced fluctuations in terms of growth. In 2021, there was a notable increase in total revenues by 19.8% due to a significant increase in local collection revenues by 27.2%, in addition to an increase in clearance revenues amounting to 15.7%, due to their retention for several months. While overall expenditures witnessed a 2% increase, the overall balance reflected a surplus of \$190 million, with \$22 million remaining after factoring in development expenditures.

In 2022, the overall balance achieved a surplus of \$349 million, marking an exceptional milestone. This was primarily fueled by a 13.3% increase in clearance revenues, a 15.4% increase in local revenues and a slight increase in both overall and development expenditures.

As for 2023, estimates indicate a decrease in the general revenues of the Palestinian treasury by 7%. This decline is linked to a 7.7% drop in local collection revenues and a 13.2% decrease in clearance revenues. Clearance revenues, constituting approximately 63% of total public revenues, covered approximately 68% of total expenditures in 2023, underscoring their critical role in the Palestinian public budget. This significance is magnified by the ongoing decrease in grants and foreign aid, which declined by 30.8% in 2021, 7.5% in 2022, and saw a modest 3.8% increase in 2023.⁸³

On the other hand, on 9/11/2023, the Palestinian Ministry of Finance released a statement revealing that the Israeli Ministry of Finance had deducted 600 million shekels (approximately \$156 million) from the clearance funds. This deduction was justified by claiming that a portion of this sum covered salaries and allowances for employees in GS.⁸⁴ Additionally, on 2/10/2023, Palestinian Ministry of Finance revealed that the Israeli government had escalated its illegal deductions from Palestinian taxpayers' funds to an unprecedented level. These deductions now range between 240–260 million shekels (equivalent to \$63–68 million) monthly, constituting about 25% of the PA's revenues from tax funds collected by Israel.⁸⁵

The Palestinian Ministry of Finance has projected that the 2023 budget deficit will surpass \$600 million should illegal Israeli deductions persist. These deductions, coupled with recurring assaults that impede economic growth and investment plans, have significantly contributed to financial pressures on the government. Furthermore, the unprecedented decline in grants and foreign aid further exacerbates the situation. Notably, the primary driver of the looming deficit is the Israeli war on GS, whose final figures have yet to be released.⁸⁶

5. Work, Unemployment and Poverty

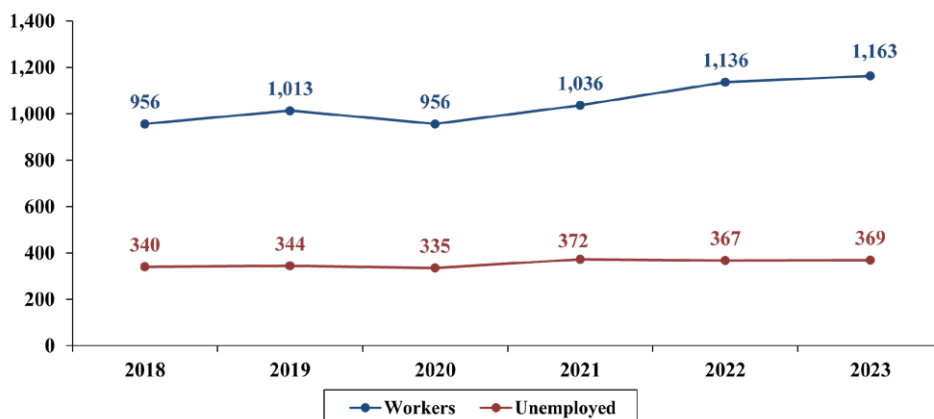
The human element forms the foundation of economic activity and its production processes, manifesting as a diverse workforce comprising craftsmen, professionals and specialists across different fields in the government sector, the private sector and non-profit institutions, along with other factors such as land and investments. The human element is directly related to the population count with the new entrants into the labor force seeking suitable opportunities to avoid unemployment and poverty.

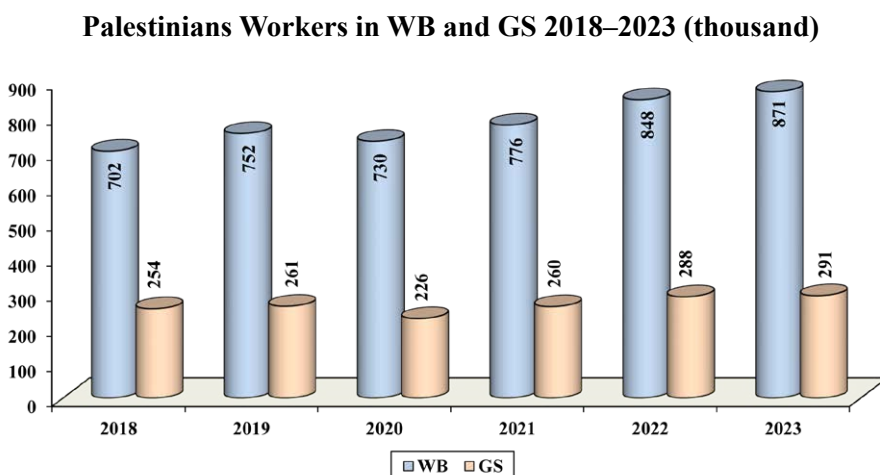
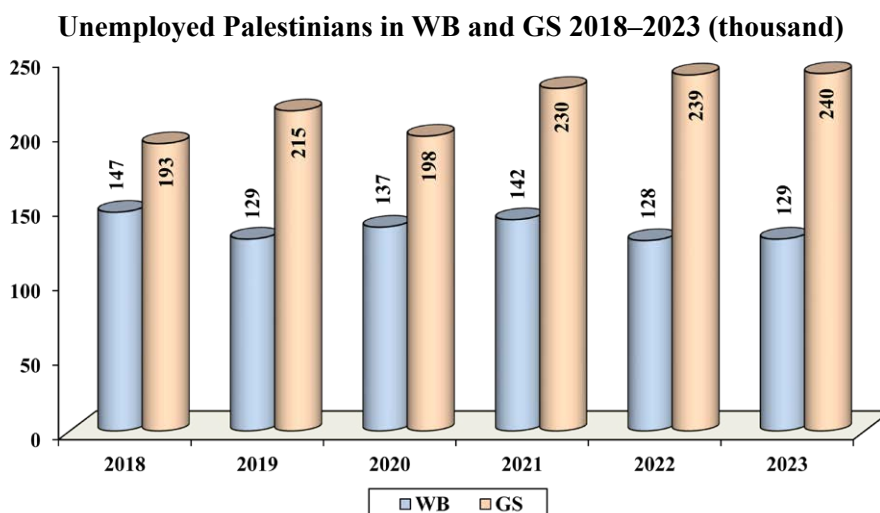
Table 17/2: Distribution of Palestinians Aged 15 Years and Above in WB and GS by Labor Force and Unemployment 2018–2023 (thousand)⁸⁷

		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*
WB	Labor force	849	881	867	918	976	1,000
	Workers	702	752	730	776	848	871
	Unemployed	147	129	137	142	128	129
	% of unemployment	17.3	14.6	15.7	15.5	13.1	12.9
GS	Labor force	447	476	424	490	527	531
	Workers	254	261	226	260	288	291
	Unemployed	193	215	198	230	239	240
	% of unemployment	43.1	45.1	46.6	46.9	45.3	45.1
WB & GS	Labor force	1,296	1,357	1,291	1,408	1,503	1,532
	Workers	956	1,013	956	1,036	1,136	1,163
	Unemployed	340	344	335	372	367	369
	% of unemployment	26.2	25.3	25.9	26.4	24.4	24.1
Workers in Israel		105	110	125	124	164	153
Workers in WB settlements		22	23		21	29	25

* Q3 2023 data prior to the war on GS.

Distribution of Palestinians Aged 15 Years and Above in the WB and GS by Labor Force and Unemployment 2018–2023 (thousand)





a. Work and Unemployment

Table 17/2 indicates a general decrease in the unemployment rate in 2022, dropping to 24.4% in the WB and GS, compared to 26.4% in 2021. However, unemployment rates remained different between WB and GS, reaching 45.3% in GS, compared to 13.1% in WB. The highest unemployment rate was concentrated among youth aged 15–24, reaching 36.1% in 2022.⁸⁸ On the other hand, total labour underutilization reached 31%, according to the revised International Labour Organization (ILO) standards, with 500 thousand persons underutilized,

including 56 thousand discouraged jobseekers* and 22 thousand in time-related underemployment**. ⁸⁹

The results of the 2022 labor force survey indicate a 5.7% increase in the number of employed in the local market (4% in the WB and 9.9% in GS). Furthermore, the number of workers in Israel and the settlements reached about 193 thousand, up from 145 thousand in 2021. Moreover, 3% of children aged 10–17 years were employed, with 5% in WB and 1% in GS. ⁹⁰

Regarding 2023, the labor force in Q3 (before the war on GS) was around 1.2 million employed persons; 983 thousand in the local market, 153 thousand persons in Israel, and about 25 thousand in Israeli settlements. Results also highlighted that 37% of wage employees in the private sector in WB and GS receive a monthly wage of less than the minimum wages (1,880 shekels, about \$500). The average monthly wage for those who receive less than the minimum wage in GS was 736 shekels (about \$200), compared to 1,432 shekels (about \$390) in WB. ⁹¹ Furthermore, according to 2022 figures, the construction sector recorded the highest employment rate in Israel and the Israeli settlements, accounting for 57.4% of the total Palestinian workers in these areas, with an average daily wage of 276 shekels (about \$80). ⁹²

In Q3 2023, the unemployment rate was approximately 24%, with 45% in GS compared to 13% in WB. Total labor underutilization stood at about 29%, totaling 457 thousand persons. This figure includes 32 thousand discouraged job seekers and 20 thousand experiencing time-related underemployment. ⁹³

Due to the ongoing Israeli war on GS since 7/10/2023 until the time of writing of this report, resulting in the displacement of about two million Palestinians, widespread destruction of institutions, headquarters, homes, universities and schools and the consequent indefinite suspension of economic activities in GS, analyzing labour force rates in WB and GS becomes unrealistic.

* **Discouraged jobseekers:** Persons classified as available for work, not seeking work during the reference period and having sought work during the past six months.

** **Time-related underemployment:** Persons who were employed during a short reference period and the total actual hours worked in all jobs were less than 35 hours and they wanted to work additional hours.

At the beginning of the war, PCBS reported unprecedentedly high unemployment rates, soaring to 75% in Q4 2023, resulting in the loss of at least 200 thousand jobs. This situation also impacted WB, with the number of unemployed persons rising to 317 thousand in Q4 2023, and the unemployment rate increasing to 32% compared to approximately 13% in Q3 2023. Additionally, the number of employed persons decreased from around 870 thousand in Q3 2023 to about 665 thousand in Q4 2023.⁹⁴

As for the number of employed persons from WB in Israel and Israeli settlements, it decreased significantly between Q3 and Q4 2023 due to the strict closures imposed by Israeli occupation following the war on GS. By Q4 2023, the total number of employed persons in Israel was around 17 thousand, including about 7 thousand in Israeli settlements.⁹⁵

b. Poverty and Food Insecurity

Poverty is a global issue, affecting both poor and rich countries. Recognizing its gravity, the world has designated an International Day for the Eradication of Poverty since the issuance of UN General Assembly resolution in December 1992. Then the call was renewed more broadly at the beginning of the third millennium to adopt the first goal of sustainable development which aims to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day.⁹⁶

It is natural to link the state of poverty to unemployment rates and prevailing wage levels. The PA endeavored to set a wage standard that would shield workers from poverty. Consequently, a decision was made to establish the minimum wage at 1,880 shekels per month (about \$500). However, in 2022, 19% of private sector wage earners in the WB received monthly wages below this threshold, with average monthly wage of about 1,419 shekels (about \$380). In contrast, this percentage was 89% in GS with an average monthly wage of about 697 shekels (about \$190).⁹⁷

It is no secret that poverty is closely linked to hunger and food shortages both locally and globally. Malnutrition can impede production efficiency, industrial growth, distribution systems, exacerbate local conflicts, amplify the impact of extreme climatic conditions and contribute to economic downturns. The food crisis has been exacerbated by the expansion of poverty and associated inequalities in income, productivity, education, healthcare and technology.⁹⁸ Prior to the war in Ukraine, food security was gradually recovering from the disruptions caused by

the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the conflict in Ukraine caused market turmoil, leading to increased food prices, elevated costs of agricultural inputs and energy, exerting varied repercussions on hunger and food insecurity.⁹⁹

In terms of labor force projections for 2024, a collaborative report by ILO and the PCBS indicates that over half a million jobs have been lost in WB and GS since the Israeli war on GS on 7/10/2023 through 31/1/2024. These job losses result in a daily income reduction of \$21.7 million. This figure increases to \$25.5 million per day, when combined with the loss of income resulting from the partial payment of wages to civil servants and the reduced incomes of workers in the private sector across GS. Should the war continue into Q2 2024, the annual unemployment rate is projected to rise even further to 45.5%,¹⁰⁰ with GS bearing the brunt of this unemployment crisis. ILO Regional Director for Arab States Ruba Jaradat said:

In Gaza, entire neighbourhoods have been wiped from existence. Infrastructure, energy and water facilities have been demolished. Schools, medical facilities, and businesses have been destroyed. This has decimated entire economic sectors and paralyzed labour market activity, with untold repercussions on the lives and livelihoods of Palestinians for generations to come.¹⁰¹

6. Industrial Activity

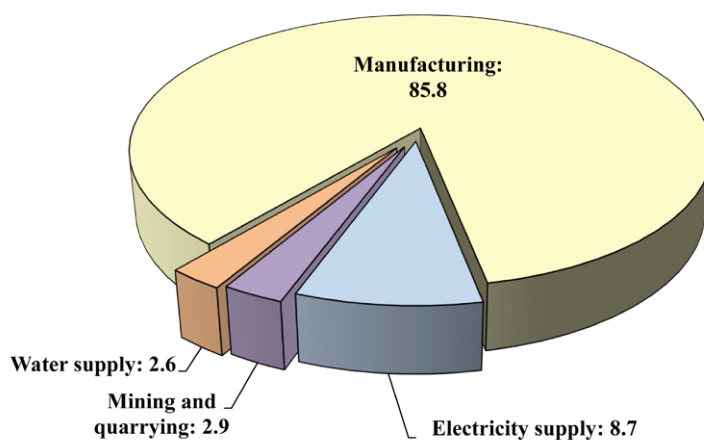
The successive industrial revolutions have been pivotal in global economic development, ushering in modern production methods and flooding markets with new products. These developments have revolutionized manufacturing processes, machinery and equipment operations. They have also transformed energy consumption and the exploration of minerals, oil, gas and other industrial resources. Consequently, many countries developed. Despite possessing ample potential for industrial development, the 1967 occupied Palestinian territories have yet to fully harness these resources.

Table 18/2: Industrial GDP in PA Territories 2018–2023
at Constant Prices (\$ million)¹⁰²

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*
Mining and quarrying	66.7	68.7	49.9	49.7	48.8	50.8
Manufacturing	1,762.8	1,779	1,500.7	1,537.7	1,623	1,497.5
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	165.9	164.1	138.6	146	160.1	152.3
Water supply, sewerage and waste treatment	61.2	62.9	55.2	56.7	56	45.1
Total	2,056.6	2,074.7	1,744.4	1,790.1	1,887.9	1,745.7
Average annual growth or deterioration (%)	–1.8	+0.9	–15.9	+2.6	+5.5	–7.5
% of GDP	13.2	13.1	12.4	11.9	12.1	11.8

* Preliminary estimates.

Industrial Sector Activities of GDP 2023 (%)



Industrial GDP in PA Territories 2018–2023 at Constant Prices (\$ million)

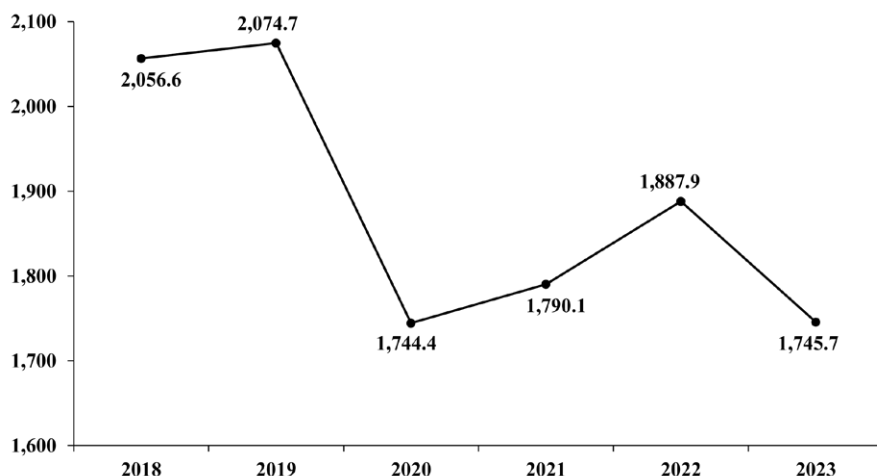


Table 18/2 reveals that manufacturing ranks first at 85.8% of productivity, an indication of its utmost importance in terms of its broad capability in generating new products and supporting other sectors, especially agriculture, with a promising role of solid waste treatment that could lead to the elimination of landfills. Then comes electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply at 8.7%, followed by mining and quarrying at 2.9%, and finally water supply, sewerage and waste treatment at 2.6%, according to 2023 estimates.

Despite the significant reserves of stones, marble and granite, the mining and quarrying industries appear to be experiencing a decline, even though they rank as the top category among the ten Palestinian exports. Additionally, the Gaza coast is also rich in large reserves of natural gas whose flare was lit in September 2000; however, the Palestinian side have yet to secure its right to exploit these resources.

Industrial development has been constrained, showing fluctuations over the years, with its contribution to the GDP averaging 12.5% between 2015 and 2022, compared to 15.4% between 2000 and 2004.¹⁰³ Despite efforts to disengage from Israel and the desire to boost national production and encourage investment in industrial cities, reliance on clearance funds as primary revenue source has hindered any significant progress in industrial growth. Furthermore, the dissolution of the Ministry of Industry, established during the emergence of the PA, has added to these challenges.

In 2021, the industrial sector in PA territories is characterized as small or very small, employing 116 thousand individuals, with heavy dependence on unpaid workers (business owners and their household members) constituting 19.1% of the total workforce.¹⁰⁴

Throughout 1994–2023, the contribution of industrial activity to the GDP declined from 22% to 11.8%, as industrial activity decreased by 7.5% in 2023 following a 5.5% improvement in 2022. This decrease can be attributed to the ongoing Israeli war on GS since 7/10/2023, which has had significant repercussions on the Palestinian economy. The value added by industrial activities in Q4 2023 dropped by 28% compared to the same period in 2022, with projections indicating a further decline throughout 2024.¹⁰⁵

7. Agricultural Activity

Agricultural activity plays a crucial role in achieving self-sufficiency by producing many agricultural crops, thereby meeting local demands of food and other essential products. This traditional production sector relies on accessible agricultural land, ample irrigation water and the adoption of modern technologies to boost productivity and make efficient use of limited spaces. In the Palestinian case, there is an urgent need to exploit all cultivable areas, intensify this activity as a consolidation of the Palestinian identity and curb the relentless expansion of settlements, which persist despite the significant sacrifices made by Palestinians to stop it.

Table 19/2: Agricultural GDP in PA Territories 2018–2023
at Constant Prices (\$ million)¹⁰⁶

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023**
Agricultural GDP*	1,091.1	1,100.7	1,001	993.9	938.6	830.7
Average annual growth or deterioration (%)	+1.6	+0.9	−9.1	−0.7	−5.6	−11.5
% of GDP	7	7	7.1	6.6	6	5.6

* Includes forestry and fishing activities.

** Preliminary estimates.

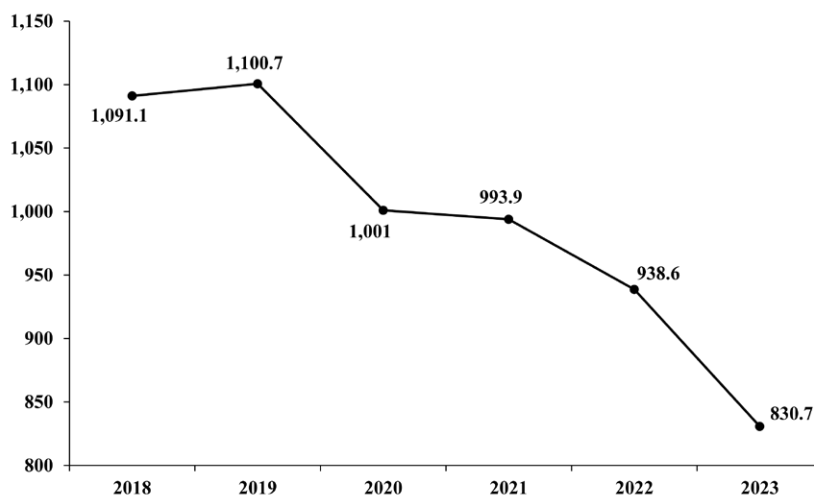
Agricultural GDP in PA Territories 2018–2023 at Constant Prices (\$ million)

Table 19/2 shows that agricultural growth is fluctuating, demonstrating a generally slow growth, while its contribution to the GDP is decreasing. Despite the ability of agricultural activity to absorb the labor force, it is noted that the percentage of employed persons in agriculture has decreased, where it was 14.1% in 2008, falling to 6.3% in 2022.¹⁰⁷

The diminishing role of the agricultural sector in the GDP can be attributed to several factors, including reduced government financial support in the annual budget, settlement expansion coupled with aggression in addition to the deprivation of farmers from cultivating large areas of their lands. This is despite the international resolutions advocating for Palestinians' right to permanent sovereignty over their natural resources.¹⁰⁸

Agriculture remains a promising sector within the economy as it deals with various segments of landowners, farmers and skilled professionals with unlimited capabilities. This multifaceted activity encompasses a range of crops, livestock and poultry, which receive wide input from non-profit organizations at home and abroad that have vast experience and creative solutions to challenges.¹⁰⁹

The Palestinian Agricultural Credit Institution could play a pivotal role in the renaissance of agricultural activity through its vision of seeking sustainable agricultural development with distinguished financing services, and through its mission to improve the level of food security and raise its contribution to the GDP.¹¹⁰

8. Trade

Trade is one of the most prominent forms of international economic relations. Given its significance, the international community has been keen in structuring trade through the World Trade Organization (WTO). The PA has sought to be part of this system, by concluding several trade agreements with many Arab and foreign countries and seeking WTO membership.

Table 20/2: Commodity Trade Balance in PA Territories 2018–2023
at Current Prices (\$ million)¹¹¹

	2018	2019	2020	2021*	2022	2023
Trade volume	7,695	7,717	7,118	9,187	9,782	9,306
Exports	1,155	1,104	1,055	1,358	1,585	1,561
Imports	6,540	6,613	6,063	7,830	8,197	7,745
Deficit	-5,384	-5,510	-5,008	-6,472	-6,612	-6,184
% Exports to GDP	7.1	6.4	6.8	7.5	8.3	9
% Deficit to total imports	82.3	83.3	82.6	82.7	80.7	79.8
% Deficit to GDP	33.1	32.2	32.2	35.7	34.5	35.5

* There are limited differences due to approximation.

PA Trade Indicators 2018–2023 at Current Prices (\$ million)

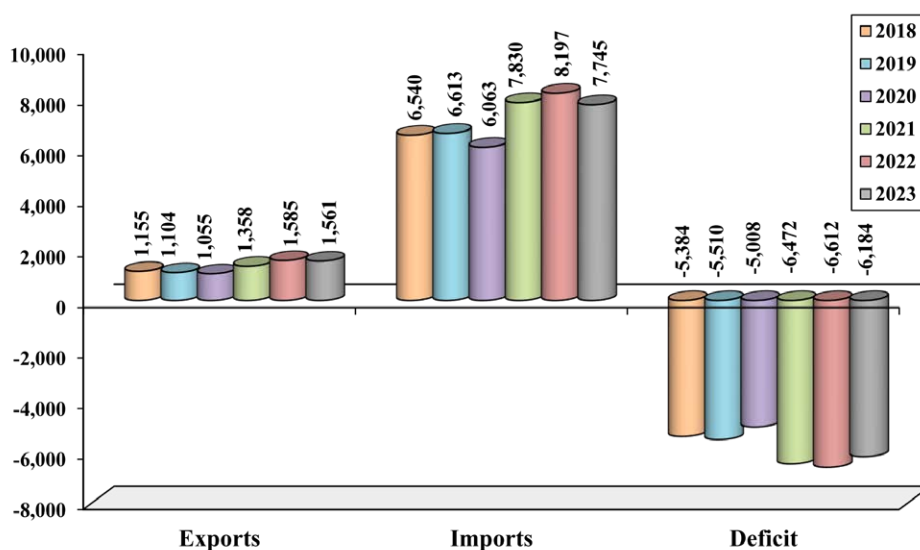


Table 20/2 indicates that trade volume tends to increase with fluctuations in exports or imports. An economic downturn was notably observed due to the Israeli war on GS following Operation al-Aqsa Flood at the end of 2023. Overall, the export volume in 2023 was low compared to imports, with a decline in GS exports. This decline was attributed to various factors, notably the limited competitiveness of Palestinian products in international markets, due to the high production cost resulting from Israeli-imposed obstacles and restrictions on movement and access, alongside internal factors related to technological levels, economies of scale and other obstacles.

While the PA's external relationship with the outside world is developing significantly, its ties with Israel remain pronounced, accounting for 86% for exports and 57% for imports in 2023, with exports to Israel valued at around \$1.34 billion and imports totaling \$4.44 billion.¹¹²

The overall trend in exports and imports shows growth with some fluctuation, reflecting the significance, benefits and challenges of these transactions. However, a prominent aspect of this trade is the severe deficit in the Palestinian trade balance, which constitutes a high percentage of GDP. The export-to-import ratio has also remained at a low level.

The persistent deficit serves as an indicator of low productivity and high unemployment rates. In general, the trade deficit reflects the weaknesses of the economy and its inability to meet the needs of the domestic market, prompting Palestinians to seek external sources to meet these needs, particularly Israel, which allows its goods to flow freely, legally and illegally, into the Palestinian market in exchange for various restrictions limiting Palestinian exports to the global market.¹¹³

In terms of geography, EU countries emerged as the primary trading partner of the PA in 2022, representing 8.6% of total trade. Following closely were Arab-Asian countries, whose trade increased significantly from 2021, reaching 7.7% of the PA's total trade volume in 2022. Arab-African countries ranked third as trading partners, constituting 3% of the total trade volume (see table 21/2).

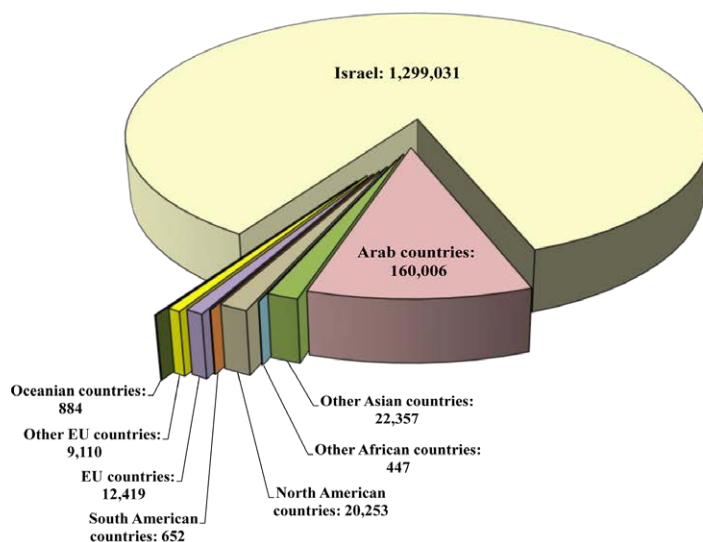
Table 21/2: Volume of Palestinian Trade, Exports and Imports in Goods in PA Territories to/ from Selected Group of Countries 2021–2022 (\$ thousand)¹¹⁴

Countries	Trade volume		Palestinian exports to:		Palestinian imports from:	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Israel	6,049,458	5,325,724	1,299,031	1,168,682	4,750,427	4,157,041
Arab-Asian countries	812,604	575,565	157,967	119,631	654,637	455,934
Other Asian countries	2,005,301	1,674,837	22,357	18,517	1,982,944	1,656,320
Arab countries in Africa	306,809	168,944	2,039	1,820	304,770	167,125
Other African countries	18,556	15,962	447	386	18,109	15,575
North American countries	135,091	136,381	20,253	17,917	114,838	118,464
Central American countries	25,533	19,280	–	–	25,533	19,280
Caribbean countries	1,045	754	–	–	1,045	754
South American countries	70,067	58,445	652	743	69,415	57,702
EU countries	907,649	912,512	12,419	16,597	895,230	895,915
Other EU countries	265,846	289,501	9,110	11,984	256,736	277,516
Oceanian countries	13,917	9,439	884	1,362	13,033	8,077
Other countries	–	–	–	–	1,919	–
Total	10,613,794	9,187,345	1,525,160	1,357,640	9,088,634	7,829,705

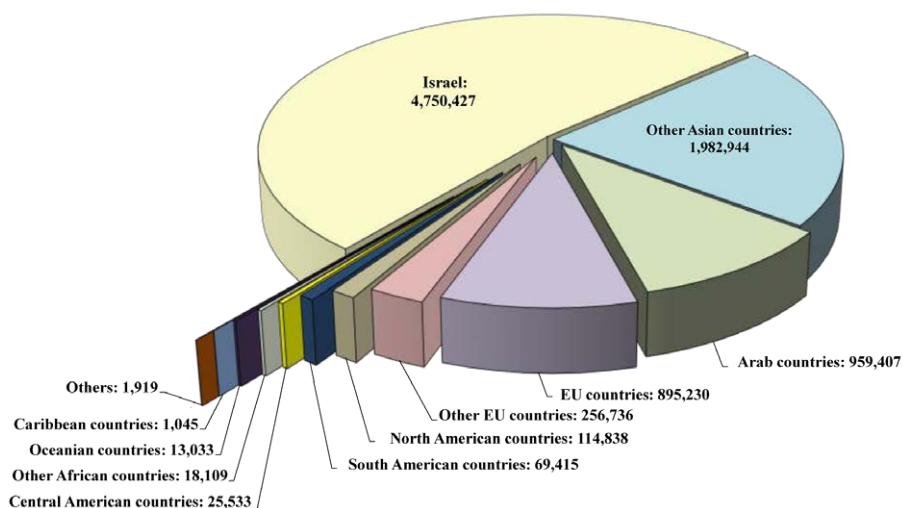
(–): No value.

Note: The total exports and imports provided in this table are based on PCBS figures published on 20/11/2023 and differ from the figures presented in table 20/2, which were updated as of 22/2/2024.

Palestinian Exports in Goods to Selected Group of Countries 2022 (\$ thousand)



Palestinian Imports in Goods from Selected Group of Countries 2022 (\$ thousand)



The challenges facing the national export strategy are apparent, falling short of achieving the targeted growth in exports. On the other hand, on 6/9/2021, the government established the Palestine Gas Company with the aim of liberalizing the energy sector, facilitating the utilization of natural resources and managing gas transmission and distribution networks.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, renewable energy

receives notable attention, being prioritized as a symbol of sovereignty over land and resources, aligning with the global trend towards developing clean energy sources.¹¹⁶

9. External Financing and Foreign Aid

External financing has consistently played a crucial role in shaping Palestinian economic conditions, especially with the establishment of the PA under the occupation. The urgent need for this financing was mainly linked to the PA's plans for economic and social development. Nevertheless, the expansion of public spending and the growing budget deficit resulted in a shift of focus, directing the bulk of this financing towards covering the indicated deficit, with less or a limited part directed towards development projects.

Table 22/2: External Financing to the PA 2018–2023 (\$ million)¹¹⁷

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
External budgetary support	506	496	346	189	240	206
External financing for development expenditures	158	–4*	118	132	105	152
Grants and foreign aid	664	492	464	321	345	358
Average annual growth or deterioration (%)	–7.8	–25.9	–5.7	–30.8	+7.5	+3.8
% of Development expenditures out of total external financing	23.8	–0.8	25.4	41.1	30.4	42.5

* This was because the Ministry of Finance returned \$125 million (according to data) to the US Consulate in response to the US position on Jerusalem.

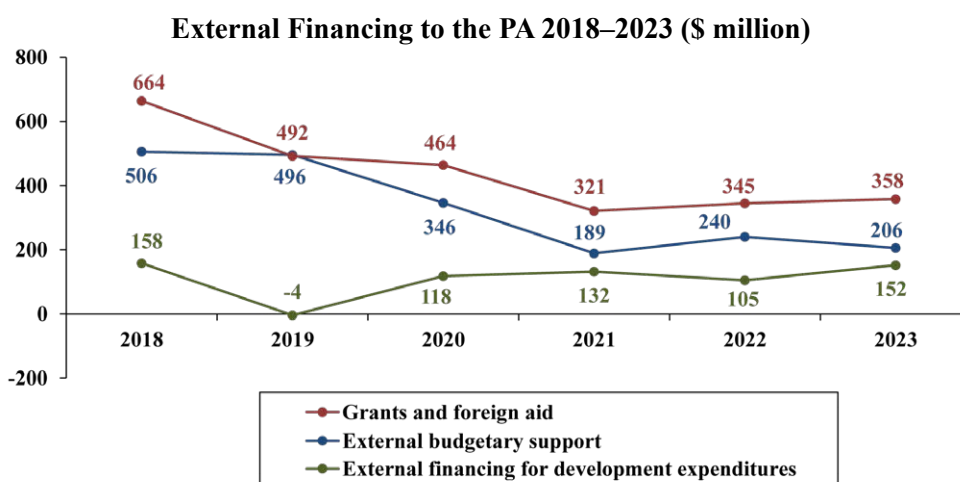


Table 22/2 shows that the decline in grants and foreign aid was the dominant feature throughout 2018–2021, reaching an unprecedented limit in 2021 of 30.8%. Subsequently, there was a modest uptick of 7.5% in 2022 and 3.8% in 2023, according to the latest data. These shifts had a severe impact on the PA's ability to fulfill public services, leading to a significant increase of domestic debt to compensate for this shortfall. This underscores the non-binding nature of external financing from donor countries, since it is done voluntarily and is subject to their conditions, including their capabilities, conviction and mostly whether it serves their political agendas. The potential repercussions of recent events; Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the Israeli war on GS, on external support for the PA remains uncertain.

In a statement on 22/12/2023, the European Commission has adopted a €118.4 million (about \$130 million) assistance package to support the PA as part of the annual allocation for Palestine in 2023. The statement added: The EU is the biggest provider of external assistance to the Palestinians which amounts to indicatively almost €1.2 billion (about \$1.3 billion) for 2021–2024 under the European Joint Strategy (EJS), of which €809.4 million (about \$890 million) have already been adopted.¹¹⁸

On the other hand, in addition to the EU, 17 countries have suspended their funding to UNRWA. This suspension was made under the pretext of Israeli claims that 12 UNRWA employees in GS participated in the October 7th, 2023 attack (Operation al-Aqsa Flood) on the Gaza envelope. These countries collectively contribute 78.4% of UNRWA's annual funding, according to the latest budget figures released by UNRWA (actual 2022 spending), amounting to about \$921 million out of a total of about \$1.175 billion, until February 2024. However, by the end of March, 6 countries had resumed their funding to UNRWA, while 10 continued their suspension.¹¹⁹ Other countries are gradually reinitiating funding as Israeli claims are being questioned.

During the Gaza aid conference in Paris, leaders of participating country pledged over €1 billion (approximately \$1.07 billion) in aid for GS. The majority of this aid is intended to fulfill the United Nations' requirements for supporting the populations of GS and the occupied WB, estimated at \$1.2 billion by the end of 2023.¹²⁰

OCHA also reported that UN Member States have disbursed approximately \$796 million against the Flash Appeal launched by the UN and its partners to implement its response plan in support of GS. This constitutes about 66% of the \$1.2 billion requested.¹²¹

Conclusion

In the fall of 2023, the Palestinian people faced a genocidal war by the Israeli occupation in GS, reflecting an ongoing effort to Judaize the land and displace Palestinians. Despite this suffering, the Palestinian people remained resilient, resisting forced displacement from GS and ultimately maintaining a population that exceeds the Jewish population in historic Palestine. Palestinians abroad remain deeply connected to their homeland and holy sites, actively supporting their cause and the goal of return.

The economic situation for Palestinians in WB and GS has significantly deteriorated under the most extremist Israeli government in Israel's history and ongoing Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. This violence peaked during the genocidal war in GS that began on 7/10/2023, which resulted in the destruction of much of the GS infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and mosques, as well as approximately 70% of homes. The siege has caused severe food shortages and famine, pushing the Palestinian people in Gaza to endure extreme hardships while rallying around the resistance, believing that these sacrifices may ultimately lead to liberation and the end of occupation.

Endnotes

- ¹ See Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), *Palestinians at the End of 2022* (Ramallah: PCBS, December 2022), <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2639.pdf>; and PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2023* (Ramallah: PCBS, December 2023), <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2687.pdf>
- ² See PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2023*.
- ³ See PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2022*; and PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2023*.
- ⁴ PCBS, On the Occasion of the International Day of Older Persons, 1/10/2023, https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_IntDayOlderP2023E.pdf
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2023*.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ PCBS, *Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2023* (Ramallah: PCBS, December 2023), <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2688.pdf>
- ¹⁰ PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2023*.
- ¹¹ PCBS, *Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2023*.
- ¹² PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2023*.
- ¹³ PCBS, On the Occasion of International Literacy Day, 7/9/2023, https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_Literacy2023E.pdf
- ¹⁴ Ibid; and PCBS, *Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2023*.
- ¹⁵ PCBS, On the Occasion of International Literacy Day, 7/9/2023.
- ¹⁶ PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2023*; and PCBS, *Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2023*.
- ¹⁷ Alex Weinreb et al., "Homicide Rates in Israel: Recent Trends and a Crossnational Comparison," Policy Paper No. 01.2024, February 2024, site of Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, <https://www.taubcenter.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Homicide-2024-ENG-3.pdf>
- ¹⁸ Mohammad Al-Kassim, Violent Crime Soars in Arab Communities in Israel, site of The Media Line, 31/3/2024, <https://themedialine.org/by-region/violent-crime-soars-in-arabs-communities-in-israel/>
- ¹⁹ Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2023*, no. 74, table 2.14, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2023/2.shnatonpopulation/st02_14.pdf
- ²⁰ "Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2023," Department of Statistics (Jordan) and ICF International, October 2023, https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/DataBank/Population/Health/KIR_DHS2023.pdf
- ²¹ See UNRWA Registered Population Dashboard, <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/relief-and-social-services/unrwa-registered-population-dashboard>
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Site of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/syria>; and UNRWA, <https://www.unrwa.org/syria-crisis>; and Palestinian Refugees in Syria, Unknown Fate, Action Group for Palestinians of Syria (AGPS), site of Youtube, 25/5/2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJ2h6hHQFG4&t=4s> (in Arabic)
- ²⁴ Fayeze Abu Eid et al., Palestinians of Syria, Striving for Survival, an annual field report monitoring the situation of Palestinians of Syria for the year 2023, AGPS, 29/2/2024, https://actionpal.org.uk/ar/reports/special/final_2023.pdf (in Arabic)

- ²⁵ UNRWA Launches \$415.4 Million Appeal For Palestine Refugees In Syria, Lebanon, And Jordan, UNRWA, 3/4/2024, <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/news-releases/unrwa-launches-us-4154-million-appeal-palestine-refugees-syria-lebanon-and-jordan>
- ²⁶ Fayeze Abu Eid et al., *Palestinians of Syria, Striving for Survival*, an annual field report monitoring the situation of Palestinians of Syria for the year 2023, AGPS, 29/2/2024. (in Arabic)
- ²⁷ PRC Urges UNRWA to Expand Service Areas to Include Palestinians in Northern Syria, site of the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC), 27/3/2023, <https://prc.org.uk/en/post/4506>; and Wafa, 10/2/2023, <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/133302>
- ²⁸ Fayeze Abu Eid et al., *Palestinians of Syria, Striving for Survival*, an annual field report monitoring the situation of Palestinians of Syria for the year 2023, AGPS, 29/2/2024. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ UNRWA, <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon>
- ³² Fayeze Abu Eid et al., *Palestinians of Syria, Striving for Survival*, an annual field report monitoring the situation of Palestinians of Syria for the year 2023, AGPS, 29/2/2024. (in Arabic)
- ³³ See UNRWA Registered Population Dashboard, <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/relief-and-social-services/unrwa-registered-population-dashboard>
- ³⁴ PCBS, New Census: 174422 Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, 21/12/2017, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3013>
- ³⁵ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 4/1/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³⁶ “Annual Operational Report 2022,” UNRWA, 27/7/2023, https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/2022_annual_operational_report_-_english.pdf
- ³⁷ Unemployment Crisis is Eroding the Social Fabric Within Palestinian Camps and Communities in Lebanon (Rights-Based Study), site of Palestinian Association for Human Rights “Witness,” 23/5/2023, <https://shorturl.at/LhRjS> (in Arabic)
- ³⁸ UNRWA, <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon>
- ³⁹ PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2023*; PCBS, *Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2023*; and “Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2023, Key Indicators,” Department of Statistics (Jordan) and ICF International, October 2023.
- ⁴⁰ Note: PCBS mentioned in *Palestinians at the End of 2023* that the numbers of refugees in WB and GS—based on which we concluded their numbers at the end of 2023—are based on the 2017 statistics. See PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2023*.
- ⁴¹ See UNRWA Registered Population Dashboard, <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/relief-and-social-services/unrwa-registered-population-dashboard>
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ “Health Department,” Annual Report 2022, UNRWA, https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/annual_report_2022_final_version_compressed-july_2023.pdf
- ⁴⁴ PCBS, The International Day of Refugees 2019, 20/6/2019, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3486>
- ⁴⁵ See CBS, <https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/yarhon0124/b1.pdf>
- ⁴⁶ PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2023*.
- ⁴⁷ Arab 48, 27/5/2023; and see Organiser: Palestinians in Europe conference a ‘national achievement’ confirming right of return, site of Middle East Monitor (MEMO), 29/5/2023, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230529-organiser-palestinians-in-europe-conference-a-national-achievement-confirming-right-of-return/>
- ⁴⁸ PIC, 27/5/2023. (in Arabic)

- ⁴⁹ Felesteen Online, 15/9/2022.
- ⁵⁰ PIC, 30/10/2022, <https://palinfo.com/news/2022/10/30/299302> (in Arabic); and see PIC, 29/10/2022, <https://english.palinfo.com/?p=69671>
- ⁵¹ “Palestinian Situation in 2022 Conference” renews the call to rebuild the national project grounded in resistance and liberation, PCPA, 5/3/2023, <https://palabroad.org/ar/post/91K4> (in Arabic)
- ⁵² In an intervention at the Human Rights Council: AGPS calls for the release of Palestinian women detainees, AGPS, 15/3/2022, <https://actionpal.org.uk/ar/post/16968> (in Arabic); and see PRC Raises Alarm over Condition of Forcibly-Disappeared Palestinian Refugee Women in Syria, PRC, 14/3/2022, <https://prc.org.uk/en/post/4360/prc-raises-alarm-over-condition-of-forcibly-disappeared-palestinian-refugee-women-in-syria>
- ⁵³ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 20/3/2023; and see Palestinian activists gather from across Latin America to boost cause, MEMO, 28/3/2023, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230328-palestinian-activists-gather-from-across-latin-america-to-boost-cause/>
- ⁵⁴ WAFA, 10/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁵ Quds Press, 14/10/2023.
- ⁵⁶ WAFA, 7/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁷ Nadine El-Bawab, Thousands of protesters gather in DC to call for a cease-fire in Gaza, site of ABC News, 5/11/2023, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/thousands-protesters-gather-dc-call-cease-fire-gaza/story?id=104633410>
- ⁵⁸ In solidarity with Palestine; Demonstrations in several cities around the world demanding an end to the war on Gaza: Stop the genocide (videos), site of Daaarb, 4/11/2023, <https://daaarb.com>; and see Hundreds of thousands march across Europe to call for cease-fire in Gaza, Anadolu Agency, 3/3/2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/hundreds-of-thousands-march-across-europe-to-call-for-cease-fire-in-gaza/3153842>
- ⁵⁹ 200 days of Israeli aggression, 34,183 killed, 77,143 injured in Gaza, Site of Al Mayadeen English, 23/4/2024, <https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/200-days-of-israeli-aggression--34-183-killed--77-143-injure>
- ⁶⁰ See Dr. Awad, President of PCBS, demonstrates the performance of the Palestinian economy during 2023 and the economic forecasts for 2024, PCBS, 30/12/2023, https://www.pcb.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_Forecasting2024PCBSPMAE.pdf
- ⁶¹ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 9/3/2024. (in Arabic)
- ⁶² Flash Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory 2024, site of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs – occupied Palestinian territory (OCHA-oPt), 17/4/2024, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/flash-appeal-occupied-palestinian-territory-2024>
- ⁶³ Escalation in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Update #2, site of ReliefWeb, 8/8/2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/escalation-gaza-strip-and-israel-update-2-1800-8-august-2022>
- ⁶⁴ See PIC, 15/8/2022 (in Arabic); and *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 9 and 15/8/2022.
- ⁶⁵ Humanitarian situation in Gaza | Flash Update #5, OCHA-oPt, 15/5/2021, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/flash-update-5-15-may-2023>
- ⁶⁶ PCBS and Palestine Monetary Authority (PMA), The Performance of the Palestinian economy during 2023, as well as the economic forecasts for the year 2024, PCBS, 30/12/2023, https://www.pcb.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_ForecastingPCBSE.pdf
- ⁶⁷ Report highlights unprecedented level of destruction of the economy of Gaza, which will take tens of billions USD and decades to reverse, site of The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 31/1/2024, <https://unctad.org/press-material/report-highlights-unprecedented-level-destruction-economy-gaza-which-will-take-tens>

⁶⁸ For the years 2018–2022, see Major national accounts variables by region for the years 1994–2022 at constant prices: 2015 is the base year, PCBS, https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/NA-Constant-94-2022-Pub.xlsx
For 2023, see PCBS, *The Preliminary Estimates of Quarterly National Accounts (Fourth Quarter 2023)* (Ramallah: PCBS, March 2024), https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_QNAQ42023E.pdf

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ For the Palestinian GDP for 2018–2022, see Major national accounts variables by region for the years 1994–2022 at current prices, PCBS, https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/NA_Current-94-2022-Pub.xlsx
For 2023, see PCBS, *The Preliminary Estimates of Quarterly National Accounts (Fourth Quarter 2023)*.
For Israeli GDP for the years 2018–2023, see CBS, <https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/yarhon0124/fl.pdf>

⁷² Dr. Awad, President of PCBS, demonstrates the performance of the Palestinian economy during 2023 and the economic forecasts for 2024, PCBS, 30/12/2023; and PCBS, *The Preliminary Estimates of Quarterly National Accounts (Fourth Quarter 2023)*.

⁷³ Report highlights unprecedented level of destruction of the economy of Gaza, which will take tens of billions USD and decades to reverse, UNCTAD, 31/1/2024.

⁷⁴ For the years 2018–2022, see Major national accounts variables by region for the years 1994–2022 at constant prices: 2015 is the base year, PCBS.
For 2023, see PCBS, *The Preliminary Estimates of Quarterly National Accounts (Fourth Quarter 2023)*.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ For the Palestinian GDP for 2018–2022, see Major national accounts variables by region for the years 1994–2022 at current prices, PCBS.
For 2023, see PCBS, *The Preliminary Estimates of Quarterly National Accounts (Fourth Quarter 2023)*.
For Israeli GDP for the years 2018–2023, see CBS, <https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/yarhon0124/fl.pdf>

⁷⁷ Regarding public debt for 2018–2022, see External and internal debt on Palestinian government, Palestine Monetary Authority (PMA), https://www.pma.ps/Portals/0/Users/002/02/2/Time%20Series%20Data%20New/Public_Finance/public_debt_for_palestinian_national_authority.xlsx
As for public debt for 2023, see Public Debt for Palestinian National Authority, PMA, https://www.pma.ps/Portals/0/Users/002/02/2/Time%20Series%20Data%20New/Public_Finance/public_debt_for_palestinian_national_authority.xlsx
For the Palestinian GDP for 2018–2022, see Major national accounts variables by region for the years 1994–2022 at current prices, PCBS.
For the Palestinian GDP for 2023, see PCBS, *The Preliminary Estimates of Quarterly National Accounts (Fourth Quarter 2023)*.

⁷⁸ PMA, Research and Monetary Policy Department, “Annual Report 2022,” June 2023, p. 22.

⁷⁹ Calling on the Government to Disburse the Dues of An-Najah Hospital and Appealing to the President for Urgent Intervention, *Alquds*, 15/12/2021. (in Arabic)

⁸⁰ PMA, Research and Monetary Policy Department, “Annual Report 2022,” June 2023, p. 22.

Note: The dollar to Israeli shekel exchange rate for June 2023, based on Bank of Israel data, averaged 3.6446.

- ⁸¹ Position Paper of the Civil Society Team for Enhancing Public Budget Transparency on the Government Policy towards Budget Management in 2023, AMAN, 29/5/2023, <https://www.aman-palestine.org/en/activities/20510.html>
Note: The dollar to Israeli shekel exchange rate for 30/5/2023, based on Bank of Israel data, was 3.709.
- ⁸² For the years 2018–2022, see Revenues, Expenditures and Financing Sources of PNA Fiscal Operations, (Cash Basis), PMA, https://www.pma.ps/Portals/0/Users/002/02/2/Time%20Series%20Data%20New/Public_Finance/revenues_expenditures_and%20financing_sources_of_pna_fiscal_operations.xlsx
For 2023, see Revenues, Expenditures and Financing Sources of PNA Fiscal Operations, PMA, https://www.pma.ps/Portals/0/Users/002/02/2/Monthly%20Statistical%20Bulletin/Public%20Finance/table_35.xlsx
- ⁸³ See Revenues, Expenditures and Financing Sources of PNA Fiscal Operations, PMA, https://www.pma.ps/Portals/0/Users/002/02/2/Monthly%20Statistical%20Bulletin/Public%20Finance/table_35.xlsx
- ⁸⁴ Finance ministry returns clearance funds transferred by Israel because of deductions, salaries will be delayed, WAFA, 9/11/2023, <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/139132>
- ⁸⁵ Palestinian Ministry of Finance page, site of Facebook, 2/10/2023, <https://www.facebook.com/PMOFPS/posts/pfbid02YphDt1xLGN6PMpej8EV8k8BDNnaVTf8hqpBGeGDZW864hnMk8xqThkeqbugqofZDI>
For more details, see Finance: Reports on Israeli facilities are misleading and the occupation is responsible for the crisis, WAFA, 2/10/2023, <https://www.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/79494> (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁶ Video: General Budget 2023, Palestinian Ministry of Finance page, Facebook, 21/6/2023, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1184248758912733>
- ⁸⁷ See Labour Force Survey (July–September, 2023) Round (Q3/ 2023) Before the war on Gaza Strip, PCBS, 8/11/2023, www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_LFSQ32023E.pdf; PCBS, *Palestinian Labour Force Survey: Annual Report 2022* (Ramallah: PCBS, April 2023), <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2658.pdf>; PCBS, Press Release on the Results of the Labour Force Survey in Palestine 2022, PCBS, 15/2/2023, www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_LFSSY2022E.pdf; PCBS, Press Release on the Results of the Labour Force Survey in Palestine 2021, PCBS, 15/2/2022, https://pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_15-2-2022-LF-year-en.pdf; PCBS, Press Release on the Results of the Labour Force Survey in Palestine 2020, PCBS, 23/2/2021, https://pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_23-2-2021-LF-en.pdf; and PCBS, Press Release on the Results of the Labour Force Survey in Palestine 2019, PCBS, 13/2/2020, https://pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_13-2-2020-LF2019-en.pdf
- ⁸⁸ See PCBS, *Palestinian Labour Force Survey: Annual Report 2022*.
- ⁸⁹ PCBS, Press Release on the Results of the Labour Force Survey in Palestine 2022, PCBS, 15/2/2023.
- ⁹⁰ See Ibid.
- ⁹¹ See Labour Force Survey (July–September, 2023) Round (Q3/ 2023) Before the war on Gaza Strip, PCBS, 8/11/2023.
Note: The dollar to Israeli shekel exchange rate for 2023, based on Bank of Israel data, averaged 3.6897.
- ⁹² PCBS, Press Release on the Results of the Labour Force Survey in Palestine 2022, PCBS, 15/2/2023.
Note: The dollar to Israeli shekel exchange rate for 14/2/2023, based on Bank of Israel data, was 3.502.
- ⁹³ See Labour Force Survey (July–September, 2023) Round (Q3/ 2023) Before the war on Gaza Strip, PCBS, 8/11/2023.



- ⁹⁴ Dr. Ola Awad, On the occasion of the International Workers' Day (May 1), PCBS, 30/4/2024, www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_InterWorkDay2024E.pdf
- ⁹⁵ Ibid.
- ⁹⁶ Goal # 1: No poverty, sustainable development goals, PCBS, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/SDGs.aspx?pageId=1>
- ⁹⁷ PCBS, Press Release on the Results of the Labour Force Survey in Palestine 2022, PCBS, 15/2/2023.
- ⁹⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021: Transforming Food Systems for Food Security, Improved Nutrition and Affordable Healthy Diets for All* (Rome: FAO, 2021), p. 4, <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/1c38676f-f5f7-47cf-81b3-f4c9794eba8a/content>
- ⁹⁹ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023: Urbanization, Agrifood Systems Transformation and Healthy Diets Across the Rural–Urban Continuum* (Rome: FAO, 2023), p. 7, <http://openknowledge.fao.org/items/445c9d27-b396-4126-96c9-50b335364d01>
- ¹⁰⁰ International Labour Organization (ILO) and Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), Impact of the war in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Bulletin No. 3, site of International Labour Organization (ILO), 18/3/2024, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_918919.pdf
- ¹⁰¹ Palestinian unemployment rate set to soar to 57 per cent during first quarter of 2024, ILO, 18/3/2024, <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/palestinian-unemployment-rate-set-soar-57-cent-during-first-quarter-2024>
- ¹⁰² See Quarterly national accounts variables in Palestine for the years 2022–2023 at constant prices: 2015 is the base year, PCBS, 17/1/2024, https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/A.QNA_Constant_20151234.xlsx; and PCBS, *The Preliminary Estimates of Quarterly National Accounts (Fourth Quarter 2023)*.
- ¹⁰³ Quarterly national accounts indicators in Palestine, value added in Palestine by economic activity and quarter for the years 2000–2021 at constant prices, PCBS, https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/A.QNA_Constant2015.xlsx
- ¹⁰⁴ PCBS and the Ministry of National Economy (MNE) present the reality of the Industrial Sector on the occasion of Palestinian Product National Day, PCBS, 1/11/2022, www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_NationalPPI2022E.pdf
- ¹⁰⁵ See PCBS and PMA, The Performance of the Palestinian economy during 2023, as well as the economic forecasts for the year 2024, PCBS, 30/12/2023.
- ¹⁰⁶ See Quarterly national accounts variables in Palestine for the years 2022–2023 at constant prices: 2015 is the base year, PCBS, 17/1/2024; and PCBS, *The Preliminary Estimates of Quarterly National Accounts (Fourth Quarter 2023)*.
- ¹⁰⁷ Distribution of Labour Force by Economic Activity, 1995–2022, PMA, https://www.pma.ps/Portals/0/Users/002/02/2/Time%20Series%20Data%20New/Labor_Force/distribution_of_labour_force_by_economic_activity.xlsx
- ¹⁰⁸ Permanent Sovereignty of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab Population in the Occupied Syrian Golan over their Natural Resources – GA Resolution (A/RES/76/225), site of United Nations (UN), 17/12/2021, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/permanent-sovereignty-of-the-palestinian-people-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-including-east-jerusalem-and-of-the-arab-population-in-the-occupied-syrian-golan-over-their-natural-resources/>

- ¹⁰⁹ Agricultural Relief Organizes the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Conference “Youth and Innovation Towards a Future Vision,” *Alquds*, 12/1/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁰ The Palestinian Agricultural Credit Institution receives a delegation from the Islamic Development Bank, Ma’an, 25/10/2021, <https://www.maannews.net/news/2052584.html>
- ¹¹¹ For 2018–2022, see Total Value of Imports, Exports in Goods, Net Balance and Trade Transactions Volume in Palestine for 1996–2022, PCBS, https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/main%20indicators%20arabic.xlsx
For 2023, see Preliminary Results of Registered Palestinian Exports, Imports of Goods by Month, Quarter and country for 2022–2023, PCBS, https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/statisticsIndicatorsTables.aspx?lang=en&table_id=2399
Noting that these statistics do not include unregistered trade and depend on the value-added tax clearance invoices at the Ministry of Finance and Planning as a primary source of data on trade exchange with Israel, and reliance on other sources of trade exchange data with countries of the world.
- ¹¹² Preliminary Results of Registered Palestinian Exports, Imports of Goods by Month, Quarter and country for 2022–2023, PCBS.
- ¹¹³ For more, see PMA, Research and Monetary Policy Department, “Annual Report 2020,” p. 39.
- ¹¹⁴ See Total Value of Registered Palestinian Exports and Imports by SITC for 1996–2022, PCBS, https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/Detailed-Indicators-Arabic%202022.xlsx
- ¹¹⁵ Government Decision to Establish the Palestine Natural Gas Company, *Alquds*, 7/9/2021. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁶ Ramallah Dialogue Series 2021, *Alquds*, 9/9/2021. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁷ For the years 2018–2022, see PMA, Research and Monetary Policy Department, *Quarterly Statistical Bulletin, Third Quarter 2023* (Ramallah: PMA, April 2024), pp. 4–5. (in Arabic)
For 2023, see PNA Revenues, Expenditures and Financing Sources (Cash Basis), PMA, https://www.pma.ps/Portals/0/Users/002/02/2/Monthly%20Statistical%20Bulletin/Public%20Finance/table_35.xlsx
- ¹¹⁸ European Commission provides over €118 million to the Palestinian Authority, site of European Commission, 22/12/2023, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/european-commission-provides-over-eu118-million-palestinian-authority-2023-12-22_en
Note: The Dollar-Euro exchange rate was adopted on 22/12/2023, with one Dollar equal to 0.908 Euros.
- ¹¹⁹ More countries suspend UNRWA funding amid calls to reconsider decision, site of Al Arabiya English, 31/1/2024, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2024/01/31/More-countries-suspend-UNRWA-funding-amid-calls-to-reconsider-decision>; and Which countries have cut funding to UNRWA, and why?, site of Al Jazeera, 28/1/2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/28/which-countries-have-cut-funding-to-unrwa-and-why>
- ¹²⁰ French President Macron hosts Gaza aid conference and appeals to Israel to protect civilians, site of The Associated Press (AP), 9/11/2023, <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-aid-conference-paris-ce36fc88cf99e69fc7d80ab421c44682>
- ¹²¹ Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #113, site of UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 7/2/2024, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-113-enhe>



Chapter Three

The Land and the Holy Sites

The Land and the Holy Sites

Introduction

The policy of Judaization, settlement and displacement in WB, including Jerusalem, the attempt to control the management of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, and the Judaization of Islamic and Christian holy sites have become a fixed strategy that most political components and policy makers in Israel are competing to achieve.

With the rise of Temple groups and the consolidation of their position in the Israeli political system and decision-making institutions, the attack on land and holy sites has intensified, threatening Palestinian existence and depriving Palestinians of sovereignty even over part of their land.

In this chapter, we address Israeli practices and measures pursued in 2022 and 2023 to Judaize Jerusalem and impose control over the management of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, digging and bulldozing operations in the vicinity of *al-Aqsa*, demolition of old Arab neighborhoods and expelling their residents, revoking Jerusalem IDs as well as targeting education in Jerusalem. We also highlight settlement projects and plans in Jerusalem and the rest of WB, and attacks on Islamic and Christian holy sites across the occupied Palestinian territories.

First: Islamic and Christian Holy Sites

1. Al-Aqsa Mosque

The years 2022–2023 have been among the most perilous for *al-Aqsa* Mosque. This was particularly evident during the Jewish holidays which were used to carry out various plans to raid the Mosque. These plans involved Knesset members, Temple groups, senior rabbis, Israeli officers and police, aiming to impose a policy of temporal and spatial division of *al-Aqsa*, in addition to raising Israeli flags in the Mosque courtyards, blowing the horn (*Shofar*), allowing access to *al-Aqsa* Mosque through Lion's Gate and bringing the "Four Species" to the Mosque. During the month of Ramadan, *al-Aqsa* became an arena of confrontation, with Israeli forces arresting hundreds of Palestinians and drones fired tear gas canisters.



Israel is attempting to impose a new fait accompli at *al-Aqsa* Mosque that aligns with its vision for the Mosque. In coordination with Temple groups, Israeli authorities are employing various methods to potentially remove *al-Aqsa* Mosque and establish the Temple in its place. To achieve this, the Israeli authorities and groups have adopted numerous plans and Judaization projects, some of which have already been implemented. They have continued excavation projects under and around *al-Aqsa* Mosque, while preventing the restoration and maintenance of the Mosque. In response, Jerusalemites, supported by resistance factions in WB and GS, are opposing these plans with determination and resilience. They emphasize that any aggression against their city and Mosque is akin to playing with fire, and they are committed to resisting Israel's efforts. Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023 highlighted the central role of *al-Aqsa* Mosque in the ongoing conflict with the occupation, which continues to seize land and holy sites.

The following sections will discuss the projects, plans, measures and actions undertaken by the Israeli authorities, supported by Temple groups and settlers, aimed at controlling *al-Aqsa* Mosque and imposing a new reality in preparation for the establishment of the alleged Temple in its place.

a. Control of the Mosque's Administration

Strengthening the Political Ascent of Temple Groups

Since 1967, Temple groups have gradually risen in influence, marked by an increase in their number, organization and ability to mobilize funding. This growth has been accompanied by significant success in parliamentary and governmental role, allowing these groups to become actively engaged in political life. Over time, they have become highly influential within official institutions and have gained a growing presence in the Knesset, contributing to numerous achievements. In recent years, Temple groups have secured several ministerial portfolios and become major players in Israeli politics. During Knesset election cycles, they have consistently formed a stable bloc of 17 to 18 Knesset members, representing about 15% of the seats.¹ In the 25th Knesset elections, held on 1/11/2022, the coalition of Likud, Religious Zionism and Haredi parties won 64 out of 120 seats.²

According to estimates, 16 of the 31 ministers in Benjamin Netanyahu's government, formed on 29/12/2022, are affiliated with Temple groups. These ministers not only support the construction of a temple in place of *al-Aqsa* Mosque but use their influence and authority within their ministries to further this goal.

An investigation by Israel's Channel 12 highlighted that for some members of the government, the establishment of a Temple on the ruins of *al-Aqsa* Mosque "is a dream for some participants in the government," referring to the *Otzma Yehudit* (Jewish Power) Party led by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, and the Religious Zionism Party led by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich. Although Israel's official rabbinate and the central religious movements prohibit Jews from entering *al-Aqsa* Mosque, warning that violating this religious edict is sinful, Temple groups—whose influence has significantly grown—are now calling for all Jews to enter *al-Aqsa* and pray there, asserting it as a sacred right.³

***Al-Aqsa* Mosque Incursions as Part of the Moral Construction of the Temple**

Incursions by Israeli settlers into *al-Aqsa* Mosque have risen sharply since 2003, when they secured a judicial ruling authorizing individual and group incursions.⁴ Their numbers have increased annually. The presence of security forces patrolling the courtyards of *al-Aqsa* has also steadily grown, and Israeli police have increasingly restricted Muslim worshippers' access to the Mosque. Additionally, the police have blocked the Jerusalem Awqaf Department from conducting renovations or repairs within the Mosque buildings, while also preventing worshippers from WB, GS and the 1948 occupied territories from entering.

The frequency of settler incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque has escalated, becoming more systematic and organized. Temple groups have launched extensive incitement campaigns on social media to further increase these incursions, particularly during Jewish holidays and occasions, which at times coincided with the holy month of Ramadan and other Islamic occasions.

According to the Jerusalem Awqaf Department, 48,238 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque in 2022,⁵ with 48,223 settlers doing so in 2023.⁶ Settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* 258 times in 2023,⁷ compared to 262 times in 2022.⁸

Other Palestinian organizations, including the Palestine Information Center—Mo3ta, also track these incidents. Mo3ta reported that 55,545 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* in 2022⁹ and 54,684 in 2023.¹⁰

This discrepancy arises because the Jerusalem Awqaf Department excludes Jewish students and Israeli security personnel from its annual statistics, while other organizations track all groups involved in incursions into *al-Aqsa*. Additionally, the use of different monitoring tools contributes to the variation between the figures released by the Jerusalem Awqaf Department and other sources.



It can be said that targeting of *al-Aqsa* Mosque has become a central focus for Israel, rather than a temporary or emergency issue. This indicates that extremist Temple groups wield significant influence within the Israeli political system, ensuring that the agenda of Judaizing *al-Aqsa* Mosque remains a priority for the Israeli government, regardless of which coalition is in power.

There are other factors that have contributed to the increased frequency of incursions, including:¹¹

- The construction and development of the Separation Wall in WB since 2002 have limited the ability of Palestinians to mobilize large numbers to confront the incursions.
- Israel's unprecedented restrictions on visitors to *al-Aqsa* Mosque, particularly those from Jerusalem and the 1948 occupied territories, have contributed to a reduction in the number of worshippers, especially during periods of incursions.
- Israel banned the Islamic Movement in the 1948 occupied territories on 17/11/2015, under Netanyahu's previous government. Since the 1970s, the movement has played a significant role in mobilizing for *al-Aqsa* Mosque, establishing five institutions dedicated to serving the Mosque. Whenever the movement called on Palestinians to visit *al-Aqsa* Mosque to resist mass settler incursions, thousands would respond.
- The escalation of the normalization process with some Arab countries has emboldened Israel to continue its aggression against *al-Aqsa* Mosque.

Throughout 2022–2023, Temple groups not only exploited religious holidays and occasions to increase the number of incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque, but also coordinated these incursions with Israeli religious or political events. They used these incursions to impose a new reality at *al-Aqsa* Mosque and pressure the Israeli government to adopt and legalize this policy through legislation.

During the Jewish Passover (*Pesach*) and the anniversary of the occupation of Jerusalem according to the Hebrew calendar (April–May 2022), 3,738 settlers and 1,687 settlers respectively stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Additionally, 1,052 settlers stormed the Mosque in June on the Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot*).¹²

Extremist Israeli organizations continued to exploit Jewish holidays to mobilize the largest possible numbers of intruders, including on *Tisha B'Av*, the day commemorating the destruction of the Temple, 7/8/2022, when 2,201 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque within a span of five hours.¹³

The Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), observed from 10 to 17/10/2022, marked the most significant period for incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque in 2022. During this time, the Mosque experienced a surge of activity, with thousands of settlers performing biblical rituals at the Western Wall and the Cotton Merchants' Gate. Settlers also engaged in biblical dances at the Lions' Gate, carried the "Four Species," and prostrated in prayer at the Chain Gate. According to sources from the Jerusalem Awqaf Department, 5,795 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque during Sukkot.¹⁴

An Extremist Settler Prostrates in Prayer at the Chain Gate of *al-Aqsa* Mosque



During the celebrations of the Festival of Lights (*Hanukkah*) (18–26/12/2022), 1,797 extremist settlers, under the protection of the Israeli police, were able to prostrate themselves, for the second time in 2022 and the second time since the occupation of *al-Aqsa* Mosque in 1967. They also performed collective biblical prayers at the gates of *al-Aqsa* Mosque and prostrated themselves in its eastern square. Among them were Moshe Feiglin, a leader of the extremist Temple groups, MK Zvika Vogel of the Religious Zionism bloc and MK Nissim Vaturi of the Likud Party, and leaders of "Women for the Temple" group.¹⁵

In 2023, Jewish settlers continued their incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque during Jewish religious occasions, including:

Jewish Passover (*Pesach*) (5–13/4/2023): During this period, the number of settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque increased significantly, with 3,430 settlers

entering the site and conducting public biblical prayers and rituals. The month of Ramadan coincided with the Jewish Passover, prompting the *Murabitun* (*al-Aqsa* Mosque defenders) at *al-Aqsa* Mosque to begin the Spiritual Retreat (*I'tikaf*) earlier than usual in anticipation of the expected incursions. *Al-Aqsa* saw repeated incursions by Israeli forces, who attempted to disrupt the *I'tikaf* each night but were met with the steadfast resistance of the *Murabitun*. On the night of Ramadan 15, the Jerusalem Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Council issued a statement allowing *I'tikaf* for the remainder of Ramadan, a position that many had expected them to take before the holy month began.¹⁶

Anniversary of the complete occupation of Jerusalem according to the Hebrew calendar (18/5/2023) and the Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot*) (25/5/2023): Temple groups mobilized to storm *al-Aqsa* Mosque, especially during the anniversary of Jerusalem's occupation, when 1,286 settlers stormed the Mosque. In addition, 380 settlers, some dressed in priestly garments, stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque on *Shavuot* and performed biblical rituals. In total, 6 thousand settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* during these holidays.¹⁷

The Israeli government, led by Netanyahu held its weekly session in a tunnel beneath the western side of *al-Aqsa* Mosque to mark the 56th anniversary of Jerusalem's occupation. This took place hours after Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, along with dozens of settlers stormed *al-Aqsa*. At the start of this weekly cabinet session, Netanyahu said, "Fifty-six years ago, in the Six Day War, we unified Jerusalem. But I must say that the fight for its unity has not ended."¹⁸

Temple Destruction (*Tisha B'Av*) (27/7/2023): July saw large-scale incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque, marked by provocative rituals coinciding with the commemoration of *Tisha B'Av*. On 27/7/2023, 2,180 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* and openly performed biblical prayers and rituals. Ben-Gvir participated in the morning incursions, marking his third visit to *al-Aqsa* since taking office at the beginning of 2023.¹⁹ On 26/7/2023, extremist rabbi Yehuda Glick, along with dozens of settlers, also stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque.²⁰ The Israeli government held a meeting near the Western Wall, alongside several settler associations, where they signed agreements related to the new Temple model project.²¹

Hebrew New Year (*Rosh Hashanah*), Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) and Sukkot (15–16/9/2023, 24/9/2023 and 29/9/2023–6/10/2023): Around 1,600 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque for the Hebrew New Year and the Day of Atonement²² (1,144 settlers on the Day of Atonement alone).²³ Among the intruders was the extremist former MK Yehuda Glick, who led a group of foreign tourists on a tour promoting Talmudic misrepresentations with false biblical interpretations.²⁴ During the New Year incursions, settlers sounded the horn in the eastern courtyards of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, marking a dangerous escalation in these incursions, and conducted public biblical prayers en masse.²⁵ During Sukkot, 5,739 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque.²⁶

The Festival of Lights (*Hanukkah*) (7–15/12/2023) and the repercussions of Operation al-Aqsa Flood: Hanukkah, the last holiday season of 2023, began on the evening of Thursday 7/12/2023 and lasted for eight days according to Jewish tradition. However, the storming of *al-Aqsa* Mosque occurred for only five days due to the closure of the Moroccan Gate on Friday and Saturday. A week before the holiday began, nine Temple groups mobilized their supporters for “March of the Maccabees,” which was approved and protected by the Israeli police. They demanded the expulsion of the Jerusalem Awqaf Department from *al-Aqsa* and the imposition of Jewish control over the Mosque. The police required 200 settlers to participate in the march, but only 150 joined. The march started half an hour late and was halted by the police minutes after it began, preventing it from reaching the New Gate near Jaffa Gate.²⁷ During this holiday period, about 1,332 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque.²⁸

Table 1/3: Number of Settlers Storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque During Jewish Holidays 2022–2023

Jewish Holidays	2022	2023
Passover	3,738	3,430
Hebrew anniversary of the occupation of Jerusalem	1,687	1,286
Shavuot	1,052	380
Tisha B’Av	2,201	2,180
Yom Kippur and Sukkot	7,941	6,883
Hanukkah	1,797	1,332



Due to the exclusion of *al-Aqsa* guards since Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the enforcement of a 50-meter distance between them and settlers during their incursions into the Mosque, as well as the general prohibition on worshippers and journalists from entering the Mosque, especially during these incursions, the violations committed by Temple groups at *al-Aqsa* Mosque could only be documented through their own posts on social media.²⁹

**Ben-Gvir (R) Lights a Candle of the Hanukkah Menorah
in the Western Wall Plaza Near *al-Aqsa* Mosque**



Incursions by Rabbis and Yeshiva Students: Rabbis, heads of yeshivot and their students have played a significant role in escalating incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Citing biblical claims and plans for the establishment of the Third Temple, rabbis and yeshiva leaders have increasingly called for regular incursions, while Jewish prayers and symbolic biblical offerings intended to “intangibly build the temple” in preparation for its physical construction. Rabbis and seminary students actively participated in numerous incursions conducted by settlers throughout 2022 and 2023.

In this context, more than 50 rabbis and heads of Jewish religious schools stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque on 3/4/2022, to mark *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* (first day of Nissan month in Hebrew calendar). The incursion was led by Rabbi Shlomo Rosenfeld of the Shadmot-Mehola yeshiva, and Rabbi Eliezer Shankolevsky from

Beit Shemesh. Rabbi Yisrael Ariel emphasized the importance of “ascending to the Temple Mount” (making *aliyah*) according to Jewish law (*halakhah*) and considered the incursion by 50 rabbis “a seal of approval, comparable to the chief rabbinate’s endorsement of ascension.” During the incursion, Rabbi Shmuel Moreno said, “We are honored to come here daily for dawn and afternoon prayers. Upholding the law on the Temple Mount is a good deed (*mitzvah*) from the Torah, and we are fortunate to experience things here that even in the days of King David, when the ‘Palace of a King did not conquer’ [were not achieved].”³⁰

Among the intruders was Rabbi Yoel Elitzur, an early advocate of Israel’s “return to the Temple Mount.” Rabbi Shimshon Elboim, head of the Temple Mount Administration, said that “Despite the significant gap between what is desired [outcome] and the current situation on the Temple Mount, considerable progress has been made compared to eight years ago.”³¹

Rabbis Storm *al-Aqsa* Mosque to Mark the First Day of Nissan Month in Hebrew Calendar



On 19/4/2022, Rabbi Yisrael Harel and Shlomo Ne’eman, head of the Gush Etzion Regional Council, were among 853 settlers who stormed *al-Aqsa* on Passover.³²

Jewish Seminary Students Storm *al-Aqsa* Mosque



Incursions by Israeli Political Officials: In 2022 and 2023, several Israeli politicians stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque. In 2022, extremist MK Itamar Ben-Gvir stormed *al-Aqsa* five times.³³ On 26/1/2022, MK Eli Cohen (Likud) stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque and led a tour for dozens of party members, accompanied by Rabbi Shimshon Elboim, head of the Temple Mount Administration.³⁴ MK Simcha Rotman (Religious Zionism Party) also stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque four times.³⁵ On 7/11/2022, on the eve of the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), Rotman, along with former MK Yehuda Glick, stormed the Mercy Gate Cemetery and blew the horn along with other settlers who performed the “prostration” ritual at *al-Aqsa* gates.³⁶ On 21/12/2022, MK Zvika Vogel (Jewish Power) stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque, accompanied by Rabbi Shimshon Elboim.³⁷ On 22/12/2022, MK Nissim Vaturi, along with 249 Israeli settlers, stormed *al-Aqsa* under the protection of Israeli forces, who imposed restrictions on the entry of Muslim worshippers.³⁸

In 2023, Israeli politicians continued to raid *al-Aqsa* Mosque on several occasions, most notably among whom were National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, Minister for the Development of the Periphery, the Negev and the Galilee Yitzhak Wasserlauf, MK Yitzhak Kroizer, Likud Party MKs, and dozens of rabbis and officials from Temple groups.³⁹

Turning *al-Aqsa* Mosque and its Courtyards into an Israeli Tourist Attraction: In the context of incursions at *al-Aqsa* Mosque, Israel has been using various measures to assert control over the Mosque and restrict access for Muslim

worshippers. One such tactic involves transforming *al-Aqsa* and its courtyards into a tourist attraction for Israelis, thereby opening it to tourists and the general Israeli public in an attempt to diminish the Islamic religious sanctity of the Mosque.

The Israeli targeting of *al-Aqsa* Mosque peaked in 2017 with the introduction of “Jerusalem 2050” project. This initiative, launched in 2011 by Australian-born Jewish businessman Kevin Bermeister, aims to transform *al-Aqsa* Mosque into a global tourist destination over the next 30 years by altering its Islamic characteristics.⁴⁰

In August 2022, dozens of foreign tourists, including fashion models wearing clothing that disregarded the sanctity of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, entered the site. Some tourists shared photos of themselves on social media in inappropriate poses.⁴¹ Naser al-Hidmi, head of the Jerusalem Anti-Judaization Committee, commented, “These photos are intended to promote the notion that *al-Aqsa* courtyards are like public parks, as the occupation wishes to portray them.” He further noted that the occupation seeks to assert its sovereignty over Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* Mosque by determining who is allowed to enter the site.⁴²

Foreign Tourists Disrespect the Sanctity of *al-Aqsa* Mosque



For years, the Knesset Committee on Education has advocated for including *al-Aqsa* Mosque in the excursion programs of Israeli schools and the integration of related educational materials into history lessons. This marks the first time such an initiative has been promoted since the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967. The committee has called for the introduction of topics related to the Temple Mount and the Temple in exams and the Bagrut certificate, emphasizing the teaching of

Temple heritage in schools, alongside encouraging and increasing student visits and school trips to the site.⁴³

Ongoing Efforts to Undermine the Role of the Jerusalem Awqaf Department

The Jerusalem Awqaf Department poses an obstacle to Israel's plans to Judaize *al-Aqsa*, as Israel seeks to impose full sovereignty over the Mosque and eliminate Islamic exclusivity in managing its affairs. This effort includes marginalizing the role of the Awqaf Department to pave the way for complete "Israeli sovereignty" over *al-Aqsa*, in line with the vision of Israel and its extremist organizations.

In this context, on 18/1/2023, Deputy Director of the Jerusalem Awqaf Department Sheikh Najeh Bkeirat warned of Israel's relentless attempts to diminish Palestinian, Arab and Islamic presence at *al-Aqsa* Mosque, through deportation orders against Jerusalemites, along with arrest campaigns and harassment of *al-Aqsa* guards.⁴⁴

In 2022–2023, Israel intensified its policies and measures against the Jerusalem Awqaf Department and its employees, impeding restoration, maintenance and expansion projects. The following outlines the most notable attacks on and responses to it:

- In 2022, the Israeli police prevented the Jerusalem Awqaf Department from conducting restoration and repair work at *al-Aqsa* Mosque on 103 occasions and arrested 24 maintenance workers, including the head of the maintenance department at *al-Aqsa*.⁴⁵
- Dozens of new guards appointed by the Jerusalem Awqaf Department for *al-Aqsa* Mosque (15 guards appointed in November 2021 for night shifts, and 60 appointed during the Lion's Gate Uprising in the summer of 2017) remain prohibited from working under Israeli orders. Additionally, current guards face repeated arrests, deportations and work restrictions.⁴⁶
- There are currently 256 guards who face daily harassment while performing their duties at *al-Aqsa* Mosque and for its worshippers. The Jerusalem Awqaf Department needs to appoint 70 additional guards to address this shortage.⁴⁷
- On 3/4/2022, the Israeli authorities issued a six-month ban order against Sheikh Najeh Bkeirat, Deputy Director of the Jerusalem Awqaf Department, prohibiting him from entering *al-Aqsa* Mosque.⁴⁸ Additionally, on 20/6/2023, the Israeli army's Home Front Command ordered Bkeirat's deportation from both Jerusalem and his hometown of Sur Baher for six months, with the possibility of extension.⁴⁹

- The Israeli authorities have prevented the Jerusalem Awqaf Department from restoring and maintaining *al-Aqsa* Mosque, including the repair of the sound system in al-Qibli Mosque where 60% of the internal speakers are malfunctioning, with over 40 speakers damaged.⁵⁰
- On 2/7/2023, the Israeli authorities issued a decision banning the employees of the reconstruction committee from working at *al-Aqsa* Mosque.⁵¹ A condition for resuming the maintenance was the closure of the *Musalla* (area allocated for prayer) of the Gate of Mercy, which had been reopened during the Mercy Gate Uprising in 2019.⁵²
- In 2023, Israeli forces arrested several guards while they were performing their duties at *al-Aqsa* Mosque.⁵³

The Policy of Expulsion From *al-Aqsa* Mosque

The Israeli authorities persisted with their deportation policy from *al-Aqsa* Mosque to undermine the resolve of *Murabitun* and imprint the situation on the consciousness of Jerusalemites. This policy is part of a broader Israeli strategy aimed at emptying *al-Aqsa* Mosque of *Murabitun* and worshippers and achieving its final Judaization. Most deportations occurred while the *Murabitun* were in detention, with decisions being used as leverage to force them into accepting deportation as a condition for their release. The deportation periods varied, ranging from three days to six months.

According to Wadi Hilweh Information Center—Silwanic, Israeli authorities issued in 2022 about 523 deportation orders from *al-Aqsa* Mosque, 436 from the Old City of Jerusalem and 31 from the city of Jerusalem.⁵⁴ In 2023, the Center recorded 568 deportation orders from the Old City, 412 from *al-Aqsa* Mosque and 29 from Jerusalem.⁵⁵

The deportation orders from *al-Aqsa* Mosque included several notable figures from Jerusalem, such as Sheikh Najeh Bkeirat, ‘Abdul Rahman Bkeirat, Director of Zayd bin Thabit Center for Memorizing the Quran⁵⁶ and Jerusalem teacher Hanadi Halwani.⁵⁷

After 15 years of deportation, Sheikh Raed Salah performed the Maghrib prayer at *al-Aqsa* Mosque on 6/2/2022. The Israeli authorities had expelled Sheikh Salah on 7/2/2007 from *al-Aqsa* Mosque, following excavation activities near the Moroccan Gate.⁵⁸

Based on the data above, we can identify the key strategies that the Israeli authorities worked to implement in 2022 and 2023 to impose more control over *al-Aqsa* Mosque through incursions:

- Establishing the strategy of “moral construction of the Temple,” particularly during Jewish holidays and Judaization events, by institutionalizing the performance of Jewish rituals related to the Temple as a regular practice for Temple groups.
- Public prayers, once considered individual acts among settlers, have evolved into a significant tool for Temple groups. Israeli authorities have facilitated this through legal rulings. On 22/5/2022, the Israeli Magistrate’s Court issued a ruling permitting settlers to perform the “prostration” ritual at *al-Aqsa*, as well as the loud recitation of “*Shema*” prayers, stating that these rituals do not endanger “peace” and that the right to pray is universal for all religions.⁵⁹
- Enforcing a policy of temporal division of *al-Aqsa* by restricting the entry and exit of worshippers during periods of incursions, along with spatial division by prohibiting worshippers from accessing the eastern area of *al-Aqsa*. This is accompanied by the raising of Israeli flags in the courtyards, the blowing of the horn, and permitting incursions into *al-Aqsa* through the Lions’ Gate for the first time since the occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967. Previously, incursions were typically conducted through the Moroccan Gate, which has been under Israeli control since that time.
- Forcibly attempting to clear *al-Aqsa* Mosque of worshippers before these incursions.
- Undermining the influence of *al-Aqsa* guards by harassing them and blocking the appointment of new guards.
- Strengthening extremist organizations’s ties with Israeli security, political and judicial bodies to secure additional decisions that facilitate storming the Mosque and increasing the participation of invaders.
- Reinforcing the inclusion of *al-Aqsa* in educational tours for Jewish students, under the claim that it is the “Temple Mount.”
- Continuing to storm *al-Aqsa* Mosque during Islamic holidays.
- Seeking to intensify incursions by increasing the number of invaders in each group, coordinating simultaneous rather than consecutive incursions, and reducing wait times at the Moroccan Gate.

b. Constructions and Excavations Under al-Aqsa Mosque and in Its Vicinity

Constructions in *al-Aqsa* Vicinity

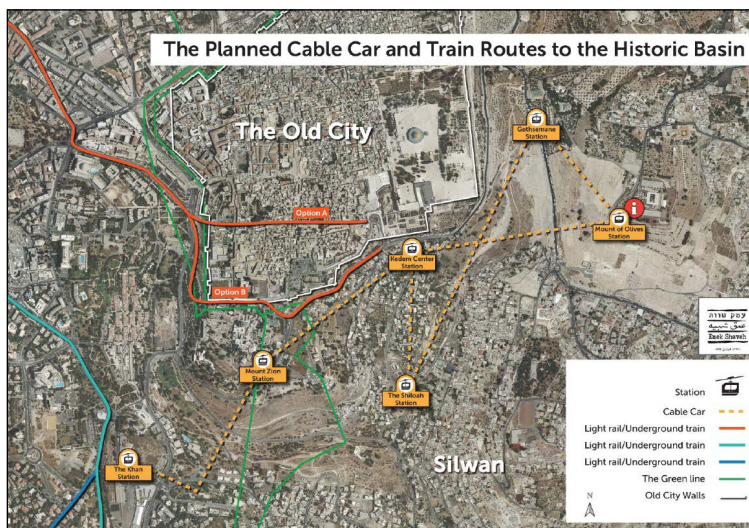
Throughout 2022–2023, Israeli authorities continued to implement and advance various Judaization projects around *al-Aqsa* Mosque, with a focus on infrastructure. This intensified following the formation of the Netanyahu government at the end of 2022, and the appointment by Smotrich and Ben-Gvir to key ministerial positions, making the Judaization of *al-Aqsa* and its surrounding areas a priority for the government.

1. The Cable Car Project

Israeli officials expected the implementation of the cable car project in Jerusalem in the near future. That was when the Israeli High Court approved the project on 15/5/2022, after rejecting four petitions filed by leftist Israeli organizations, thus removing all obstacles preventing its implementation.⁶⁰

The 200 million shekels (\$61.4 million) project, approved by the government in November 2019, calls for a 1.4-km track, with a capacity of three thousand visitors per hour.⁶¹ According to the Jerusalem municipality, at the first stage the cable car in the air will have three stops—the Khan Theater, Mount Zion and the Moroccan Gate where a station will be built for settlers to use to reach the Western Wall and Old Jerusalem. At the second stage other lines will lead to the Pool of Siloam, the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane.⁶²

Map 1/3: The Route of the Cable Car Project in Jerusalem⁶³



2. The Light Rail

As part of the ongoing implementation of the light rail project in Jerusalem, four tenders were submitted on 9/8/2022 for the construction and operation of the “Blue Line.” This line will join the existing Red and Green Lines within the JNET network, both of which are already under construction.⁶⁴ The project involves the development of a new light rail system, about 20 km long, with an elevated section from the Rosemary Junction in southern Jerusalem, running along the Hebron Road, Keren HaYesod and King George Streets in central Jerusalem. An underground section, about 2 km long, will be constructed in the city center, featuring three subway stations. The first section of the Blue Line is expected to be operational in 2028, with full operation slated for 2030.⁶⁵

3. Expanding the Moroccan Gate to Increase Incursions

Temple groups have revealed plans to expand the Moroccan Gate, the entry point used for incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque, as part of their 2023–2024 vision. These groups stated that the plans were discussed with Israeli government and the Jerusalem municipality officials, and they have called for extending the daily incursion hours from four to ten hours, including nighttime access during Jewish holidays. Regarding the expansion of the Moroccan Gate, Temple groups mentioned discussions with officials about removing the earthen hill and the wooden bridge that connects the Western Wall Square to the Moroccan Gate. They also proposed constructing a permanent bridge, inscribed with biblical phrases, large enough to accommodate increased numbers of Israelis storming *al-Aqsa*.⁶⁶

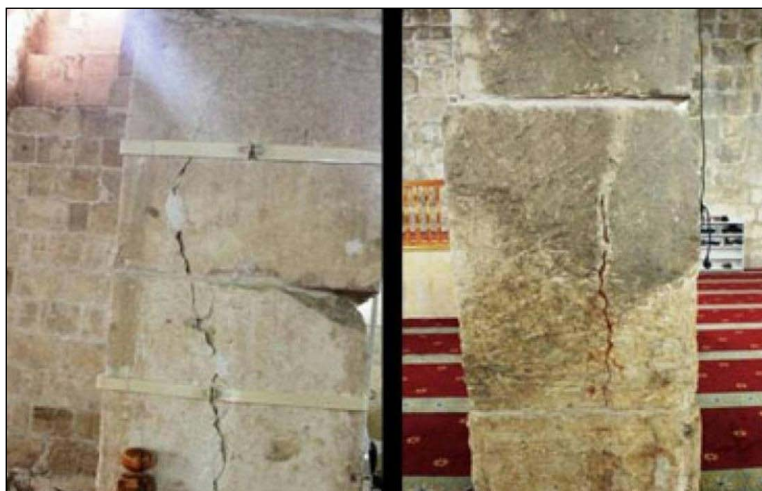
Excavations

The Israeli authorities continue to target the *al-Aqsa* Mosque area, both above and below ground, through various Judaization projects carried out by official and unofficial Israeli institutions. This report highlights the most prominent of these projects.

Excavations adjacent to the external foundation of *al-Aqsa* Mosque in the areas of the Western Wall and the Umayyad Palaces: Ongoing excavations by Israeli authorities beneath and around *al-Aqsa* Mosque are posing a serious threat to its foundations. Jerusalem institutions have reported the emergence of new cracks in the mosque’s floor as a result of these ongoing excavations. The cracks

have appeared in the western section of the Mosque, near the Islamic Museum and the Moroccan Gate adjacent to the Western Wall, extending towards the Umayyad Palaces area.⁶⁷

Israeli Excavations Cause Cracks and Dust Fallout From *al-Aqsa* Mosque Columns



The Jerusalem Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Council has warned about the dangerous excavations being conducted by Israeli authorities around *al-Aqsa* Mosque. On 23/6/2022, the Council reported that the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) and the Ir David Foundation (Elad) have been carrying out “suspicious and mysterious excavations” using bulldozers and large drilling machines near *al-Aqsa*, particularly on its southern and western sides, near the external foundation of the Mosque, in the vicinity of the Western Wall and the Umayyad palaces, close to the lower foundations of *al-Aqsa* Mosque. The Council emphasized that observers have reported the systematic destruction of significant archaeological stones over the course of months, with the stones being reduced to small fragments, concealed and disposed as garbage by excavation workers associated with settler associations.⁶⁸

Meanwhile, Jerusalem institutions have reported that the Israeli authorities are conducting excavation work near *al-Aqsa* Mosque’s wall. According to the Jerusalem-based al-Qastal platform and corroborated by local activists, these excavations are occurring in the Umayyad Palaces area, which is adjacent to the southern wall of the Mosque. This area is close to the mosque’s lower foundations,

raising concerns about potential damage if these activities persist.⁶⁹ The institutions also noted that Elad is secretly carrying out new tunnel excavations 130 meters from the southeastern wall of *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Israeli forces have admitted workers and vehicles into a tunnel opening near the Fountain of the Virgin complex, dug by the Canaanites, which extends 533 meters to the underground Silwan Spring complex.⁷⁰

Israeli Excavations in *al-Aqsa* Mosque



2. Islamic Holy Sites in Jerusalem

a. The Yusufiyah Cemetery

The Israeli authorities have continued their targeting of the Yusufiyah Cemetery, located north of the Mercy Gate Cemetery and adjacent to the eastern wall of *al-Aqsa*. On 28/2/2022, the District Planning and Building Committee in Jerusalem approved the confiscation of part of the Yusufiyah Cemetery and the land opposite to it, to develop a walkway and park. Lawyer Muhannad Jbara reported that the decision affects privately owned Arab land used as a parking lot and the Martyrs' memorial area, which the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) began bulldozing in 2021, uncovering some graves.⁷¹ Khalil Tufakji, Director of the Mapping and Geographic Information Systems Department at the Arab Studies Society, said that the committee's decision aims to transform al-Khandaq land (Friday Market) and part of the Yusufiyah Cemetery in the eastern corner of the Old City wall into a tourist park, covering an area of 4.5 donums (1 donum = 1,000 m²). He added that the land belongs to the 'Oweis, Hamad and 'Atallah families.⁷²

b. Targeting Mosques by Demolition

In a blatant violation of the sanctity of holy religious sites in Jerusalem, Israeli authorities issued a decision in January 2022 to demolish al-Taqwa Mosque in al-Issawiyah. Additionally, demolition orders were issued for the golden dome of al-Rahman Mosque in Beit Safafa, which has stood for over 100 years. On 15/10/2022, 20 Jerusalemites from Beit Safafa, south of occupied Jerusalem, filed an objection with the Israeli Local Affairs Court to prevent the demolition of the golden dome of the mosque in their village.⁷³

3. Islamic Holy Sites in the Rest of Palestine

a. Ibrahimi Mosque

The years 2022–2023 saw a significant escalation in Israeli attacks on the Ibrahimi Mosque, particularly following the removal of parts of the historic white stairs of the Mosque. This period also witnessed extensive excavations aimed at altering the mosque's archaeological features and advancing the “electric elevator” project designed to facilitate settler incursions.⁷⁴ Approved on 24/2/2020, by then Israeli Defense Minister Naftali Bennett,⁷⁵ the project received authorization from the Planning Committee in the Civil Administration.⁷⁶ The Israeli authorities began foundational excavations for the elevator on 10/8/2021.⁷⁷ According to the Hebron Reconstruction Committee, the elevator project will reduce the mosque's space by 91 m² and affect an additional 300 m² of external yards and corridors.⁷⁸

Since the start of the war on GS on 7/10/2023, Israeli forces have tightened security measures around the Ibrahimi Mosque and restricted access, resulting in a decrease in the number of worshippers and visitors. They closed two of the three military checkpoints leading directly to the mosque, namely Abu al-Rish checkpoint and Checkpoint 160, effectively preventing around three thousand residents living nearby from visiting and praying there. Although the Israeli authorities reopened Abu al-Rish checkpoint on the second day of Ramadan, extremist settler groups protested during *Tarawih* prayers, demanding its closure, which was subsequently re-closed, and it was opened in an irregular manner. In addition, settlers raised Israeli flags and religious and historical symbols such as the menorah on its walls, held noisy celebrations, repeatedly closed it, prevented its restoration and maintenance, and imposed a curfew in the surrounding area.⁷⁹



During 2022–2023, there were 1,747 Israeli attacks on the Ibrahimi Mosque detailed as follows:

Table 2/3: Israeli Attacks on the Ibrahimi Mosque 2022–2023⁸⁰

Attacks	2022	2023
Incursions and performing biblical rituals	63	59
Excavations and constructions altering its surrounding features	67	17
Mosque closure	16	13
Arrests in the mosque's vicinity	4	7
Beating worshippers, <i>murabitun</i> and mosque employees	24	13
Attacks on infrastructure	2	2
Overstepping the Hebron Waqf Directorate's authority	13	1
<i>Adhan</i> ban	617	714
Obstruction and denial of worshippers' access	53	55
Attacks on Mosque property	1	6
Total	860	887

b. Islamic Holy Sites in GS and Other Areas of WB 2022–2023

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs' annual report, 2023 saw a rise in violations against mosques due to the Israeli war on GS. The report states that 388 mosques were affected: 145 were completely destroyed, and 243 mosques were partially destroyed, rendering them unusable for prayers.⁸¹

In WB, the Ministry's report documented violations and attacks on 24 mosques in Hebron, al-Bireh, Masafer Yatta, Salfit, Beit Safafa, Bethlehem, Tulkarm and its refugee camp (RC), in addition to Jenin and its RC. Some mosques were attacked multiple times—up to eight incidents at the Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque in Nur Shams RC in Tulkarem. Additionally, several mosques in Jenin RC and its surroundings, such as al-Ansar Mosque and Khalid al-Asir Mosque, were shelled with missiles several times. Furthermore, Israeli soldiers broke into Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Jenin RC and performed biblical prayers inside.⁸²

Settlers also attacked and desecrated the Karantina Cemetery in Hebron. Israeli authorities have announced the demolition of seven graves in al-Burj village, southwest of Hebron, citing the need for construction in Area C. Additionally, settlers vandalized tombstones in a cemetery in Burqa village, northwest of Nablus, on lands near the evacuated Homesh settlement.⁸³

c. Al-Qassam Cemetery in Haifa

In January 2022, activists from the 1948 occupied territories and the custodians of al-Istiqlal Endowment Committee in Haifa established a protest tent to oppose plans to remove the Islamic cemetery in the village of Balad al-Sheikh. This move followed a decision by Israeli authorities to build a commercial project on the cemetery land, located to the west of Haifa. The cemetery is the largest burial site for martyrs in Palestine, including those from the *Nakbah* and earlier periods, notably the martyr Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam.⁸⁴ On 7/2/2022, Israeli bulldozers and vehicles, accompanied by Israeli police forces, stormed the cemetery and commenced excavation and bulldozing operations to prepare for infrastructure construction. This work was commissioned by the Israeli company Kerur Akhzakot, which claims ownership of part of the cemetery and intends to develop a commercial project. However, protesters successfully forced the vehicles to leave.⁸⁵

In January 2023, Israeli authorities blocked the restoration of the buildings in the cemetery, citing a lack of permits. Despite the efforts by Haifa's al-Istiqlal Endowment Committee to carry out the restorations "legally," the Nesher municipality—established on the forcibly depopulated Balad al-Sheikh town—and the Planning and Building Committee remained adamant in preventing the maintenance and restoration.⁸⁶

The Israeli authorities have divided the cemetery into three sections; the first (14 donums) is officially recognized by Israel as a cemetery; the second (14 donums) is claimed to be owned by the Israel Land Authority; and the rest of the cemetery is owned by an Israeli company that claims ownership of the land.⁸⁷



Israeli Bulldozers Encroaching on al-Qassam Cemetery Land



Al-Qassam Grave



4. Christian Holy Sites in Jerusalem and Palestine

To consolidate the policy of exclusion and religious cleansing pursued by Israel in Jerusalem for decades, and to establish a Jewish character as the sole and dominant identity in the city, attacks on churches and Christian properties have continued, alongside relentless efforts to control Christian properties and endowments, which are subject to attempts at diversion by various agents of the occupation.

a. Decrease in the Arab Christian Population in Jerusalem

For decades, Israel has maintained a policy of discrimination, economic marginalization and harassment against Palestinians in Jerusalem, including Palestinian Christians. This policy has driven many Christians to emigrate, leading to a decline in their population over the years. On 25/12/2022, British newspaper *Daily Mail* reported that in 1948, Jerusalem's 31 thousand Christians represented around 20% of the population, whereas they currently number just 10 thousand, less than 2%, and numbers are continuing to fall.⁸⁸

According to CBS, the number of Arab Christians in Jerusalem reached 13 thousand by the end of 2022. Adding 3,500 non-Arab Christians living in the city brings the total to 16,500 (see table 3/3). When measured against the total population of the city, the percentage of Christians in Jerusalem in 2022 is 1.7%, the lowest since the establishment of the church in the region two thousand years ago.

Table 3/3: Ratio of Christians to Jerusalem's Population 2014–2022⁸⁹

Year	Arab Christians	Ratio to Jerusalemites (%)	Christians in general	Ratio to the population of both sides of Jerusalem (%)
2014	12,300	3.9	15,600	1.8
2015	12,600	3.9	15,800	1.8
2016	12,600	3.8	15,800	1.8
2017	12,600	3.7	15,800	1.8
2019	12,900	3.6	16,200	1.7
2020	12,900	3.4	16,300	1.7
2021	12,900	3.4	16,400	1.7
2022	13,000	3.4	16,500	1.7

b. Diversion of Christian Properties and Real Estate to Settler Associations

The diversion of Christian properties and real estate to settler associations has continued through deceptive methods and fraudulent operations, supported by biased decisions from the Israeli Supreme Court. This Court authorized the Ateret Cohanim settler association to seize properties belonging to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in East Jerusalem. The decision, issued on 8/6/2022, permitted the

association to take over the Imperial and Petra hotels in Omar Square near Jaffa Gate and Muzamiya House, in the Christian Quarter. In its ruling, the court dismissed the Patriarchate's challenge to the legality of documents submitted by Ateret Cohanim years earlier to claim ownership of these properties.⁹⁰ Notably, the area where the Petra Hotel is located serves as the main entrance for Christians to access the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

During deliberations at the Jerusalem District Court on 30/6/2022, it was revealed that members of Ateret Cohanim had established shell companies, including one based in Morocco, and used them to seize control of several Arab properties belonging to the Orthodox Church in Jerusalem, with the aim of Judaizing them.⁹¹

On 18/2/2022, church leaders in Jerusalem warned that “Under the guise of protecting green spaces, the plan appears to serve an ideological agenda that denies the status and rights of Christians in Jerusalem.” The warning was issued in a letter addressed to Israeli Environment Minister Tamar Zandberg, following the disclosure of a “project to expand a national park onto church-owned lands and Christian holy sites in East Jerusalem.”⁹²

Petra Hotel in Jerusalem



c. Attacks on Christians and Christian Holy Sites and Endowments in Jerusalem

Israeli authorities and settlers continued their attacks on Christians, Christian holy sites and endowments in Jerusalem. The following are the most significant attack documented in the report for 2022:

- On 27/3/2022, settlers affiliated with Ateret Cohanim broke into the Petra Hotel, near Jaffa Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem and took control of part of it.⁹³
- On 12/4/2022, settlers assaulted Christian clerics near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.⁹⁴
- On 21/4/2022, during Easter, the Israeli authorities restricted the number of participants in the Holy Saturday celebrations in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher to four thousand. Of these, 1,800 were allowed inside the church, with the remaining participants confined to the courtyard. This decision was based on a ruling from the Israeli High Court.⁹⁵
- On 7/6/2022, settlers attacked the Church of the Holy Spirit and the Greek Garden of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. They vandalized the property, desecrated graves, disturbed its contents and littered the courtyards with garbage.⁹⁶
- On 17/7/2022, a group of Haredi youths verbally assaulted 140 priests and monks, hurling insults and spitting at them as they entered the Old City of Jerusalem.⁹⁷
- On 2/12/2022, settlers demolished ancient walls of the Petra Hotel near Jaffa Gate.⁹⁸
- On 27/12/2022, settler gangs, with the protection of the Israeli police, seized al-Hamra land in Silwan in Jerusalem. The land, covering about eight donums, belongs to the Greek Orthodox Monastery in Silwan, administered by the Greek Patriarchate.⁹⁹

In 2023, settler attacks on Christian holy sites and Christians in occupied Jerusalem continued, and the following are the most prominent of these attacks:¹⁰⁰

- On 1/1/2023, settlers desecrated over 30 graves at the historic Protestant cemetery on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, destroying crosses and smashing Christian gravestones.
- On 4/1/2023, extremist settlers attacked a cemetery belonging to the Evangelical Episcopal Church in Jerusalem, desecrating graves and breaking crosses.
- On 2/2/2023, a settler stormed the Church of the Prison of Christ in the Old City of Jerusalem and attempted to set it on fire.
- On 15/4/2023, Israeli authorities imposed severe restrictions on Christian access to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher for Holy Saturday celebrations and closed several gates in the Old City leading to the church.



- In the first week of October 2023, during the Jewish Sukkot holiday, settlers walking and praying in the alleys of the Old City attacked Christians, pilgrims and churches by spitting and hurling insults, and this was repeated several times.

d. Israeli Attacks on Christian Holy Sites in GS Following Operation al-Aqsa Flood (7/10/2023–31/12/2023)

Since the start of the Israeli war on GS on 7/10/2023, Israeli aggression have not spared Palestinian Christians, their churches or Christian institutions. On 17/10/2023, the Israeli army targeted the Ahli Arab Hospital in GS with a missile, killing 500 Palestinians, including many children, and damaging the adjacent church. The hospital, run by the Anglican Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, was providing medical care to the sick and wounded Palestinians and shelter to thousands of displaced Palestinians. On 19/10/2023, Israel targeted Saint Porphyrius Greek Orthodox Church in Gaza City, destroying part of the church building and killing 17 Palestinian Christians, including 9 children, the oldest aged 12 and the youngest only three months. Other Israeli attacks affected the Arab Orthodox Cultural and Social Center of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Rosary Sisters School of the Catholic Church, the Holy Family Catholic Church and the Convent of the Sisters of Mother Theresa (Missionaries of Charity).¹⁰¹

According to data from the GS Government Media Office, as of 22/1/2024, Israeli forces have fully destroyed three churches.¹⁰²

Second: Population Under the Occupation

1. The Reality of the Demographic Battle

The Jerusalem municipality developed the “Jerusalem Master Plan” based on projections by Sergio Della Pergola, a prominent Jewish demographer, predicting that Arab Jerusalemites would make up 40% of Jerusalem’s population by 2020. The plan focused on preventing this 40% Arabs-to-60% Jewish ratio, a shift from earlier plans guided by the Interministerial Committee to Examine the Rate of Development in Jerusalem (Gafni Committee). The committee set a binding policy, approved by the Knesset, to maintain the Palestinian Jerusalemite population at no more than 30% compared to 70% for Jewish settlers.¹⁰³

In 2021, 11,900 new residents relocated to Jerusalem from other localities in Israel, up from 11 thousand in 2020. During the same year, 22,700 residents left Jerusalem for other areas, an increase from 18,800 in 2020. As a result, Jerusalem experienced a net negative intercity migration of 10,800 in 2021.¹⁰⁴

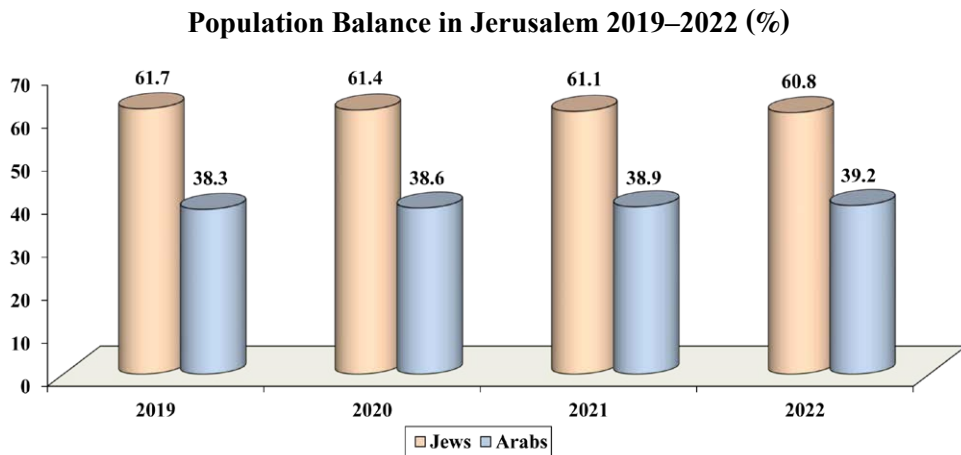
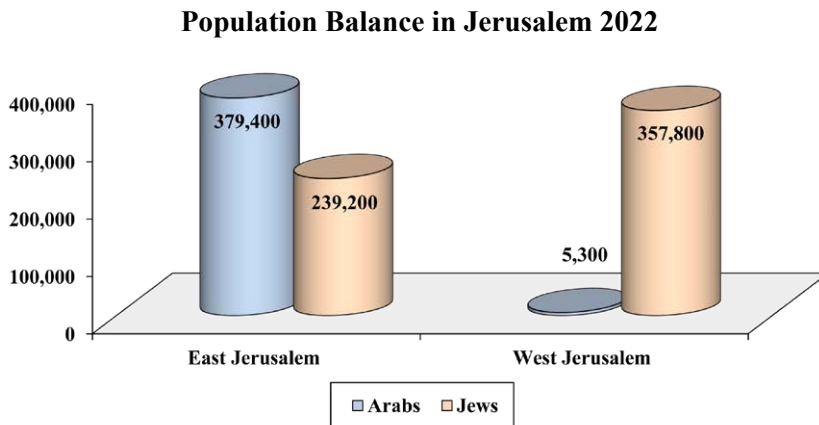
In 2022, Arab Jerusalemites comprised 39.2% of Jerusalem's population, while Jews made up 60.8% (see table 4/3). This occurred despite Jewish internal and external migration, the Israeli discriminatory policies against Arab Jerusalemites and the higher fertility rates among Jewish women in Jerusalem (4.4) compared to Arab Jerusalemite women (3.1).¹⁰⁵

The actual figures for Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem from 2019 to 2022 were as follows:

Table 4/3: Demographic Balance in Jerusalem 2019–2022¹⁰⁶

		East Jerusalem (Occupied in 1967)		West Jerusalem (Occupied in 1948)		Total for both sides of Jerusalem	
		Arabs	Jews	Arabs	Jews	Arabs	Jews
2019	Number	354,000	227,100	4,800	350,500	358,800	577,600
	Percentage (%)	61	39	1.4	98.6	38.3	61.7
Total		581,100		355,300		936,400	
2020	Number	361,700	233,700	5,000	350,700	366,700	584,400
	Percentage (%)	60.7	39.3	1.4	98.6	38.6	61.4
Total		595,400		355,700		951,100	
2021	Number	370,500	236,600	5,100	354,000	375,600	590,600
	Percentage (%)	61	39	1.4	98.6	38.9	61.1
Total		607,100		359,100		966,200	
2022*	Number	379,400	239,200	5,300	357,800	384,700	597,000
	Percentage (%)	61.3	38.7	1.5	98.5	39.2	60.8
Total		618,600		363,100		981,700	

* The 2022 figures were derived from growth rates published by the Israeli CBS, showing a 2.4% increase for Arabs and 1.1% for Jews in Jerusalem.



According to the Israeli CBS, as of the end of 2022, approximately 371 thousand Muslims lived in Jerusalem, making up 37.9% of the city’s population in both its eastern and western parts. The community is notably young with 32.2% under the age of 14, while those aged 65 and over account for about 4.7%.¹⁰⁷

2. Attempts to Expel the Palestinian Population

a. Sheikh Jarrah Neighborhood

For years, Israeli authorities have sought to displace residents of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in occupied Jerusalem using a combination of intimidation and enticement, including offering “financial incentives” to homeowners who have resisted these offers, remaining steadfast in their commitment to their homes despite ongoing Israeli efforts to persuade them otherwise.

Sheikh Jarrah is home to over three thousand Palestinians living on approximately one thousand donums of land, the last remaining area following the confiscation of thousands of donums, which were used to build three settlements known as the French Hill settlements.¹⁰⁸ In Sheikh Jarrah, 160 Palestinians from 12 families face the threat of eviction due to eviction orders issued as part of the ongoing Israeli settlement campaign aimed at displacing Palestinian families from the neighborhood.¹⁰⁹

At the beginning of 2022, Israeli officials and settlers intensified their attacks on Sheikh Jarrah. Dozens of settlers, led by extremist MK Itamar Ben-Gvir, and the Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Aryeh King, along with Tzachi Mamo, member of Nahalat Shimon settler association and its court representative, actively participated.¹¹⁰ Tensions escalated in February when Ben-Gvir provocatively set up his office on the Salem family's land on the western side of the neighborhood, sparking unrest.¹¹¹ Ben-Gvir continued to storm the neighborhood on a daily basis in a provocative manner, accompanied by settlers who hurled profanities against Prophet Muhammad, all under the tight protection and heavy presence of the Israeli forces and police.¹¹²

On 17/2/2022, the Council of Torah Sages called for reinforcing the Jewish presence in Sheikh Jarrah. The rabbis' statement declared that the "Shimon Hatzadik" neighborhood (Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood) is located in the heart of Jerusalem and serves as a frontline for Jewish control over the holy city, the capital of Israel.¹¹³

In a provocative move on 12/3/2022, Ben-Gvir extended an invitation to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin to hold negotiations in his office in Sheikh Jarrah.¹¹⁴

On 19/1/2022, Israeli police raided the home of Jerusalemite Mahmoud Salhiyeh in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. Shortly after, the Jerusalem municipality demolished the house, and arrested six members of his family, along with at least 18 other Palestinians who were present in solidarity. The land, owned by Salhiyeh, where his house, a plant nursery and a car showroom stood, spans approximately six thousand square meters.¹¹⁵

The Israeli authorities, through the Ministry of Justice, are working to Judaize large areas of land in Jerusalem, by registering the ownership of extensive sections in the occupied city, including areas around the Old City, *al-Aqsa* Mosque and

Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, under Jewish ownership. This is being done “with government funding earmarked for narrowing economic disparities and improving the quality of life of Palestinian residents of Jerusalem,” according to a *Haaretz* report published on 26/6/2022. The report also noted that “the registration process has been completed and nearly all of the land registered to Jews.”¹¹⁶ Additionally, the process is targeting locations in the French Hill area, where plans are in place to build a new settlement neighborhood called Givat HaShaked in southern Jerusalem. The Judaization efforts are also focused on the area between the Har Homa settlement and the town of Sur Baher, near the Haredi settlement Har Shlomo, areas administered by the Custodian for Absentee Property.¹¹⁷ According to a report published in July 2022 by Europeans for al-Quds Organization, “40 houses inhabited by 45 Palestinian families in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood were registered in the names of settlement associations, without the knowledge of their owners.”¹¹⁸

The Israeli authorities have been working to suffocate Sheikh Jarrah through surrounding settlement projects. The Jerusalem municipality plans to expand the Shimon HaTzadik settlement outpost and double the number of settlers in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood through three settlement projects, in collaboration with the Israel Land Fund and foreign Jewish investment companies.¹¹⁹

b. Silwan

Silwan is one of the most targeted towns in Jerusalem for settlement projects, carried out either by the Israeli government or by settler associations such as Elad and Ateret Cohanim. These groups primarily advance their settlement agenda in Jerusalem by issuing eviction orders to Palestinian families who have lived there for decades. They justify these actions with various claims of ownership and leverage legal backing provided by the Israeli authorities to seize Palestinian homes.

About 59 thousand Jerusalemites live in Silwan, which spans an area of 5,640 donums. In contrast, Israel has settled 2,800 Jewish settlers in 78 settlement outposts while forced displacement poses a threat to around 7,500 residents in six targeted neighborhoods: Wadi Hilweh, al-Bustan, Batn al-Hawa, Wadi al-Rababa, Wadi Yasul and ‘Ein al-Louzeh. These neighborhoods face the risk of home demolitions under the pretext of unlicensed construction or eviction for the benefit of settler organizations.¹²⁰

Settlement building in Silwan, particularly in the Batn al-Hawa neighborhood situated in the town's heart, carries significant strategic implications. This area lies between the large settlement on the Mount of Olives near Damascus Gate, and Elad settlements in the Wadi Hilweh neighborhood near the Moroccan Gate. The implementation of the settlement building plan in Silwan would establish an extensive and interconnected settlement network within the Old City area, effectively severing the town from its Palestinian surroundings. This would infringe upon the residents' right to freedom of movement, even on foot, especially with the presence of armed settlers, a special guard unit, Israeli police and Israel Border Police forces.

The Israeli plan is realized through the Judaization of Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah, as it involves the appropriation of public space in the Old City, imbuing it with a distinctly Jewish character and connecting the settlements to the surrounding Jewish areas.

Throughout 2022, the neighborhoods of Silwan were subjected to ongoing settlement plans and persistent targeting by Israeli authorities and settler organizations. According to settlement researcher Ahmed Sub Laban, the town faces ten settlement projects, some of which have already been implemented, while others await approval from Israeli planning and construction committees.¹²¹ In 2023, Israeli authorities demolished three residential buildings and 12 houses in Silwan, and killed three Jerusalemites, including a child. On 4/8/2023, Israeli authorities constructed a suspended bridge over the lands of the Wadi al-Rababa area in Silwan.¹²²

3. The Policy of Assaults, Arrests and Deportation

Throughout 2022 and 2023, various towns and neighborhoods in Jerusalem experienced numerous violations aimed at large numbers of Jerusalemites who resisted Israeli pressures. The Jerusalemites paid a heavy price for their steadfastness, with the most profound sacrifice being their lives; 18 Jerusalemites were killed in 2022,¹²³ and 37 in 2023 as a result of Israeli attacks.¹²⁴

a. Assaults

According to Mo3ta, Israeli forces and settlers carried out 5,363 attacks against Jerusalemites, encompassing various crimes and violations such as killings, expulsions, arrests, house demolitions, land bulldozing, property confiscations and

assaults on the education and health sectors.¹²⁵ In 2023, the number of such attacks increased to 5,703.¹²⁶

On 18/7/2022, the Israeli Ministry of Interior, settler associations and the Jerusalem municipality announced the formation of armed militias composed of extremist settlers to undertake “security tasks.” According to the Hebrew newspaper *Maariv*, one of the militias’ roles is to intervene during resistance operations in the settlements or in Jerusalem and its surroundings.¹²⁷

b. Arrests

During 2022 and 2023, Israeli authorities continued to use arrests as a tool to terrorize and harass Jerusalemites, restricting their movement and activities against the occupation.

In 2022, the Israeli forces carried out large-scale arrest campaigns targeting Jerusalemites under dubious pretexts. A total of 3,003 arrests were documented, including women, the elderly and children. Among those arrested were 35 children under the age of criminal responsibility (less than 12 years old), 619 minors and 120 females, including 9 minor girls.¹²⁸ In 2023, Silwanic monitored 3,261 arrests in Jerusalem, including 53 children under the age of responsibility, 643 boys and 165 females. The Center further noted that 987 of the arrests were documented between 7/10/2023 and the end of 2023.¹²⁹

Israeli Forces Arrest a Young Jerusalemite Woman in Jerusalem



The Israeli authorities continued the practice of re-arresting recently released Jerusalemite prisoners, detaining them either at the prison gate upon release or shortly after they return to their residential areas. They are then released after several hours or days under specific conditions, the most notable being expulsion from Jerusalem, eviction from their place of residence and a ban on celebrating their release.

The Palestine Center for Prisoners Studies reported that the arrests in 2022 targeted Islamic and national leaders, including deported Jerusalemite MP Ahmad ‘Atoun, Director of *al-Aqsa* Mosque Sheikh ‘Umar al-Kiswani and Head of Committee of Families of Prisoners from Jerusalem Amjad Abu ‘Asab, accusing them of incitement on Facebook. Israeli intelligence repeatedly renewed its ban on Jerusalem Governor Adnan Ghaith from entering the occupied WB, as well as its decision to prohibit *al-Aqsa* Mosque preacher Sheikh ‘Ikrima Sabri from communicating with some figures, including Sheikh Raed Salah and his deputy Kamal al-Khatib. Additionally, an administrative detention order was issued against Muhammad Abu Tair, a Jerusalem member in the PLC.¹³⁰

In late September 2022, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz issued an order to seize and confiscate the funds of Palestinian prisoners from Jerusalem and the 1948 occupied territories, under the “Counter-Terrorism Law of 2019.” The decision targeted 41 prisoners from the 1948 occupied territories and 8 prisoners from Jerusalem, one of whom was a freed prisoner.¹³¹

In 2022, 33 Palestinians were placed under house arrest following the filing of indictments against them.¹³² Among those sentenced to house arrest was Jerusalemite journalist Lama Ghosheh, who has been suffering under this decision since the last quarter of 2022.¹³³

In 2022, the Israeli authorities placed 43 Jerusalemites under administrative detention, including MPs Muhammad Abu Tair and Ahmad ‘Atoun, with some of the prisoners having their administrative detention orders renewed multiple times.¹³⁴ In 2023, 21 more Jerusalemites were sentenced to administrative detention.¹³⁵

c. Deportation

The Israeli authorities have increasingly employed deportation as an effective tool against Jerusalemites, aiming to clear *al-Aqsa* Mosque and Jerusalem

neighborhoods of *Murabitun*, Palestinians and activists. In 2022, there were about 523 deportation orders from *al-Aqsa* Mosque, 436 from the Old City and 31 from the city of Jerusalem.¹³⁶ In 2023, 412 deportation orders from *al-Aqsa* Mosque, 568 from the Old City and 29 from the city of Jerusalem were recorded.¹³⁷

Table 5/3: Deportation and Ban Orders Against Jerusalemites 2022–2023¹³⁸

Deportation and ban orders	2022	2023
Deportation from <i>al-Aqsa</i> Mosque	523	412
Deportation from the Old City of Jerusalem	436	568
Deportation from Jerusalem	31	29
Deportation from Palestine	1	NA
Ban on entry to WB	2	NA
Total	993	1,105

Among those permanently deported from Jerusalem were Mansour Abu Gharbiyeh,¹³⁹ Murad Ghazi al-‘Abbas¹⁴⁰ and the prisoner lawyer Salah Hammouri who was stripped of his Jerusalem ID and deported to France on 18/12/2022 after being detained for nine months.¹⁴¹

4. Demolition of Houses and Structures

The Israeli authorities implement a demolition policy in occupied Jerusalem as part of punitive measures, forced displacement, ethnic cleansing of Jerusalemites and the Judaization of the city. They justify home demolitions primarily on the grounds of unlicensed construction, yet rarely issue the necessary permits for Jerusalemites to build homes, while charging exorbitant fees for the few permits that are granted. In 2022 and 2023, the Israeli authorities continued these demolitions under the same pretext. The Jerusalem municipality also forces residents to carry out demolitions themselves under the threat of fines or imprisonment. If residents do not comply, they must pay the costs of the vehicles, crews, security forces and workers involved in the municipality’s execution of the demolition order.

In 2022, Silwanic documented 140 demolitions across various towns and neighborhoods in Jerusalem.¹⁴² In 2023, 209 structures were demolished, 68 of which occurred during the war.¹⁴³

In 2022, the number of demolition orders reached 984, while 521 building permit applications were submitted to the Jerusalem municipality. Of these, 509 were rejected for purely political reasons. A total of 22,389 homes in Jerusalem are under threat of demolition, placing about 124 thousand Jerusalemites at risk of forced displacement. Additionally, 1,380 residents in the Sheikh Jarrah and Batn al-Hawa neighborhoods face the danger of ethnic cleansing, following Israeli court rulings that mandate their expulsion in favor of settler associations.¹⁴⁴

According to figures from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA-oPt), the number of structures demolished over the past six years is as follows:

Table 6/3: Demolished Structures in Jerusalem 2018–2023¹⁴⁵

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Numbers	178	208	178	181	144	229

Adding the above figures to the 1,352 structures demolished between 2000 and 2017,¹⁴⁶ the total number of structures demolished by the Israeli authorities in Jerusalem from 2000 to 2023 amounts to 2,470, primarily consisting mostly of residential buildings.

5. Confiscation and Seizure of Jerusalemites' Properties and Real Estate

The Israeli attempts to control the lands and real estate of Jerusalemites continued. In 2022 and 2023, Israeli authorities escalated the targeting of families in Sheikh Jarrah and various neighborhoods in Silwan, as highlighted in this chapter. This indicates that the authorities employ various tools to confiscate properties from Jerusalemites and harass them.

Settlers seize Palestinian properties and homes through methods such as the Absentee Property law from 1950, claiming the properties belong to Jews who owned them before the 1948 war, or by purchasing rights, including ownership or disposal rights from protected tenants who lived in the properties before 1967. This latter method has been increasingly used by settlers.

According to Khalil Tufakji, director of the Mapping and Geographic Information Systems Department at the Arab Studies Society, from 1967 until 30/3/2022, Israeli authorities have confiscated over 35% of East Jerusalem land, amounting to 24 km², citing “public interest.” In addition, 87% of the remaining area is categorized as green land, prohibiting construction or confiscation for streets. Thus, only 13% of land is allocated for construction for Jerusalemites.¹⁴⁷

The Israeli Ministry of Justice has started registering ownership of large tracts of land belonging to Islamic endowments and other Palestinians in the so-called “archaeological park” south of *al-Aqsa* Mosque. This is part of a land registration and settlement project initiated by the Israeli government in mid-2018 with a budget of about \$15.5 million, as part of its five-year plan. The project aims to register 50% of the lands in East Jerusalem by the end of 2021 and finalize the settlement of remaining lands by the end of 2025.¹⁴⁸

In April 2022, the implementation of the project in Sheikh Jarrah resulted in the registration of portions of land in both the eastern and western parts of the neighborhood in favor of Jews who claimed pre-1948 ownership without presenting any evidence or documentation. Meanwhile, residents provided two Turkish title deeds (*tabu*-original ownership documents), which the Israeli court refused to consider.¹⁴⁹

In an attempt to facilitate the confiscation and diversion of Jerusalemites’ properties and real estate to Jews, Israel empowered its courts to grant Palestinians “inheritance injunctions” without referring to Palestinian courts, as a response to the intensive Palestinian campaign to prevent such actions. On 27/7/2022, *Israel Hayom* reported that the decision issued by Yehuda Fox, commander of the Israeli army’s central command,¹⁵⁰ aimed to facilitate sales and protect the Palestinian seller who leaked and sold lands and properties to Jews from being prosecuted by the PA. In November 2021, Fox issued military order No. 2081, the reasons for which were unclear at the time. This order granted Israeli courts the authority to issue “inheritance injunctions” to Palestinians living in WB who sought them. This order was kept secret until recently due to “political calculations.”¹⁵¹

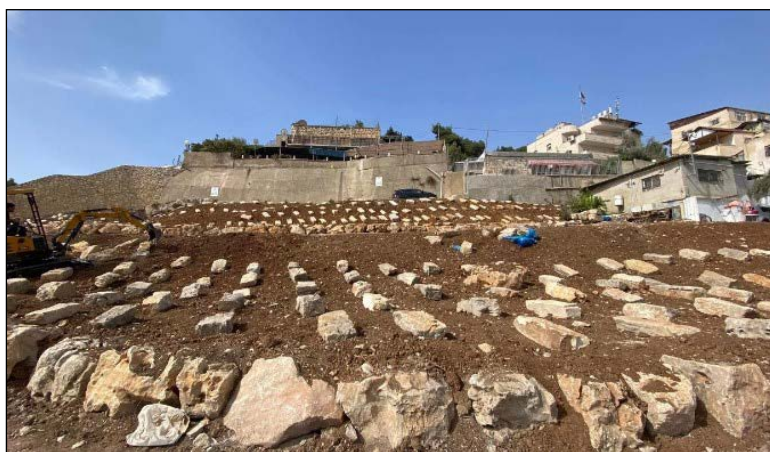
a. Land Confiscation Through Fictitious Cemeteries and Biblical Parks

Israeli authorities have used claims of the existence of Jewish cemeteries in various Jerusalem neighborhoods as a means to control land and reserve it for settlement development. Settler associations have worked for years to place fake

graves in many areas of Silwan, alleging they were Jewish burial sites undergoing rehabilitation. More than 50 fictitious graves have been placed by Israeli authorities north of the town. Additionally, hundreds of donums of Jerusalem land have been confiscated to establish seven biblical parks, spanning from the towns of Silwan and Jabal al-Mukaber in the south, to al-Issawiyah and Mount Scopus in the north, Ras al-Amud and al-Tur in the east, and Solomon's Pool in the west.¹⁵²

Jerusalem data reveals that biblical parks and fake cemeteries established by Israel occupy more than 5 thousand donums of land in the city. Israeli authorities began placing fake graves in 1978, and by November 2022, a total of 12,800 fake graves had been planted around *al-Aqsa*. Of these, 32% are located in Silwan, south of the Mosque, including 935 in Wadi al-Rababa neighborhood, with over 50 are newly added graves in that area.¹⁵³

Fake Jewish Graves in Jerusalem to Seize Vacant Land for Settlement Expansion



b. Revocation of Jerusalemites' Blue ID Cards

Since occupying Jerusalem in 1967, Israel has consistently worked to alter the holy city's features with the aim of Judaizing it, erasing its identity and diminishing the Arab, Islamic and Christian presence. Various policies and measures have been implemented against the city and its residents. One of the most prominent strategies is the displacement of Palestinians, as successive Israeli governments strive to establish a new reality, where Jews form the majority in Jerusalem.



The academic report prepared by the PLO Negotiations Affairs Department confirms that the Israeli authorities withdrew more than 14 thousand ID cards from Jerusalemites between 1967 and 2009, impacting more than 20% of Palestinian families in Jerusalem. Between 2006 and 2008 alone, 4,577 ID cards were revoked, marking a 50% increase in total withdrawals. Israeli statistics indicate plans to increase the number of settlers to half a million, leaving only 70–80 thousand Palestinians, which would represent 22% of the population.¹⁵⁴

According to PCBS, data on the confiscation and revocation of Jerusalemite ID cards are largely based on announcements from the Israeli Ministry of Interior, which have reported 14,701 revoked cards between 1967 and 2020. However, this figure includes IDs of heads of families, meaning the IDs of individuals associated with withdrawn cards are also revoked, resulting in a much higher number of individuals affected.¹⁵⁵ Jerusalem affairs specialist Fakhri Abu Diab asserts that about 20 thousand Jerusalemites have had their IDs withdrawn and have been completely deported from Jerusalem since the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967 until 19/12/2022, with this policy increasing significantly in the 1990s.¹⁵⁶

c. Targeting Education in Jerusalem

Several authorities oversee education in Jerusalem. Some schools are affiliated with the Israeli Ministry of Education, while others are private institutions, many of which follow the Israeli curriculum. The PA curriculum is implemented in schools run by the PA, the Jerusalem Awqaf Department and UNRWA. Since 1948, and especially following the 1967 occupation, Israel has aimed to erase Palestinian and Arab identity.¹⁵⁷

This fragmentation of educational authorities has allowed Israeli authorities to single out each group separately and impose more arbitrary measures, further Israelizing education in Jerusalem. The education system faces three main challenges, the first being high dropout rates due to the economic conditions faced by Jerusalemites and the targeting of Palestinian schools and students. Statistics show that 32% of Palestinian students in occupied Jerusalem do not complete the 12 years of schooling, compared to about 1.5% of Jewish students.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, the dropout rate among Jerusalemite students exceeds 13% each year, whereas only 1% of students in Israeli schools in western Jerusalem drop out.¹⁵⁹

The second challenge is the inability of Palestinian schools teaching the Palestinian curriculum to address the classroom shortage. According to the Israeli organizations Ir Amim and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, there was a shortage of about 2,500 classrooms in occupied Jerusalem for the 2021/2022 school year. In contrast, the Israeli authorities provide extensive support and funding to schools that adopt or align with the Israeli curriculum.¹⁶⁰

The third challenge is overcrowding in Jerusalem's schools, a result of the Israeli authorities' neglectful policies. A report by Faisal Husseini Foundation in August 2022 revealed that schools under the Palestinian umbrella have the capacity for 31,500 students but currently serve 45,500. This necessitates the addition of 560 classrooms to accommodate the excess of 14 thousand students, along with 80 classrooms each year to address the annual increase of two thousand students.¹⁶¹

Following calls from the Parents' Union and various legal committees and institutions, the Israeli Supreme Court issued several rulings mandating the Ministry of Education to address classroom shortages. In response, the Ministry began purchasing educational services from private schools, compensating them on a per-student basis. This approach benefited Israeli authorities by incentivizing private schools to accept government funding, which was initially unconditional, allowing them to plan and budget accordingly. Consequently, 98% of private schools now receive Israeli funding, making them susceptible to infiltration and Israelization efforts, especially given the lack of support from the PA.¹⁶²

The Jerusalem municipality has been constructing new, modern schools under the Ministry of Education that adopt the Israeli curriculum. The number of municipal schools has risen from 54 in the 2011/2012 academic year to 92 available for registration in the 2022/2023 academic year. This approach has proven to be the simplest way to expand the Israeli curriculum without facing the conflicts associated with transitioning established schools from the Palestinian curriculum, which has been in place for decades.¹⁶³

To reinforce Israelization, the five-year plan for 2018–2023 was approved, followed by a subsequent five-year plan for 2023–2028. These two major initiatives target East Jerusalem, ostensibly aimed at its development and reducing social and economic disparities within the city. However, they are intended to penetrate its demographic, geographic, economic and cultural structures. Both plans placed



special emphasis on the education and higher education sectors. Funding for education in the first plan was 445 million shekels (about \$120 million), which nearly doubled in the second plan to 800 million shekels (about \$216 million). This funding was allocated to promote the Israeli curriculum in schools, Hebrew language education, extracurricular activities and higher education. However, the higher education component was removed from the latest plan due to objections from Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who cited concerns about the alleged radicalization of Arab students in universities.¹⁶⁴

One of the primary objectives of the initial plan was to integrate 90% of Jerusalemite students into the Israeli education system “Bagrut.” However, this effort failed, with the highest conversion rate reaching only 21% in the 2019/2020 academic year. Recognizing that this approach was ineffective, new strategies were implemented, including promoting a distorted Palestinian curriculum that is as problematic as the Israeli curriculum itself, mandating its use in both municipal and private schools. In the last two years, Israeli authorities have demonstrated unprecedented rigor in monitoring the curriculum used in schools in East Jerusalem.¹⁶⁵

In June 2022, as part of efforts to tighten Israeli control over the education sector in East Jerusalem, the Finance Committee of the Jerusalem municipality allocated an estimated budget of 514 million shekels (about \$152 million). This includes 18 projects for the construction of classrooms and kindergartens in the city’s villages and neighborhoods, as well as public buildings and infrastructure improvements.¹⁶⁶

Israel continues its assault on education in Jerusalem, employing various methods to impose its own narrative. On 28/7/2022, the Israeli Ministry of Education revoked the permanent operating licenses of six Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem, citing allegations of “dangerous incitement” in their curricula. These schools were granted a temporary licenses for one year, during which they were required to remove the “incitement books.” The decision affected al-Iman Islamic Schools, with its five branches, serving approximately 1,755 students at the primary and secondary levels, as well as al-Ibrahimiéh College, with about 288 secondary-level students.¹⁶⁷ On 26/10/2022, Israeli forces, accompanied by officials from the Israeli Department of Education, raided al-Iman Islamic Schools, searching for books from the Palestinian curriculum.¹⁶⁸

After multiple confrontation, Israeli authorities forced schools in Jerusalem to abandon the Palestinian curriculum, imposing a modified version in its place. The Israeli campaign against schools, bolstered by its control over the city, is driven by the need for financial support, renovation, aid and teacher recruitment. Around 70% of schools fall under the control of the Israeli Ministry of Education: 45% are directly affiliated with it, while 25% receive its funding.¹⁶⁹

In September 2023, at the start of the 2023/2024 academic year, the Israeli Ministry of Education issued official letters to schools in Jerusalem titled “Receipt of Educational Textbooks for an Educational Institution by the Jerusalem Municipality,” threatening to revoke the educational institution’s license if it distributes any curriculum containing “inflammatory content,” referring to Palestinian curriculum books. Additionally, the Israeli police stationed at the gates of *al-Aqsa* Mosque were provided with a list of books prohibited for students of *al-Aqsa* Sharia schools. In August 2023, the Israeli police confiscated “Palestinian curriculum books” being transported to the Our Lady of Pilar College in the Old City of Jerusalem. The Jerusalem municipality also compelled some schools in the city to remove the “Palestinian flag and keffiyeh” from the covers of these books. Israeli forces further raided and searched several schools in Jerusalem.¹⁷⁰

Third: Development of Settlement Expansion in WB

It is challenging to determine the exact number of Jewish settlers in WB, as Israeli statistics intentionally exclude figures for settlers in East Jerusalem and are often vague about the rest of WB to temper potential Palestinian and international backlash against its settlement policies. According to the annual report of the Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission (CWRC) for 2022, the number of settlers in WB was 726,427,¹⁷¹ and the Commission’s 2023 report stated that this number had risen to 730,330.¹⁷² Meanwhile, the Applied Research Institute–Jerusalem (ARIJ) reported on 14/5/2024 that the number of settlers in WB exceeded 954 thousand with 350 thousand (36.7%) residing in East Jerusalem.¹⁷³

Regarding the number of settlements in WB, Israeli authorities, while continuing their aggression against GS, persist in issuing settlement plans aimed at expanding Israeli settlements and seizing vast areas of Palestinian land for



settlement construction and related activities. Additionally, Israel maintains systematic policies that infringe upon Palestinians' rights to land, housing, freedom of movement and freedom of worship. These policies impose restrictions and obstacles intended to perpetuate displacement, promote Judaization, and undermine prospects for establishing an independent Palestinian state. The exact number of Jewish settlements in WB is difficult to ascertain. According to Peace Now, there are 147 officially government-established settlements in WB, excluding East Jerusalem, along with 191 outposts.¹⁷⁴ However, ARIJ estimates the number of settlements in WB at 199.¹⁷⁵ The 2022 annual CWRC report stated that the number of settlements in WB was 176, with 186 outposts,¹⁷⁶ compared to 180 settlements and 194 outposts in 2023.¹⁷⁷

In addition to the intentional ambiguity of Israeli officials, there is also the challenge of distinguishing between what is considered “official” and “unofficial” by Israeli standards. This includes differentiating between outposts that are unstable and those that have taken a permanent status, pending “legalization” by Israel.

Israeli settlements continue to grow and expand. From 2023 to March 2024, orders and tenders were issued for the construction of over 30 thousand settlement units through more than 220 plans, covering an area of about 16 thousand donums. This brings the total area of land confiscated during the same period for settlement construction and nature reserves to over 36 thousand donums. As for settlement outposts, there were 243 outposts as of the end of 2022. By the time the current Israeli government took office in 2023 and until the first quarter of 2024, 26 outposts were established, of which 15 were legalized.¹⁷⁸

ARIJ monitored 58 settlement plans in Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem encompassing 5,760 settlement units across 3,470 donums of Palestinian land by 2023. Furthermore, the Israeli authorities issued 152 settlement plans in WB, including the construction of 21,988 settlement units, industrial zones, bypass roads and public buildings on 9,657 donums of Palestinian land.¹⁷⁹

The CWRC stated in its annual report for 2023 that the Supreme Planning and Building Council of the Israeli Civil Administration held seven sessions to examine and approve master plans aimed at expanding existing settlements or altering the designated uses of previously confiscated lands for colonial settlement purposes. A total of 173 master plans were reviewed, proposing the addition of

18,625 settlement units. This resulted in the approval of 8,137 settlement units, while an additional 10,486 settlement units were submitted for future approval, affecting 17,881 donums of private Palestinian land across various governorates in WB and Jerusalem.¹⁸⁰

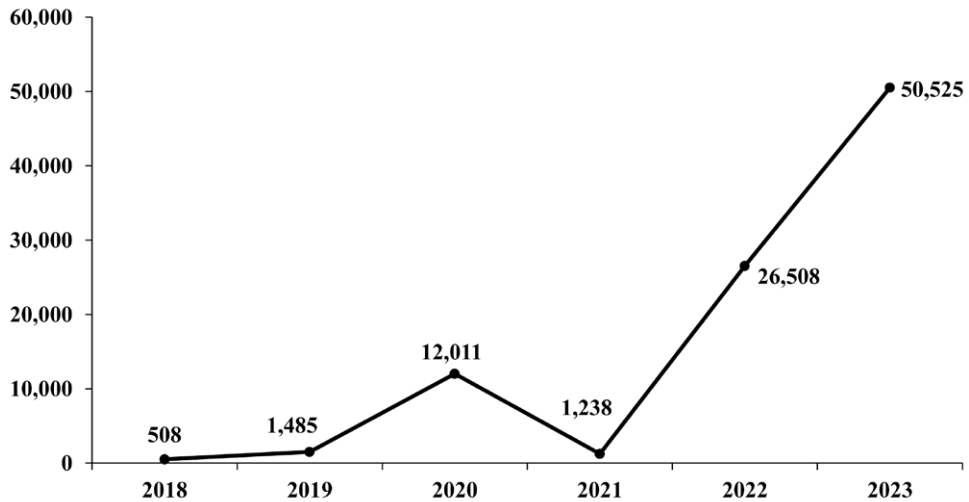
Israeli settler attacks on Palestinian civilians, their property and land in WB have escalated since the current government took office in early 2023, with a significant increase in the frequency of attacks, particularly following the Israeli war on GS. ARIJ documented 2,191 attacks during 2023, of which 707 (about 32%) occurred after 7/10/2023.¹⁸¹ The CWRC documented 2,616 attacks in 2023 compared to 1,187 in 2022.¹⁸²

The year 2023 saw direct targeting of Bedouin communities in WB, leading some to migrate in fear for their lives and those of their family members, while others were forcibly displaced due to repeated, brutal settler attacks on their property. The number of forcibly displaced communities reached 28. Notably, there are 126 Palestinian Bedouin communities in WB, including 33 in East Jerusalem, which Israel classifies as “illegal” under its claimed “sovereignty” over the area.¹⁸³

1. Land Confiscation

The confiscation of Palestinian land in 2023 doubled compared to 2022, with 50,525 donums confiscated in 2023, up from 26,508 donums in 2022. These confiscations occurred under various pretexts, including nature reserve declarations, expropriation orders, seizure orders and the designation of state lands. Additionally, approximately 7,152 donums of land were bulldozed by Israeli authorities and settlers. In 2023, violations and attacks against Palestinian trees by Israeli forces and settlers in WB increased, continuing the trend of previous years. The frequency of these attacks rose further after the Israeli war on GS, with a total of 379 incidents recorded, affecting 21,731 trees—87% of which were olive trees (18,964 trees). Hebron, in southern WB, experienced the highest rate of fruit trees uprooting, with 4,910 trees, followed by Nablus with 4,352 trees and Ramallah with 5,811 trees.¹⁸⁴



Areas of Confiscated Land 2018–2023¹⁸⁵

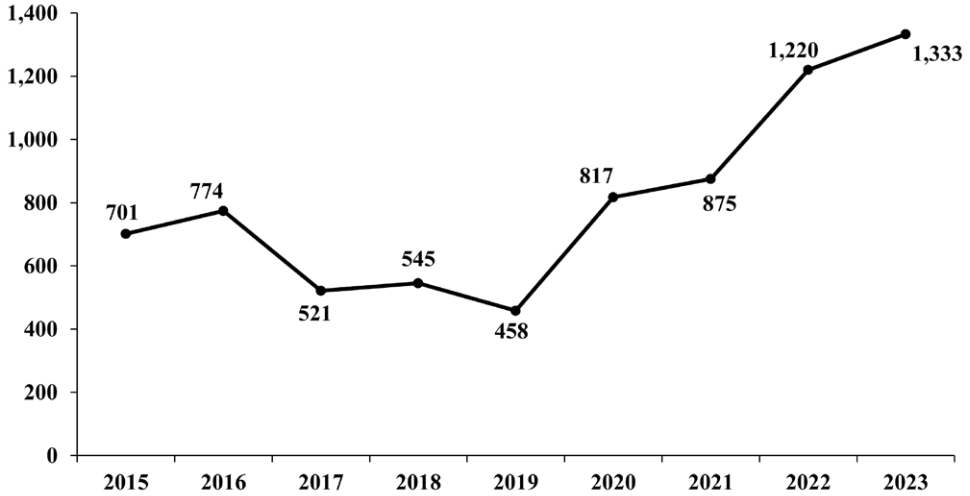
2. Demolition of Palestinian Homes and Structures

According to the CWRC, in 2022, Israeli authorities carried out 378 demolitions targeting 715 structures in WB, including Jerusalem, affecting 1,235 people, 430 of whom were children. Most of these demolitions occurred in the Jerusalem governorate, with 118 demolitions resulting in 178 demolished structures, followed by the Hebron governorate with 76 demolitions and 171 demolished structures. In 2023, Israeli authorities conducted 514 demolitions, targeting 659 structures in WB, including Jerusalem. The majority took place in the Jerusalem governorate, with 171 demolitions and 209 demolished structures, followed by Hebron with 67 demolitions and 82 demolished structures. The 2023 demolitions included inhabited and uninhabited dwellings, dwellings under construction, agricultural facilities, mobile homes (caravans), commercial and industrial structures, as well as water wells.¹⁸⁶

In 2022, Israeli authorities issued 1,220 demolition notices for Palestinian structures, citing a lack of building permits. Most of these were concentrated in the Hebron (400 notices) and Bethlehem (225 notices) governorates. In 2023, the number increased to 1,333 notices, with Hebron (356 notices) and Bethlehem (246 notices) again being the primary targets. The notices largely focused on the South Hebron area, particularly Masafer Yatta, which faces the threat of

forced displacement and population transfer. In Bethlehem governorate, a major settlement plan known as the E2 Plan aims to isolate Palestinian villages and towns while geographically connecting settlements.¹⁸⁷

Increased Distribution of Demolition Notices 2015–2023¹⁸⁸

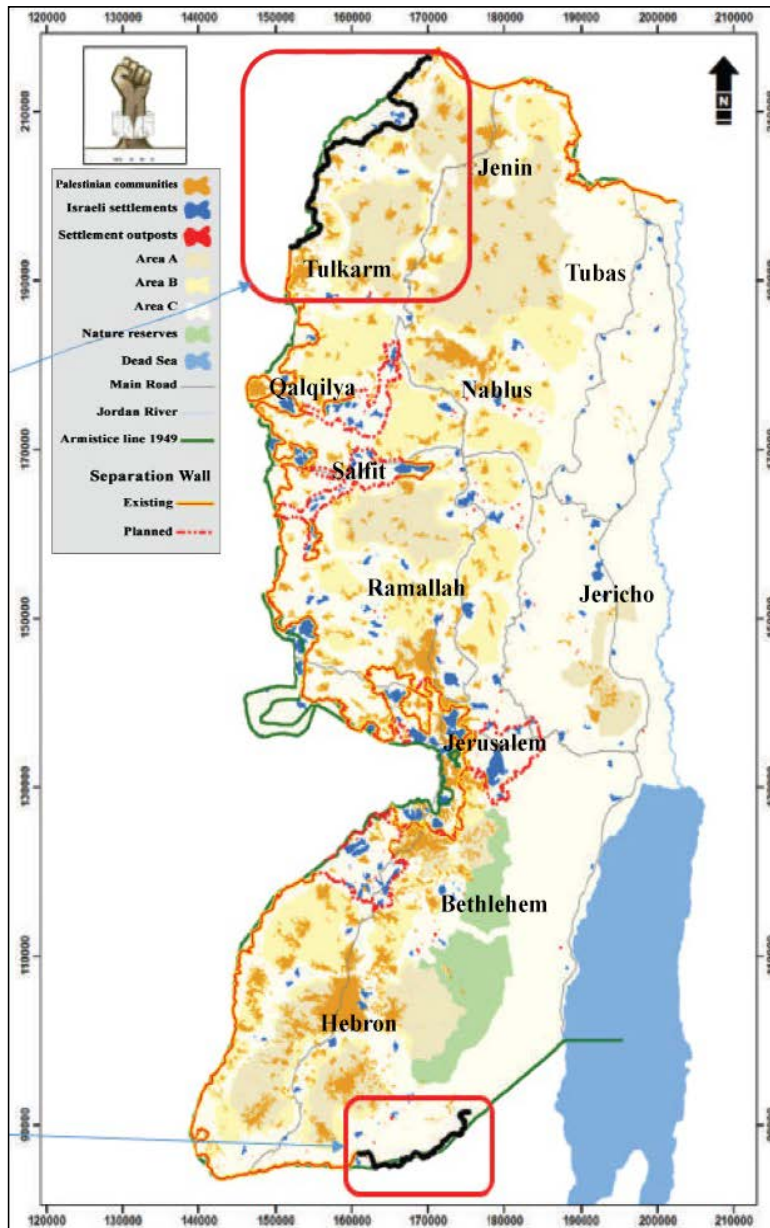


3. The Separation Wall

In the first half of 2022, the Israeli government approved the construction of an additional 67 km of the Separation Wall at a cost of 360 million shekels (about \$107 million).¹⁸⁹ The plan involved building a nine-meter-high concrete wall with advanced technological features in areas Israel identifies as worker passageways, known as “openings” or uncontrolled outlets. In early July 2022, Israeli authorities began building two sections of the Separation Wall. The first, located in the northwestern WB, is an eight-meter-high concrete wall running alongside a metal fence, stretching 45 km from Salim village, west of Jenin, to the area west of Shweika village in Tulkarm governorate. The second section, in the southern WB, extends 22 km from Lisifir village to the area south of Khashm al-Daraj village in the Hebron governorate. Although this section is being constructed on the pretext of “security needs,” but the fact here is that it is being built primarily to isolate Masafer Yatta beyond the Wall, where Israel aims to forcibly displace local communities. Upon completion, the Separation Wall will span 714 km, with 489 km of it already constructed on Palestinian land.¹⁹⁰



Map 2/3: Locations of Sections Under Construction of the Separation Wall in the Northern and Southern WB¹⁹¹



4. Barriers

According to ARIJ, as of 6/10/2023, there were 567 Israeli barriers, including 77 main checkpoints and 490 other obstacles such as earth mounds, cement blocks and iron gates. Following the war on GS on 7/10/2023, an additional 140 checkpoints and barriers were added. These measures aim to isolate and close off Palestinian cities, villages and towns, restricting communication and movement, while preventing Palestinians from using bypass roads, which have become reserved for settlers. A report by the CWRC indicates that the number of permanent and temporary checkpoints rose from 593 in 2022 to 694 in 2023. Due to the arbitrary measures imposed by Israel on Palestinian citizens in WB, over three million Palestinians have become hostages to these restrictions, significantly hindering their movement between cities and towns.¹⁹²

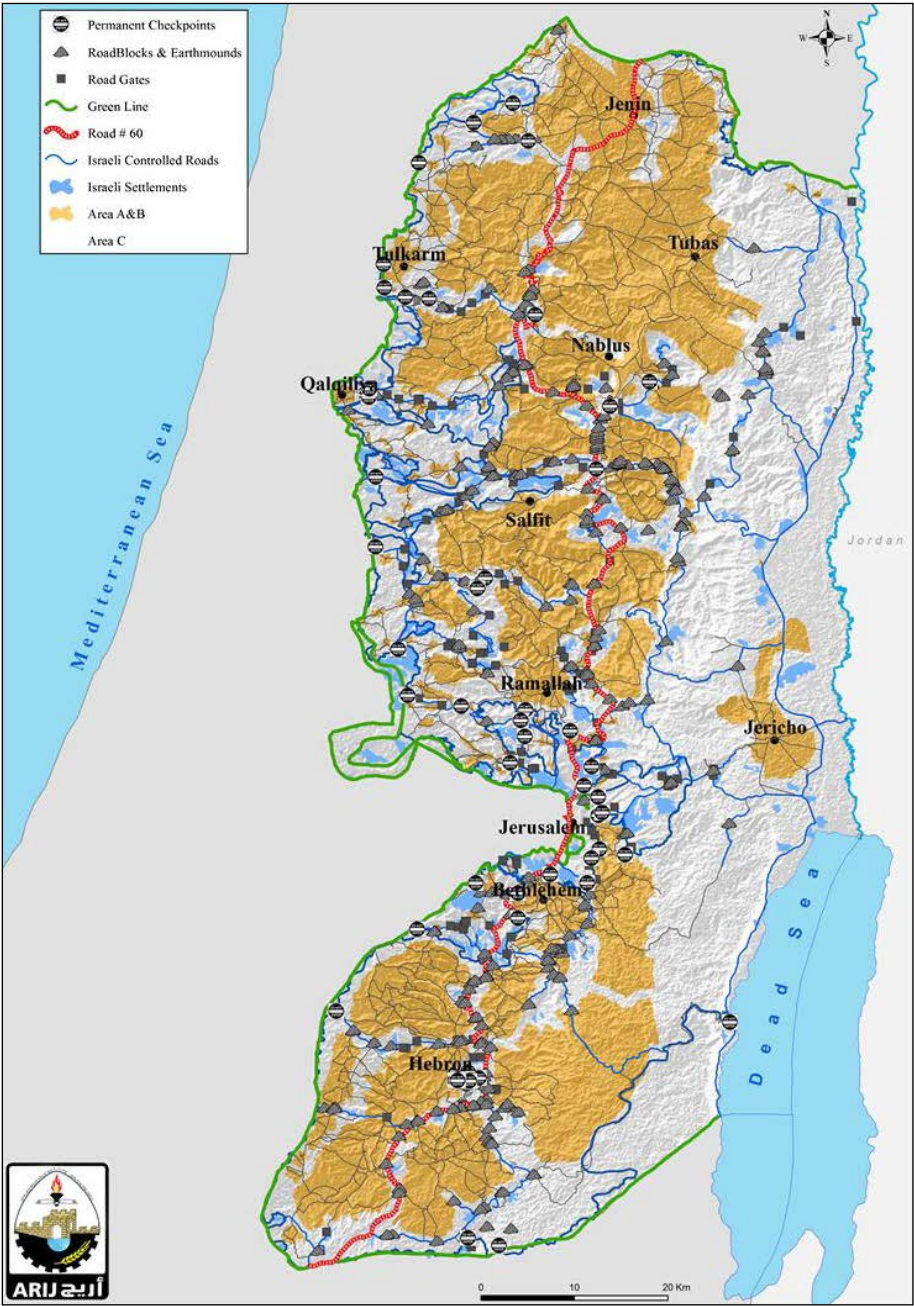
Since 7/10/2023, Israel has barred Palestinian workers from entering the 1948 occupied territories. Furthermore, the Israeli army in WB has increased the number of military checkpoints on roads and at entrances to Palestinian towns and villages, effectively segregating the Palestinian governorates and transforming WB into over 35 isolated areas.¹⁹³

According to UNCTAD's 2022 report, due to "mobility restrictions, Palestinians lose 60 million work hours per year, equivalent to \$274 million," and checkpoints alone cost the WB economy at least 6% of GDP.¹⁹⁴

Table 7/3: Israeli Forces and Settler Violations in WB 2022–2023¹⁹⁵

	2022	2023
Settler attacks	1,187 attacks	2,616 attacks
Cutting, burning or destroying trees	10,291 trees	21,731 trees
Confiscated lands	26,508 donums	50,525 donums
Demolished structures	715 structures	659 structures
Permanent and temporary checkpoints (gates, military or dirt checkpoints)	593 checkpoints and gates	694 checkpoints and gates

Map 3/3: Israeli Checkpoints Established by Israeli Authorities Between Palestinian Governorates Since 7/10/2023, Dividing WB into Ghettos¹⁹⁶



Conclusion

During 2022 and 2023, Israeli plans and policies aimed at exerting more dominance over land and holy sites continued, seeking to resolve key issues and impose new realities. This strategy focused on resolving the conflict without bearing significant costs, while using the aggressive war on GS since 7/10/2023 to divert attention from the ongoing active war in Jerusalem and the rest of the WB.

The influence of the ultra-nationalist religious Zionist movement has become more entrenched in Israeli decision-making, with Temple groups gaining significant sway within official institutions and expanding their presence in the Israeli Knesset. In recent years, these groups have secured ministerial portfolios, leveraging their powers to advance Judaization plans and tighten control over *al-Aqsa* Mosque, Jerusalem and the rest of WB.

At the level of Islamic holy sites, controlling the administration of *al-Aqsa* Mosque was a primary objective during the reporting period. This included increasing the number of settler incursions into *al-Aqsa*, extending the duration of these incursions, and raising the number of groups participating in these actions. Efforts were also made to entrench the temporal and spatial division of the Mosque, undermine the role of the Jerusalem Awqaf Department and promote the strategy of “moral construction of the Temple,” particularly during Jewish holidays and Judaization events that coincided with Islamic occasions and festivals.

The second aspect of Israel’s targeting of *al-Aqsa* Mosque involves ongoing Judaization projects in its vicinity, alongside continued restrictions on restoration operations within the Mosque. Throughout 2022–2023, Israeli authorities advanced several Judaization projects focused on infrastructure around *al-Aqsa* Mosque, notably the cable car project and the completion of the light rail project in Jerusalem, with the first segment expected to be operational by 2028. Additionally, plans have surfaced to expand the Moroccan Gate, which is often used for incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque. To facilitate this, the proposal includes removing the earthen hill and the wooden bridge connecting the Western Wall Plaza to the Moroccan Gate, and constructing a fixed bridge inscribed with biblical phrases.

The third aspect of targeting *al-Aqsa* involves excavations around the external foundation of the Mosque, particularly near the Western Wall and the Umayyad



Palaces. These excavations extend beneath and around *al-Aqsa* Mosque, posing a serious threat to its foundations, as evidenced by visible cracks in the western section of *al-Aqsa* and dust falling from its pillars.

At the level of targeting and displacing Jerusalemites, this battle focused on plans to displace residents of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood and Silwan town through various methods of intimidation and temptation, often backed by legal frameworks imposed by the Israeli authorities. Numerous settlement projects, carried out directly by the Israeli government or through settler organizations like Elad and Ateret Cohanim, were utilized. Furthermore, Israel intensified house demolitions, eviction orders, and arrest and expulsion measures from Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* Mosque, while revoking IDs and imposing the Israeli curriculum in Jerusalem.

At the level of other Islamic holy sites, the policy of Judaizing the Ibrahimi Mosque persisted, with significant excavation operations conducted as part of Israeli plans to alter its archaeological features and complete the “electric elevator” project facilitating settler incursions. During the Israeli war on GS following Operation al-Aqsa Flood, hundreds of mosques were either completely or partially destroyed, including attacks on 24 mosques in Hebron, al-Bireh, Masafer Yatta, Salfit and Beit Safafa.

Regarding Christian holy sites, the diversion of Christian properties and real estate to settler organizations continued through deceptive tactics and fraudulent operations, often under the guise of Israeli Supreme Court decisions. Settlers seized land in al-Hamra, located in al-Ain area of Silwan, which belonged to the Greek Orthodox Monastery. Settler attacks on Christians and Christian clergy in Jerusalem have intensified, including attempts to set fire to the Church of the Prison of Christ in the Old City, as well as the desecration and destruction of Christian graves.

Settlement expansion in Jerusalem continued, with numerous projects and plans launched under the guise of urban development and reducing social and economic disparities among the population. This approach further suffocated Jerusalemites, imposing additional restrictions on movement and urban expansion, while allowing a larger number of settlers to seize real estate and land, effectively encircling Palestinian neighborhoods.

In the rest of WB, Israeli authorities continued to issue settlement plans aimed at expanding Israeli settlements alongside their aggression against GS. These plans involved seizing vast areas of Palestinian land for settlement construction and activities, as well as completing and extending the Separation Wall, building bypass roads, and establishing military checkpoints. This expansion was accompanied by increased restrictions on the movement of Palestinians, the demolition of their homes, the displacement of Bedouin communities and the encouragement of settlers to carry out numerous attacks targeting Palestinian civilians and their properties.

Operation al-Aqsa Flood demonstrated the Palestinian people's commitment to their land and holy sites, showcasing their determination to protect them at any cost. While the extremist Israeli government attempts to mitigate the repercussions of the operation and pursue its plans in various forms, it is increasingly aware of the magnitude of the challenges it faces. These include the growing capabilities of the resistance and the Palestinian people to counter Israeli attempts at Judaization, supported by the Arab and Muslim *Ummah* as well as the free people of the world.



Endnotes

- ¹ Raghda Atmeh, “Temple groups from marginal and small to ruling in Israel,” Independent Arabia, 25/4/2024.
- ² Final results of the Israeli elections: Netanyahu’s far-right coalition wins majority, Aljazeera.net, 3/11/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³ Raghda Atmeh, “Temple groups from marginal and small to ruling in Israel,” Independent Arabia, 25/4/2024.
- ⁴ Al-Aqsa 20 Years of Israeli Incursions, Anadolu Agency, 9/4/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵ 2022 was the worst year in terms of occupation violations at al-Aqsa Mosque More than 48 thousand settlers stormed the al-Aqsa Mosque, Aljazeera.net, 30/12/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁶ More than 48 thousand settlers stormed al-Aqsa Mosque during 2023, Anadolu Agency, 1/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ⁷ In 2023, 258 incursions into al-Aqsa and 704 prohibitions of the call to prayer at the “Ibrahimi” [Mosque], Anadolu Agency, 21/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ⁸ Palestinian “Awqaf”: Al-Aqsa was stormed 262 times in 2022, Anadolu Agency, 8/1/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁹ Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2022, site of the Palestine Information Center—Mo3ta, 3/1/2023, <https://mo3ta.ps/?p=3932>
- ¹⁰ Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2023, Mo3ta, 2/1/2024, <https://mo3ta.ps/?p=8714>
- ¹¹ Storming al-Aqsa between Sharon and Ben-Gvir.. What has changed in 22 years?, Aljazeera.net, 3/1/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹² Jerusalem in 2022, site of Wadi Hilweh Information Center—Silwanic, 31/12/2022, <https://www.silwanic.net/article/news/78762/jerusalem-in-2022>
- ¹³ They insulted the Prophet and raised the Israeli flag.. Details of the storming of al-Aqsa by two thousand settlers on the anniversary of the “Destruction of the Temple,” Aljazeera.net, 7/8/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴ Monitoring Israeli violations against al-Aqsa Mosque during October 2022, WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=FMD0sea28165226529aFMD0se (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵ 1,797 settlers desecrated its courtyards.. This is how the Jewish Hanukkah passed by al-Aqsa Mosque, Aljazeera.net, 26/12/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶ Jerusalem Reports No. 149, month 4, 2023, site of Palestine Scholar Association, 4/5/2023, <https://palscholars.org/>
- ¹⁷ Jerusalem Reports No. 151, month 5, 2023, Palestine Scholar Association, 1/6/2023.
- ¹⁸ Hamas calls it a religious war.. Netanyahu holds his cabinet meeting under al-Aqsa and a large number of people storm its courtyards, Aljazeera.net, 21/5/2023 (in Arabic); and PM Netanyahu’s Remarks at the Start of the Festive Cabinet Meeting in the Western Wall Tunnels in Honor of Jerusalem Day, site of Prime Minister’s Office, Israel, 21/5/2023, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/spoke-start210523>
- ¹⁹ The anniversary of the destruction of the Temple Mount.. The use of Jewish narratives to fuel extremism and violate Islamic holy sites, Aljazeera.net, 27/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁰ Storming al-Aqsa... Extremist groups are preparing to bring thousands of settlers to the Temple Mount and calls for a sit-in (video), site of Mubasher Aljazeera.net, 26/7/2023, <https://www.aljazeeramubasher.net/>

- ²¹ 164 detainees and nearly 7,000 visitors to al-Aqsa Mosque.. Dangerous escalation in violations during July, site of Al Qastal, 1/8/2023, <https://alqastal.info/>
- ²² “Jewish Holidays” are darker days for al-Aqsa...Al Qastal Network documents the events in Jerusalem in September, Al Qastal, 30/9/2023.
- ²³ September 2023 in the city of Jerusalem, Silwanic, 1/10/2023, <https://www.silwanic.net/article/news/79090/september-2023-in-the-city-of-jerusalem>
- ²⁴ “Jewish Holidays” are darker days for al-Aqsa...Al Qastal Network documents the events in Jerusalem in September, Al Qastal, 30/9/2023.
- ²⁵ Monthly report on Zionist attacks on the city of Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque for the month of September (9) 2023, Palestine Scholar Association, 5/10/2024.
- ²⁶ October 2023 in the city of Jerusalem, Silwanic, 1/11/2023, <https://www.silwanic.net/article/news/79129/october-2023-in-the-city-of-jerusalem>
- ²⁷ In 5 days.. This is what al-Aqsa witnessed during Hanukkah, Aljazeera.net, 14/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸ The year 2023 in the city of Jerusalem, Silwanic, 1/1/2024, <https://www.silwanic.net/article/news/79216/the-year-2023-in-the-city-of-jerusalem>
- ²⁹ In 5 days.. This is what al-Aqsa witnessed during Hanukkah, Aljazeera.net, 14/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁰ Guy Ezra, 50 Rabbis went up to the Temple Mount: “Rabbinical permit stamp,” site of Srugim, 4/4/2022, <https://www.srugim.co.il/?p=661541> (in Hebrew)
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Occupation forces withdraw from al-Aqsa courtyards after lawyers’ privileges expire, *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 19/4/2022.
- ³³ Right-wing MK Ben Gvir storms al-Aqsa Mosque, Anadolu Agency, 31/3/2022 (in Arabic); The most prominent violations against al-Aqsa Mosque during May 2022, Wafa Info, 1/6/2022, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=qCXHnQa28105266090aqCXHnQ (in Arabic); Monitoring Israeli violations against al-Aqsa Mosque during August 2022, Wafa Info, 1/9/2022, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=de39Nna28127156409ade39Nn (in Arabic); Ben Gvir storms al-Aqsa Mosque and the occupation police prevent worshipers from entering, Al-Mayadeen Channel, 22/9/2022, (in Arabic); and Monitoring Israeli violations against al-Aqsa Mosque during October 2022, Wafa Info, 1/11/2022, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=FMD0sea28165226529aFMD0se (in Arabic)
- ³⁴ 22 raids on al-Aqsa and 50 bans on the call to prayer in the Ibrahimi Mosque last January, Quds Press, 2/2/2022.
- ³⁵ Settlers perform Talmudic rituals and blow the Shofar near al-Aqsa Mosque, *Alghad* newspaper, Amman, 23/9/2022, <https://alghad.com>; In the video, a member of the Knesset blows the Shofar in the courtyards of al-Aqsa Mosque, Shehab News Agency, 2/10/2022, <https://shehabnews.com/p/108287>; and In the video, after the encirclement of Jerusalem... Settlers storm al-Aqsa in groups, site of al-Manar TV, 5/10/2022, <https://almanar.com.lb/10006581>
- ³⁶ Israeli settlers storm the courtyards of the blessed al-Aqsa Mosque, *Al-Youm al-Sabi’* newspaper, Cairo, 7/11/2022, <https://www.youm7.com>
- ³⁷ MK Tzvika vogel storms al-Aqsa and calls for changing the status quo in the mosque, site of Al Quds International Institution (QII), 21/12/2022, <https://qii.media/index.php?s=news&cat=7&id=41019&skw=%D8%B4%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%88%D9%86>
- ³⁸ Under police protection and with the participation of a member of the Knesset... 249 settlers storm al-Aqsa Mosque, Aljazeera.net, 22/12/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³⁹ The year 2023 in the city of Jerusalem, Silwanic, 1/1/2024.
- ⁴⁰ Jerusalem 5800.. A Judaization Project Through Tourism, site of Taghrib, 4/3/2017, <https://www.taghribnews.com/ar/>; and see site of Jerusalem 5800, <https://www.jerusalem5800.com/>



- ⁴¹ Inappropriate pictures and dancing in the courtyards of al-Aqsa Mosque.. Who desecrated the sanctity of the place and provoked the feelings of Muslims?, Aljazeera.net, 25/8/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁴² Maha Shahwan, Why does the occupation promote “tourism” in al-Aqsa?, site of Noon Post, 8/9/2022, <https://www.noonpost.com/content/45137>
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Bkeirat warns of the occupation’s attempts to diminish the Islamic presence in al-Aqsa, PIC, 18/1/2023, <https://palinfo.com/news/2023/01/18/302148> (in Arabic)
- ⁴⁵ Jerusalem Reports No. 142, 2022, Palestine Scholar Association, 9/1/2023.
- ⁴⁶ Arrests, deportations and work bans.. Al-Aqsa Mosque faces a severe shortage of guards, Aljazeera.net, 12/1/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Israeli occupation authorities ban senior Muslim official from entering al-Aqsa Mosque for 6 months, WAFA, 3/4/2022, <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/128677>
- ⁴⁹ Deportation orders from Jerusalem and al-Aqsa... Arrests, Silwanic, 20/6/2023, <https://www.silwanic.net/article/news/78983/deportation-orders-from-jerusalem-and-al-aqsa-arrests>
- ⁵⁰ “Jerusalem Awqaf: Israeli police disrupt repair of al-Aqsa’s sound system, Arab 48, 19/9/2022.
- ⁵¹ The occupation prevents the restoration of al-Aqsa, *Addustour* newspaper, Amman, 10/7/2023, <https://www.addustour.com>
- ⁵² Abdullah Ma’ruf, Israeli ambitions to run al-Aqsa Mosque, Aljazeera.net, 22/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵³ Ziad Bhies et al., *Eye on al-Aqsa: An Annual Documentary Report Monitoring Israeli Aggressions on al-Aqsa Mosque and the Interaction with it, between 1/8/2022 until 1/8/2023*, Report no. 17 (Beirut: QII, 21/8/2023), <https://qii.media/index.php?s=9&cat=51&id=1948> (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁴ Jerusalem in 2022, Silwanic, 31/12/2022.
- ⁵⁵ The year 2023 in the city of Jerusalem, Silwanic, 1/1/2024.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.; and The occupation removes a Jerusalemite from al-Aqsa and obstructs the work of Waqf employees, PIC, 29/3/2022, <https://palinfo.com/news/2022/03/29/112246/> (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁷ The occupation renewed the deportation of Hanadi Halawani from al-Aqsa for 6 months, site of Al-Resalah.net, 19/6/2022, <https://alresalah.ps/p/262457>
- ⁵⁸ After 15 years of deportation.. Sheikh Raed Salah prays at al-Aqsa, PIC, 6/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁹ Ali Ibrahim, A Weekly Reading of Developments in Jerusalem, Research and Information Department, QII, 25/5/2022, <https://qii.media/index.php?s=items&cat=65&id=1707>
- ⁶⁰ Sue Surkes, High Court rejects petitions against plan to build cable car to Jerusalem’s Old City, The Times of Israel, 15/5/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/high-court-rejects-petitions-against-plan-to-build-cable-car-to-jerusalems-old-city/>
- ⁶¹ Ibid.
- ⁶² Moshe Gilad, Floating Over Jerusalem Without Ever Seeing the City’s Arab Residents, 9/7/2017, *Haaretz* newspaper, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2017-07-09/ty-article-magazine/.premium/floating-over-jerusalem-without-ever-seeing-the-citys-arab-residents/0000017f-e5be-dc7e-adff-f5bf1e1e0000>
- ⁶³ The occupation is considering a project that will change the face of Jerusalem, Aljazeera.net, 29/1/2019. (in Arabic)
- ⁶⁴ Site of Light Rail, <https://jet.gov.il/ar/light-rail>
- ⁶⁵ Jerusalem light rail tender - the blue line comes out, site of Ministry of Transport and Road Safety, Israel, 10/8/2022, <https://www.gov.il/ar/pages/bids-tender-establishment>

- ⁶⁶ The so-called “Temple” groups reveal their upcoming plans: Expanding the Moroccan Gate to increase incursions, Quds News Network, 27/7/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁶⁷ Al-Aqsa floor cracks due to occupation excavations, *Alghad*, 26/6/2022.
- ⁶⁸ Jerusalem Awqaf warns of the occupation’s excavations in the vicinity of al-Aqsa: “The foundations of the mosque are exposed,” Arab 48, 23/6/2023.
- ⁶⁹ Al-Aqsa floor cracks due to occupation excavations, *Alghad*, 26/6/2022.
- ⁷⁰ New excavations and tunnel uncovered near al-Aqsa, site of M3raj, 2/4/2022, <https://m3raj.net/?p=2083>
- ⁷¹ *Al-Ayyam*, Ramallah, 1/3/2022.
- ⁷² *Al-Ayyam*, Ramallah, 14/6/2022.
- ⁷³ Jerusalem in 2022. Unprecedented assaults and a never-ending existential struggle, Palestinian Press Agency (Safa), 27/12/2022, <https://safa.ps/>
- ⁷⁴ *Al-Ayyam*, Ramallah, 24/5/2022.
- ⁷⁵ Jerusalem in 2022.. New unlawful attacks strengthen Israeli control over the Ibrahimi Mosque, Aljazeera.net, 24/2/2020. (in Arabic)
- ⁷⁶ Petition by Emek Shaveh and Palestinians against plan to build lift at Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron has been Rejected, site of Emek Shaveh, 30/11/2020, <https://emekshaveh.org/en/tomb-of-the-patriarch-loss/>
- ⁷⁷ The occupation starts implementing a ventilation project that includes installing an electric elevator in the Ibrahimi Mosque, Wafa, 10/8/2021, <https://www.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/28928> (in Arabic)
- ⁷⁸ Hebron Reconstruction Committee: The Electric Elevator is an Israeli Plan to Judaize the Ibrahimi Mosque, site of Russia Today (RT), 16/8/2021, <http://arabic.rt.com> (in Arabic)
- ⁷⁹ Occupation and settler practices besieging the Ibrahimi Mosque, *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 15/3/2024; and Aljazeera.net, 25/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁰ Israeli attacks on the Ibrahimi Mosque in 2022, Wafa Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=m7U46xa28053871428am7U46x (in Arabic); and Israeli attacks on the Ibrahimi Mosque in 2023, Wafa Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=wrzmyya28214717685awrzmyy (in Arabic)
- ⁸¹ The Ministry of Awqaf issues its annual report on Israeli violations against holy sites, site of Palestinian Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, 30/1/2024, <https://www.pal-wakf.ps/ministry-news/1609.html>
- ⁸² Ibid.
- ⁸³ Ibid.
- ⁸⁴ Protest tent against the removal of the Qassam cemetery in Haifa, *Asharq al-Awsat*, 10/1/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁵ In response to the desecration of the Qassam cemetery: Call for a Friday vigil, site of Mawteni 48, 8/2/2022, <https://www.mawteni48.com/archives/190212>
- ⁸⁶ The occupation prevents the restoration of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam cemetery buildings in Haifa, PIC, 4/1/2023, <https://palinfo.com/news/2023/01/04/300710/> (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁷ Palestinian mobilization to stop the occupation’s plans for the Qassam Cemetery in Haifa, Felesteen Online, 10/2/2022.
- ⁸⁸ Church cries for help as Christians are driven from the Holy Land: Fears the faith will be little more than a ‘museum piece’ in Jerusalem after followers of Jesus fell by two thirds to 10,000 since 1948, site of MailOnline, 25/12/2022, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11558827/Church-cries-help-Christians-driven-Holy-Land.html>

- ⁸⁹ The table covering 2014–2019 was prepared based on *Jerusalem Facts and Trends* reports issued throughout 2012–2021.
For 2020, see CBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2021*, no. 72, table 2.14, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2021/2.shnatonpopulation/st02_14.pdf; For 2021, see CBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2022*, no. 73, table 2.14, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2022/2.shnatonpopulation/st02_14.pdf
For 2022, see CBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2023*, no. 74, table 2.14, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2023/2.shnatonpopulation/st02_14.pdf
- ⁹⁰ Sue Surkes, Supreme Court upholds Greek church sales to far-right group, ending legal battle, *The Times of Israel*, 9/6/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/supreme-court-upholds-greek-church-sales-to-far-right-group-ending-legal-battle/>
- ⁹¹ Fictitious Companies to Control Church Property in Jerusalem, *Asharq al-Awsat*, 1/7/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁹² Jacob Magid, In 1st, Israel advancing plan to expand national park onto E. Jerusalem church lands, *The Times of Israel*, 20/2/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-1st-israel-advancing-plan-to-expand-national-park-onto-e-jerusalem-church-lands/>
- ⁹³ Settlers seize part of Petra Hotel in occupied Jerusalem, *Arabi21*, 28/3/2022.
- ⁹⁴ Settlers attack Christian clerics near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, *Alquds*, 12/4/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁹⁵ Israeli court allows 4 thousand people to participate in Shabbat of Light celebrations in Jerusalem, *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 21/4/2022.
- ⁹⁶ Settlers attack the Church of the “Holy Spirit” in Jerusalem, *Alghad*, 7/6/2022.
- ⁹⁷ Israeli Center: Ultra-Orthodox Jews Assault 140 Monks in Jerusalem Under the Watchful Eye of Occupation Police, *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 24/7/2022.
- ⁹⁸ In Pictures: Settlers Demolish Ancient Walls of the Petra Hotel in Jerusalem, *Shehab News Agency*, 2/12/2022, <https://shehabnews.com/p/112053>
- ⁹⁹ Settlers seize land belonging to the Greek Orthodox Monastery in Silwan, *Arab 48*, 27/12/2022.
- ¹⁰⁰ “Report of Israeli Occupation Crimes in Jerusalem Governorate 2023,” site of Jerusalem Governorate, pp. 33–34, <https://www.jerusalemgov.ps/userfiles/file/t2023/Jerusalem%20Governorate%20report%20on%20the%20most%20prominent%20crimes%20of%20the%20occupation%20%202023.pdf>
- ¹⁰¹ Summary of Israeli targeted and escalating crimes and systematic aggression against Christian Holy Sites and Palestinian Christians in 2023, site of Higher Presidential Committee of Churches Affairs in Palestine, 22/1/2024, <https://www.hcc.ps/archives/52221?lang=en>
- ¹⁰² *Aljazeera.net*, 25/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁰³ Planning Administration, City Engineer and City Planning Department, “Report No. 4: The Proposed Plan and the Main Planning Policies,” prepared for the Jerusalem Municipality, 2004, Chapter 7.
- ¹⁰⁴ See Maya Choshen and Michal Korach, *Jerusalem Facts & Trends 2023* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Policy Studies, 2023), p. 21, <https://jerusalemcenter.org.il>
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁶ Maya Choshen and Michal Korach, *Jerusalem Facts & Trends 2021* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Policy Studies, 2021), pp. 15–16, https://jerusalemcenter.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Pub_564_facts_and_trends_2021_eng.pdf; Maya Choshen and Michal Korach, *Jerusalem Facts & Trends 2022* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Policy Studies, 2022), p. 18; Maya Choshen and Michal Korach, *Jerusalem Facts & Trends 2023*; and CBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2023*, no. 74, table 2.14, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2023/2.shnatonpopulation/st02_14.pdf

- ¹⁰⁷ CBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2023*, no. 74, table 2.14, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2023/2.shnatonpopulation/st02_14.pdf; and Eid Mubarak! Muslims around the world mark Eid al-Adha, *The Jerusalem Post* newspaper, 27/6/2023, <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-747936>
- ¹⁰⁸ Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood: Why does it confuse the Israeli occupation?, Al-Mayadeen Channel, 17/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁰⁹ New settlement plans to strangle Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood threatened with displacement, site of Palestinian Refugees Portal, 22/10/2022, <https://refugeesps.net/p/22750>
- ¹¹⁰ Settlers storm the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood led by the extremist “Ben-Gvir,” Wafa, 10/1/2022, <https://www.wafa.ps/pages/details/39436> (in Arabic)
- ¹¹¹ Is Ben-Gvir pushing for another explosion in Jerusalem?, *Alghad*, 14/2/2022.
- ¹¹² Al-Aqsa preacher: Settlers insult Prophet Muhammad as they storm al-Aqsa Mosque, site of Alkofiya TV, 29/5/2022, <https://alkofiya.tv/post/145116>
- ¹¹³ Council of Torah Rabbis calls for strengthening Jewish presence in Sheikh Jarrah, PIC, 17/2/2022, <https://palinfo.com/news/2022/02/17/65289/> (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁴ Ben-Gvir invites Zelensky and Putin to negotiate in his “office” in Sheikh Jarrah, Sama, 12/3/2022.
- ¹¹⁵ Zena Al Tahhan, Israeli forces demolish Palestinian home in Sheikh Jarrah, Al Jazeera, 19/1/2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/19/israeli-forces-demolish-palestinian-home-in-sheikh-jarrah>; Israeli occupation forces demolish the house of Salhiyeh family in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem and assault those present there, *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 19/1/2022; and Occupation demolishes Salhiyeh’s home in Sheikh Jarrah and arrests 26 of his family and neighbors, Quds Press, 19/1/2022.
- ¹¹⁶ Nir Hasson, Israel Moves to Register Lands Near Al-Aqsa Using Funds Earmarked for Palestinians, *Haaretz*, 26/6/2022, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2022-06-26/ty-article/israel-moves-to-register-lands-near-al-aqsa-using-funds-earmarked-for-palestinians/00000181-a154-d19e-ab99-f575f89f0000>
- ¹¹⁷ Haaretz: Israeli occupation begins registering land around al-Aqsa Mosque under Jewish ownership, Sama, 27/6/2022.
- ¹¹⁸ Israeli Violations in Jerusalem City: July 2022, site of Europeans for al-Quds Organization, 4/8/2022, <https://eu4alquds.org/?p=1116>
- ¹¹⁹ 3 plans to expand settlement projects in Sheikh Jarrah, Arab 48, 20/10/2022. See also The Three Israeli Settlement Rings in and around East Jerusalem: Supplanting Palestinian Jerusalem, site of Jerusalem Story, 22/10/2022, <https://www.jerusalemstory.com/en/article/three-israeli-settlement-rings-and-around-east-jerusalem-supplanting-palestinian-jerusalem>
- ¹²⁰ Demolition Report in Jerusalem A new chapter in the Nakba, displacement and oppression, Felesteen Online, 27/5/2022.
- ¹²¹ Jerusalem’s most targeted neighborhood for settlement.. Why is the Silwan operation sensitive for Israelis?, Aljazeera.net, 28/1/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹²² Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2023, Mo3ta, 2/1/2024.
- ¹²³ Al-Qastal documents the occupation’s violations in Jerusalem in 2022, Al Qastal, 1/1/2023.
- ¹²⁴ Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2023, Mo3ta, 2/1/2024.
- ¹²⁵ On a report by the Mo3ta Center: 176 martyrs in 35,520 violations of the occupation in the West Bank and Jerusalem during 2022, Felesteen Online, 5/1/2023.
- ¹²⁶ Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2023, Mo3ta, 2/1/2024.
- ¹²⁷ The occupation media reveals the formation of settler gangs in Jerusalem, PIC, 18/7/2022, <https://palinfo.com/news/2022/07/18/225018/> (in Arabic)



- ¹²⁸ Jerusalem in 2022, Silwanic, 31/12/2022.
- ¹²⁹ The year 2023 in the city of Jerusalem, Silwanic, 1/1/2024.
- ¹³⁰ Al-Asra Center for Studies, 31/12/2022; and 2022.. The Most Criminal Year in Palestine, site of Al-Ahed News, 1/1/2023, <https://www.alahednews.com.lb/article.php?id=49222&cid=126>
- ¹³¹ Jerusalem in 2022, Silwanic, 31/12/2022.
- ¹³² Ibid.
- ¹³³ Al-Qastal documents the occupation's violations in Jerusalem in 2022, Al Qastal, 1/1/2023.
- ¹³⁴ Jerusalem in 2022, Silwanic, 31/12/2022.
- ¹³⁵ The year 2023 in the city of Jerusalem, Silwanic, 1/1/2024.
- ¹³⁶ Jerusalem in 2022, Silwanic, 31/12/2022.
- ¹³⁷ The year 2023 in the city of Jerusalem, Silwanic, 1/1/2024.
- ¹³⁸ Jerusalem in 2022, Silwanic, 31/12/2022.
- ¹³⁹ The occupation court expels a citizen from Jerusalem permanently, site of Msdr News, 28/5/2022, <https://msdrnews.com/133711/>
- ¹⁴⁰ The occupation forces permanently expel Murad al-Abbasi from Jerusalem, PIC, 3/6/2022, <https://palinfo.com/news/2022/06/03/88682/> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴¹ Matt Murphy, Salah Hammouri: Israel departs Palestinian lawyer to France, Site of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 18/12/2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-64016598>
- ¹⁴² Jerusalem in 2022, Silwanic, 31/12/2022.
- ¹⁴³ The year 2023 in the city of Jerusalem, Silwanic, 1/1/2024.
- ¹⁴⁴ Jerusalem in 2022. Unprecedented assaults and a never-ending existential struggle, Safa, 27/12/2022.
- ¹⁴⁵ Data on demolition and displacement in the West Bank, OCHA-opt, <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/demolition>
- ¹⁴⁶ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestine Strategic Report 2016–2017* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2018), p. 185.
- ¹⁴⁷ Land Day.. The confiscation of Jerusalem's land is a nightmare that has haunted its residents for 55 years, Aljazeera.net, 30/3/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁸ "Land Registration and Settlement"... Israeli project targets remaining Palestinian property in Jerusalem, Aljazeera.net, 15/3/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁰ The Israeli Civil Administration, reporting to the commander of the Israeli army's Central Command, is responsible for managing Palestinian civil affairs, including issuing building and property permits in the West Bank. Its authority persisted even after the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993.
- ¹⁵¹ Israel circumvents the Palestinian Authority to facilitate "land transfers" to Jews, *Asharq al-Awsat*, 26/7/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵² Public calls to participate in Friday prayers and mass sit-in in Wadi al-Rababa, QII, 17/11/2022, <https://qii.media/news/40716>
- ¹⁵³ Cemeteries Without Dead to Judaize Jerusalem, WAFA, 11/11/2022, <https://www.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/59051> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁴ Palestine Liberation Organization-Negotiations Affairs Department, Jerusalem: Steadfastness... Survival... Development, Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 2012, p. 6., <https://oldwebsite.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/uploads/files/plond2012.pdf> (in Arabic); and Asaad Abdul Rahman, Jerusalem Identity: The Massacre of Card Revocation, *Alittihad* newspaper, Abu Dhabi, 5/4/2012.

- ¹⁵⁵ Withdrawal of Jerusalemites' IDs, WAFA Info, https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=cVvzZia 27437135484acVvzZi (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁶ To resolve the demographic conflict.. The occupation deprives 20 thousand people of their Jerusalem identity, Safa, 19/12/2022.
- ¹⁵⁷ The reality of education in Jerusalem and the occupation, WAFA Info, <https://info.wafa.ps/pages/details/30126> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁸ Ali Ibrahim, Half of Palestinian schools teach an Israeli curriculum! How is the Israeli occupation Judaizing the education sector in occupied Jerusalem?, site of Arabic Post, 11/6/2022, <https://arabicpost.net/>
- ¹⁵⁹ The reality of education in Jerusalem and the occupation, WAFA Info. <https://info.wafa.ps/pages/details/30126> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶⁰ Ali Ibrahim, Half of Palestinian schools teach an Israeli curriculum! How is the Israeli occupation Judaizing the education sector in occupied Jerusalem?, Arabic Post, 11/6/2022.
- ¹⁶¹ Education in Jerusalem, site of Faisal Hussein Foundation, 2/1/2023, <https://www.fhfpal.org/programs/63.html>; and Anwar Hamdullah Qadah, Academic Paper: Israelization of Jerusalem's Curriculum: An "existential challenge," al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 19/2/2024, https://www.alzaytouna.net/arabic/data/attachments/AcademicArticles/PA_AnwarHamdallahKadah_Education-Jerusalem-Israel_2-24.pdf (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶² Ibid.
- ¹⁶³ Ibid.
- ¹⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶⁶ The occupation municipality allocates a budget of 514 million shekels to complete the Judaization of the education sector in Jerusalem, QII, 10/6/2022, <https://qii.media/news/39060>
Note: The exchange rate of the dollar to the Israeli shekel was based on the Bank of Israel data on 10/6/2022, which was 3.375.
- ¹⁶⁷ Israel revokes licenses for schools in Jerusalem.. War on the Palestinian Curriculum, *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 29/7/2022.
- ¹⁶⁸ Occupation storms Al-Iman schools in occupied Jerusalem, PIC, 26/10/2022, <https://palinfo.com/news/2022/10/26/298791/> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶⁹ Israel forces Jerusalem schools to remove Palestinian curriculum and teach another, *Asharq al-Awsat*, 9/11/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁷⁰ The year 2023 in the city of Jerusalem, Silwanic, 1/1/2024.
- ¹⁷¹ Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizer Violations in Occupied Palestinian Territories in 2022, Annual Report 2022, site of Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission (CWRC), 1/1/2023, <https://www.cwrc.ps/file/attachs/1290.pdf>
- ¹⁷² Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizers' Violations in the Occupied Palestine 2023, Annual Report 2023, CWRC, 8/1/2024, <https://www.cwrc.ps/file/attachs/1876.pdf>
- ¹⁷³ Commemorating 76 years of al-Nakba, site of the Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ), 14/5/2024, <https://www.arij.org/latest/nakbeh-2024/>
- ¹⁷⁴ Population, site of Peace Now, <https://peacenow.org.il/en/settlements-watch/settlements-data/population> (accessed on 8/5/2024)
- ¹⁷⁵ The 48th anniversary of Land Day: Pain and sorrow for the martyrs and the theft of land, topped by a determination filled with the euphoria of victory, ARIJ, 29/3/2024, <https://www.arij.org/ar/latest-ar/ard-day-2024> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁷⁶ Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizer Violations in Occupied Palestinian Territories in 2022, Annual Report 2022, CWRC, 1/1/2023.



- ¹⁷⁷ Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizers' Violations in the Occupied Palestine 2023, Annual Report 2023, CWRC, 8/1/2024.
- ¹⁷⁸ The 48th anniversary of Land Day: Pain and sorrow for the martyrs and the theft of land, topped by a determination filled with the euphoria of victory, ARIJ, 29/3/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁷⁹ "The outcome of 2023," Gaza is dominating the Palestinian scene in light of the brutality of the Israeli occupation's war on Gaza and the acceleration of settlement and settler violence in the occupied West Bank, ARIJ, 23/12/2023, <https://www.arij.org/ar/category/publications-ar/special-reports-ar/> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸⁰ Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizers' Violations in the Occupied Palestine 2023, Annual Report 2023, CWRC, 8/1/2024, p. 10.
- ¹⁸¹ The 48th anniversary of Land Day: Pain and sorrow for the martyrs and the theft of land, topped by a determination filled with the euphoria of victory, ARIJ, 29/3/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸² Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizer Violations in Occupied Palestinian Territories in 2022, Annual Report 2022, CWRC, 1/1/2023; and Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizers' Violations in the Occupied Palestine 2023, Annual Report 2023, CWRC, 8/1/2024.
- ¹⁸³ "The outcome of 2023," Gaza is dominating the Palestinian scene in light of the brutality of the Israeli occupation's war on Gaza and the acceleration of settlement and settler violence in the occupied West Bank, ARIJ, 23/12/2023 (in Arabic); and The 48th anniversary of Land Day: Pain and sorrow for the martyrs and the theft of land, topped by a determination filled with the euphoria of victory, ARIJ, 29/3/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸⁴ Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizer Violations in Occupied Palestinian Territories in 2022, Annual Report 2022, CWRC, 1/1/2023; and Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizers' Violations in the Occupied Palestine 2023, Annual Report 2023, CWRC, 8/1/2024.
- ¹⁸⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁸ Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizers' Violations in the Occupied Palestine 2023, Annual Report 2023, CWRC, 8/1/2024.
- ¹⁸⁹ The exchange rate of the dollar to the Israeli shekel was based on the Bank of Israel data for 2022, which was 3.3577.
- ¹⁹⁰ Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizer Violations in Occupied Palestinian Territories in 2022, Annual Report 2022, CWRC, 1/1/2023, pp. 71–72.
- ¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 73.
- ¹⁹² "The outcome of 2023," Gaza is dominating the Palestinian scene in light of the brutality of the Israeli occupation's war on Gaza and the acceleration of settlement and settler violence in the occupied West Bank, ARIJ, 23/12/2023 (in Arabic); Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizer Violations in Occupied Palestinian Territories in 2022, Annual Report 2022, CWRC, 1/1/2023; and Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizers' Violations in the Occupied Palestine 2023, Annual Report 2023, CWRC, 8/1/2024.
- ¹⁹³ The 48th anniversary of Land Day: Pain and sorrow for the martyrs and the theft of land, topped by a determination filled with the euphoria of victory, ARIJ, 29/3/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁹⁴ The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The Cost of Restrictions in Area C Viewed from Above, UNCTAD, 9/3/2023, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/gdsapp2022d1_en.pdf
- ¹⁹⁵ Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizer Violations in Occupied Palestinian Territories in 2022, Annual Report 2022, CWRC, 1/1/2023; and Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizers' Violations in the Occupied Palestine 2023, Annual Report 2023, CWRC, 8/1/2024.
- ¹⁹⁶ The suffering of the Palestinian olive tree due to occupation and colonization in 2023, ARIJ, 21/11/2023, <https://www.arij.org/ar/latest-ar/olive-ocu-2023/#> (in Arabic)

Chapter Four

***The Courses of Aggression, Resistance
and the Peace Process***

The Courses of Aggression, Resistance and the Peace Process

Introduction

During the period covered by this report, Palestinian resistance reached its peak since the establishment of Israel in 1948. Operation al-Aqsa Flood, carried out by Hamas' military wing Al-Qassam Brigades, represented the most potent, sophisticated and impactful form of resistance against Israel. It shattered Israel's national security doctrine, struck at the core of its existence and functional role, deprived the Israelis of their sense of safe haven, disrupted normalization projects, and strengthened the armed resistance option amidst the collapse of the peace process. The unprecedented Israeli brutality in its attack on GS, the strong Palestinian resistance in response, and the widespread popular support for the resistance played a significant role in reshaping Arab, Muslim and global consciousness regarding the Palestine issue.

This chapter examines the trajectories of Israeli war and Palestinian resistance, highlighting the ferocity of the occupation under the most extreme Israeli government in history. It chronicles the rise of resistance in WB and GS in the period 2022–2023, detailing various resistance operations and battles, particularly Operation al-Aqsa Flood. Additionally, it reviews the conditions of prisoners in Israeli prisons, while the final section focuses on the evolution of the peace process during the period covered by the report.

First: Resistance Operations and Escalation in WB

In 2022 and 2023, Israel continued its occupation and aggression against the Palestinian people, who, in turn, persisted in their resistance. In WB, despite security coordination between the PA security forces and the Israeli army, individual “lone-wolf” operations escalated, and daily confrontations and various forms of popular resistance endured.

In GS, Palestinian resistance witnessed development in its defensive strategy in response to the attacks on Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* Mosque. This was exemplified by Operation al-Aqsa Flood (dubbed by the Israelis Operation Swords of Iron), carried out by Hamas' military wing Al-Qassam Brigades on 7/10/2023. It was preceded by two major Israeli offensives against GS, in which it allegedly targeted the PIJ and its military wing, Al-Quds Brigades. The first was called Unity of the Arenas Battle (dubbed by the Israelis Operation Breaking Dawn), on 5–7/8/2022. The second was Revenge of the Free Battle (dubbed by the Israelis Operation Shield and Arrow), on 9–13/5/2023.

As a result of these three operations, GS saw, in 2022 and 2023, a sharp increase in Palestinian rocket launches towards Israeli communities in the 1948 occupied territories, where 1,245 rockets were launched in 2022, most of which were during Unity of the Arenas Battle (1,233 rockets). In 2023, and by the end of August 1,671 rockets were launched, with the majority launched during Revenge of the Free Battle (1,582 rockets),¹ while after that, during Operation al-Aqsa Flood, over 12 thousand missiles were launched from the besieged Strip,² as per Shabak and the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Israel also continued to close the GS crossings and tighten the siege in 2022 and 2023, completely sealing them off during its war on GS following Operation al-Aqsa Flood. It cut off electricity and water to Gaza entirely and frequently disrupted internet access, intensifying the land and sea blockade. This created an unprecedented level of economic and social suffocation for Gaza's residents, leading to the displacement of nearly two million people from their homes. The return of these displaced individuals was prevented through massacres, property destruction and starvation tactics, including blocking access to basic necessities.

The pace of resistance operations remained high throughout 2022 and 2023. In 2022, the Shabak recorded 3,825 attacks in WB, including East Jerusalem, GS and the 1948 occupied territories. This number increased to 4,578 in 2023, excluding the attacks during Operation al-Aqsa Flood.

The Shabak recorded 2,152 attacks in WB (excluding Jerusalem) in 2022, compared to 2,657 in 2023. In East Jerusalem, it recorded 392 attacks in 2022, compared to 305 by the end of August 2023. Within the 1948 occupied territories, 30 attacks were recorded in 2022, compared to 18 by the end of August 2023.

Notably, most of the recorded attacks in WB involved clashes, stone-throwing and Molotov cocktails, indicating a rise in the spirit of resistance despite a challenging and complex security environment with systematic and organized pursuit of resistance for many years, fully coordinated between the PA and Israel. In GS, the Shabak recorded 1,251 attacks in 2022, compared to 1,598 by the end of August 2023. Most resistance actions in GS involved rocket launches (mainly during Unity of the Arenas and Revenge of the Free battles), amounting to 2,916 rockets.³

Table 1/4: Geographical Distribution of Palestinian Resistance Operations 2022–2023, According to Shabak⁴

Year	WB (excl. Jerusalem)	East Jerusalem	1948 Occupied Territories	GS	Total
2022	2,152	392	30	1,251	3,825
2023 (until August)	2,657	305*	18*	1,598**	4,578***
Total	4,809	697**	48*	2,849**	8,403***

* After August 2023, the Shabak has reported the attacks of East Jerusalem and the 1948 occupied territories with those of WB.

** No statistics were issued by the Shabak for GS attacks after August 2023.

*** Excluding the attacks of Operation al-Aqsa Flood.

The annual reports of the Palestine Information Center—Mo3ta have mentioned that the popular and armed Palestinian resistance in WB, including East Jerusalem, have significantly developed both quantitatively and qualitatively. In 2022, Palestinians carried out 12,188 resistance acts in WB, including East Jerusalem, of which 1,380 were impactful attacks (armed, stabbings, vehicular attacks). The report stated that the impactful attacks in 2022 more than quadrupled compared to 2021.

According to the report, the governorates of Jenin, Nablus and Hebron witnessed the highest frequency of significant resistance operations, particularly shootings, with 445, 382 and 131 incidents, respectively. Resistance actions in various areas of WB and Jerusalem in 2022 were highest in Nablus (2,420), Hebron (1,943), Jerusalem (1,854), Ramallah (1,724) and Jenin (1,308). The report stated that 31 Israelis were killed, predominantly soldiers, and 525 others were injured.⁵

In 2023, resistance operations increased qualitatively as well. Palestinians carried out across WB, a total of 14,183 resistance acts, including 3,258 impactful

attacks (armed). This marks a more than twofold increase in the number of impactful attacks compared to 2022.

According to the report, the governorates of Jenin, Nablus and Tulkarm witnessed the highest frequency of significant resistance operations, particularly shootings, with 1,066, 704, and 338 incidents, respectively. Resistance actions in various areas of WB and Jerusalem in 2023 were highest in Nablus (2,700), Jenin (2,162), Hebron (1,899), Ramallah (1,815 and Jerusalem (1,675). The report stated that 43 Israelis were killed, and 507 others were injured.⁶

Table 2/4: Development of Resistance Action in WB 2020–2023⁷

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Popular Resistance Actions*	5,433	10,189	10,808	10,925
Impactful Attacks**	97	404	1,380	3,258
Total	5,530	10,593	12,188	14,183

* Includes clashes, stone throwing, Molotov cocktails, strikes, protests, etc.

** Includes shooting, stabbing, and run-over...

Table 3/4: Development of Significant Operations by Type 2020–2023⁸

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Shooting	29	171	848	2,053
Stabbing or attempted stabbing	27	36	37	46
Vehicular assault or attempted vehicular assault	11	18	18	25
Deployed or dropped improvised explosive device (IED)	30	53	222	653
Arson targeting military facilities, vehicles and posts	—	106	65	109
Destroying military vehicles and equipment	—	17	187	336
Downing a drone	—	3	2	26
Twin bombings	—	—	1	—
Rocket launch	—	—	—	10
Total	97	404	1,380	3,258

Security coordination in WB led to the exposure of numerous resistance cells and the prevention of numerous resistance operations. Indeed, Israeli Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi claimed that in 2022, his forces “prevented around 400 terror attacks” in WB.⁹

This occurred despite ongoing Israeli crimes and aggression against the Palestinian people and despite the PCC announcement on 9/2/2022, of the “cessation of all forms of security coordination.”¹⁰ It also continued despite the PA declaration of suspension of security coordination following Israeli military operations in Jenin and its RC in January and July 2023.¹¹ The PA leadership later reaffirmed the continuation of the suspension due to the war on GS following Operation al-Aqsa Flood.¹²

Analysts and national security think tanks agree that security coordination is a mutual “interest” for both the PA and Israel. The PA recognizes that without coordination, it risks dissolution and loss of control in WB. Conversely, Israel aims to prevent “armed operations” and weaken Palestinian resistance through this coordination. Because it serves the interests of both parties, security coordination has persisted even during crises and tensions between the two sides, becoming a tool for exerting pressure and blackmail.¹³

According to Israeli estimates, the role and importance of security coordination were highlighted during Operation “Break the Wave,” which began on 31/3/2022. As part of this operation, the Israeli army conducted large-scale raids, searches and arrests in WB on a daily basis, “based on intelligence from the army and Shabak, and in coordination with Palestinian security forces to avoid clashes with military forces,” according to the Israeli side.¹⁴ As a result, on 19/9/2022, Palestinian security forces arrested active resistance members, including Mus‘ab Shtayyeh, a commander in Al-Qassam Brigades who is wanted by Israeli forces.¹⁵

Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz confirmed ongoing sporadic communications with President ‘Abbas on security issues, emphasizing the utmost importance to “continue maintaining an open channel of security and civilian coordination, which serves the security of Palestinians and Israelis and enables economic and civil well-being.”¹⁶ In an article on the Israeli Channel 13 website, Colonel (Reserve) Moshe Elad described the cessation of security coordination as an empty and useless threat, explaining that the threats and discussions within the

Fatah movement led by Mahmud ‘Abbas are merely attempts by the PA to improve ‘Abbas’s image among the Palestinian public.¹⁷

In the same context, on 8/9/2022, two senior Israeli security officials secretly met with Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary-general of the PLO Executive Committee, and GIS Chief Majid Faraj, to deploy security forces aimed at preventing potential escalation during the Jewish holidays.¹⁸ On 19/2/2023, the PA reached understandings with the Israeli government, mediated by the US, to “reduce tensions and prevent a wide-scale security escalation in the West Bank.”¹⁹

Palestinian and Israeli officials pledged, on 26/2/2023, at the conclusion of the ‘Aqaba security summit—the first of its kind in years—to “reduce escalation on the ground and prevent further violence.” The summit was attended by GIS Chief Majid Faraj, Shabak Chief Ronen Bar, Israeli National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi, and White House Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Brett McGurk, with the presence of security officials from Jordan and Egypt.²⁰

During Operation al-Aqsa Flood, some Israeli voices called for restructuring the PA security system, in line with a US proposal to rebuild the PA in preparation for a potential future takeover of governance in GS, referring to the so-called “day after the war.” According to an assessment by the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) in Tel Aviv, Reem Cohen, coordinator of the Israeli-Palestinian Program at the institute, stated, “As the war in Gaza continues, with one of its principal goals being the elimination of Hamas’s military and governing capabilities, Israel should help realize a functional Palestinian Authority able to govern in Gaza the ‘day after’ the war—a task that neither Israel nor the international system is eager to assume.”²¹

In the same context, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, during a press conference on 5/11/2023, emphasized that “The PA is playing a very important role right now in the West Bank in trying to keep stability there. That’s hugely important because no one wants another front in the West Bank or anywhere else. And they’re really stepping up under very difficult conditions to do the necessary work.”²²

Second: Key Resistance Groups in WB

In 2022 and 2023, WB experienced a new trend of armed resistance marked by the emergence of armed groups in specific areas. These groups differed in their formation and development, creating a structure distinct from traditional Palestinian political parties. They established field leadership, and members from various Palestinian factions joined these groups without severing ties with their original organizations. These groups began forming in the northern WB in late 2021 and spread to a lesser extent to the south and center. Notable among them are the Jenin Battalion in Jenin RC, the Lions' Den and Balata Battalion in Nablus, the Tulkarm Battalion in Tulkarm and Nur Shams RCs, and the Aqabat Jabr Group in Jericho...²³

1. Jenin Battalion

The Jenin Battalion is the first of these formations, with its name first appearing on 7/9/2021, in Jenin RC following the Freedom Tunnel jailbreak when six Palestinian prisoners escaped from Gilboa Prison. The group was formed to protect and defend the prisoners. The battalion's actual presence was established after the killing of Jamil al-'Amuri, from the Jenin RC, on 10/6/2021, who is considered its first founder. Al-Quds Brigades, the PIJ military wing, is the strongest component of the Jenin Battalion. Its activities have not been limited to Jenin RC but have expanded to include some areas in rural Jenin, settlements and inside the Green Line.²⁴ Since its inception, the battalion has engaged in direct confrontations with the Israeli forces, resisted incursions and downed Israeli military drones.²⁵

Since the battalion was announced, Israel has systematically targeted its leaders, implementing various measures, including targeted incursions, assassinations and arrests. A prominent operation was the Battle of Jenin's Might (dubbed by Israel Operation Home and Garden) in July 2023, where Israeli forces attacked Jenin RC using an entire brigade. However, they failed to eliminate the emerging force, leading to increased resistance operations.²⁶ The Jenin Battalion affirmed that "the resistance journey will not stop, and the blood of the martyrs will fuel the ongoing struggle until liberation and return."²⁷

The exact number of battalion members is unknown, but Al-Quds Brigades leader Akram al-'Ajouri stated in an interview on "What is Hidden is Greater"

(*Ma Khufia A'tham*) program aired on 6/1/2023, that the Jenin Battalion is in the process of building and evolving, with dozens of fully armed and experienced members. He said the battalion's core consists of about 100 fighters. Battalion field commander Abu al-Hasan mentioned that the battalion comprises three units: the monitoring and surveillance unit, the explosives unit, and the confrontation and engagement unit.²⁸ The Israeli army estimates its members at around 300.²⁹ Notable figures in the Jenin Battalion, in addition to al-'Amuri, include the assassinated members Na'im al-Zubaidi, Muhammad al-Sa'di, Faruq Salameh, Ahmad al-'Amer, Samih Abu al-Wafa, Majdi 'Ar'arawi, Aws Hanun, 'Ali al-Ghoul and Ra'd Khazem...³⁰

In a related context, the Jenin Battalion accused the Palestinian security forces of assaulting its members, pursuing them, arresting them and shooting at them. The Battalion called on "the honorable members of the Fatah movement, Al-Aqsa [Martyrs'] Brigades, and the security forces" to fulfill their religious, ethical and national responsibilities by pressuring the PA agencies to end what it described as the "farce of arrest and pursuit."³¹ In response, the PA Ministry of Interior and Jenin Governor Major General Akram Rajoub, affirmed that they would not tolerate or be lenient in enforcing the law and maintaining public security in the Palestinian governorates, and would cut off any hand that disturbs security.³² Notable battalion members detained by the PA include Murad Malaisheh, Muhammad Barahmeh, 'Eid Hamamreh, Muhammad 'Alawneh, Muhammad Malaisheh, Mu'men Fashafsheh, 'Imad Khaliliyyeh, Khalid 'Ar'arawi, Jamil Ja'ar and Salameh 'Abdul Jawad.³³

2. Nablus Battalion (Lions' Den)

The Nablus Battalion was formed in late 2021, and from it emerged the Lions' Den group. The Lions' Den officially took on its name less than a month after the killing of Ibrahim al-Nabulsi on 2/9/2022. This development followed a shooting incident in which the group claimed responsibility for targeting a car driven by a settler near the village of Huwara. The group's name gained prominence through a series of surprise attacks against Israeli forces. Abu Mujahid (Abu Palestine), the leader of the Lions' Den, discussed the group's formation and key operations³⁴ in an interview on "What is Hidden is Greater" (*Ma Khufia A'tham*) program, which aired on 6/1/2023. Members of the group come from various Palestinian factions but maintain their original organizational affiliations.

In response, Israeli forces launched a series of systematic assassinations and arrests targeting the Lions' Den leadership. The most notable operation was

Operation “Break the Wave” in Nablus, which began on 31/3/2022, and involved substantial Israeli forces deployed in WB. This operation resulted in the killing of numerous Lions’ Den members, including Muhammad al-Dakhil, Ashraf Mubasalat, Adham Mabruka, Ibrahim al-Nabulsi, Islam Sabuh, Hussain Taha, ‘Abdul Rahman Subuh and Muhammad al-‘Azizi.³⁵

Despite Israel’s efforts, it failed to contain the rising armed resistance in WB. Consequently, it relied on security coordination with the PA to manage the situation. Nablus witnessed violent clashes between Palestinian security forces and protesters enraged by the PA’s arrest of Mus‘ab Shtayyeh, a prominent activist in the Lions’ Den and a leader in Al-Qassam Brigades. Fakhri Barghouthi, a member of the Fatah Revolutionary Council, confirmed that the PA is opposed to the emergence of any resistance force in WB and is seeking negotiations with the Lions’ Den and the Jenin Battalion.³⁶ Some members of the Lions’ Den surrendered to the PA in an attempt to end Israel’s pursuit of them.³⁷

Following Operation al-Aqsa Flood, the Lions’ Den declared that the war was a battle for all Palestinians and a war for liberation. They stressed the importance of shifting from defense to offense in WB.³⁸ The group sent a message to Muhammad Daif, Saleh al-‘Aruri and all resistance leaders, asserting that “the West Bank will only be a sword and shield for you, God willing.”³⁹

3. Tulkarm Battalion

The Tulkarm Battalion was established in March 2022 by a group of young men from Tulkarm, led by Saif Abu Labdeh and Muhammad Jaber, known as Abu Shuja‘. Based in Tulkarm and the adjacent Nur Shams RC, it included members from various Palestinian factions. The battalion has carried out numerous significant military operations against the occupation. In February 2023, a faction founded by Amir Abu Khadijah, known as the “Rapid Response Group,” joined them.⁴⁰

Tulkarm and Nur Shams RC were subjected to numerous raids, which significantly increased following Operation al-Aqsa Flood. The Tulkarm Battalion improved its tactics, combat methods, individual training and the manufacturing of explosive devices, enhancing their capability to cause direct damage. This enabled them to carry out significant operations against the Israeli forces at contact points and military checkpoints and to confront military incursions, sometimes fighting outside the RC’s boundaries.⁴¹

In the same context, members of the Tulkarm Battalion were pursued by Palestinian security forces, and some were killed by their gunfire during these pursuits.⁴² Tulkarm witnessed a series of protest activities and marches opposing this. The battalion called on the Palestinian security forces to “correct their course and stop pursuing members of the military formations.”⁴³ They also sent messages to the Palestinian security forces, affirming their position of not wanting to confront them.⁴⁴

Third: GS Before Operation al-Aqsa Flood

The years 2022 and 2023 saw numerous rounds of fighting and escalation in GS, with some incidents lasting days and others months, marked by a significant increase in rocket and mortar fire. This section focuses on Unity of the Arenas Battle (dubbed by the Israelis Operation Breaking Dawn), Revenge of the Free Battle (dubbed by the Israelis Operation Shield and Arrow) and Operation al-Aqsa Flood (dubbed by the Israelis Operation Swords of Iron).

1. Unity of the Arenas Battle (5–7/8/2022)

After days of tension following the arrest of senior PIJ leader Bassam al-Saadi in Jenin on 1/8/2022, PIJ in GS declared a state of “alert” and heightened the “readiness” of its fighters.⁴⁵ On 5/8/2022, Israel launched Operation Breaking Dawn against the movement, which the Palestinian resistance referred to as Unity of the Arenas Battle. The operation began with the Israeli army assassinating a member of the Al-Quds Brigades military council, the northern front commander Taysir al-Jabari, and the rocket unit commander ‘Abdullah Qaddum, targeting several sites of the movement in GS.⁴⁶

Immediately following the Israeli aggression, PIJ declared, “No mediations now, and no talk of any truce.” They asserted that Israel bears full responsibility for the crime and that they would not hesitate to respond to the aggression, which they viewed as a declaration of war. PIJ Secretary-General, Ziad Nakhleh, issued a direct order to all members of Al-Quds Brigades to respond to the Israeli crime in GS. Nakhleh emphasized that there are no red lines in this battle and that Tel Aviv would be a target for the resistance’s rockets. PIJ spokesperson stated that “communications with Egyptian officials took place an hour before the bombing,

and the responses were positive,” stressing that the assassination of al-Jabari was aimed at thwarting Egyptian efforts to de-escalate the situation.⁴⁷

Conversely, the Joint Operations Room of the Palestinian factions held Israel fully responsible for the aggression on GS, asserting that it had miscalculated. In a statement, the Joint Operations Room confirmed that this aggression would not go unchallenged and that the resistance’s response was imminent, as determined by the leadership. They announced that they were “in continuous session, assessing the situation in coordination with all military wings, and would not allow the enemy to prey on our people or break their resilience and resistance.”⁴⁸

On 1/8/2022, PIJ agreed to a ceasefire with Israel, reached through Egyptian mediation. PIJ claimed success in imposing its conditions on Israel during indirect negotiations. From Tehran, PIJ Secretary-General Ziad Nakhleh stated that popular support and the Joint Operations Room of the resistance provided backing, “but the Jihad carried out the bulk of the fighting.”⁴⁹ Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid informed Israeli municipal leaders in the Gaza Envelope area that “Israel had met its goals in the three days of fighting and that there was no real benefit to continuing the operation.” Shabak Chief Ronen Bar had “advised ministers to start wrapping up the operation before an ‘accident or mistake’ by the military complicates the situation.”⁵⁰

During the aggression, the Israeli army conducted 147 airstrikes against targets in GS.⁵¹ According to Shabak estimates, the Al-Quds Brigades, the PIJ military wing, fired 1,233 rockets towards Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, the Gaza Envelope and other “central Israeli cities” in response.⁵²

As a result, the Palestinian Ministry of Health in GS reported that 46 Palestinians were killed, including 16 children and 4 women, and 360 were injured, including 151 children and 58 women.⁵³ Al-Quds Brigades announced in a statement that among the dead were 12 of their members, including two prominent leaders, “senior commander Taysir al-Jabari, the northern region commander, and senior commander Khalid Mansur, the southern region commander.”⁵⁴ Meanwhile, it was reported that 70 Israelis were injured due to rocket fire from GS.⁵⁵

Statistics from the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in GS showed that the Israeli forces destroyed 18 housing units completely, 71 partially but uninhabitable, and 1,675 partially but still habitable during the aggression.⁵⁶

2. Revenge of the Free Battle (9–13/5/2023)

On the early morning of 9/5/2023, the Israeli army conducted airstrikes in GS using 40 fighter jets. This operation resulted in the deaths of 13 Palestinians, including three senior leaders of Al-Quds Brigades, along with their wives and several children. The leaders were Jihad al-Ghannam, secretary of the Military Council of the Al-Quds Brigades, Khalil al-Bahtini, Northern Region commander, and Tariq Muhammad ‘Ezzedeen, a military commander in WB.⁵⁷

The aggression continued until the evening of 13/5/2023. During this period, the Israeli army reported targeting 422 PIJ sites, which bore the brunt of the conflict, supported logistically and shielded by Hamas and other resistance factions. According to Shabak estimates, the resistance, particularly PIJ, retaliated by launching 1,582 rockets toward Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, the Gaza Envelope and “central Israeli cities.”⁵⁸ The attacks resulted in one Israeli fatality and 77 injuries. Meanwhile, 33 Palestinians were killed, and 190 were wounded.⁵⁹ Among the deceased were 11 members of Al-Quds Brigades’ military leadership.⁶⁰

The Gaza Government Media Office reported that 2,041 housing units were damaged, resulting in estimated losses of \$9 million. This figure includes the complete destruction of 31 houses, totaling 93 housing units, with an additional 128 units rendered uninhabitable and 1,820 units partially damaged. Agricultural sector losses were estimated at \$3 million, contributing to a total economic disruption of \$40 million over the five-day aggression period.⁶¹

In summary, the Unity of the Arenas and Revenge of the Free battles achieved significant milestones for the resistance. The overall power balance favored the resistance, a point underscored by the remarkable success of Operation al-Aqsa Flood.

Fourth: Operation al-Aqsa Flood and Israeli War on GS

1. The Execution of Operation al-Aqsa Flood

On 7/10/2023, the Ezzedeen al-Qassam Brigades, affiliated with Hamas, launched a comprehensive and intense assault targeting the Israeli military division stationed around GS. They successfully breached this division, seized

control of its positions, and overran settlements in the Gaza Envelope, covering an area more than twice the size of the GS itself. Approximately 1,400 Qassam fighters accomplished this within hours, resulting in the deaths of around 1,200 Israelis and the capture of about 250 others. The PIJ and other resistance factions also participated in Operation al-Aqsa Flood from the first day. Hamas initiated this operation to halt the ongoing crimes of the occupation against the Palestinian people, and its repeated incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Another objective was to secure the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli prisons, as declared by Muhammad Daif “Abu Khalid,” the commander of Al-Qassam Brigades, at the outset of Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023.⁶²

Operation al-Aqsa Flood marked an unprecedented strategic and qualitative blow to Israel since its establishment 75 years ago. The operation combined elements of surprising military and strategic security actions, meticulous planning and execution, and the invasion of a significant area of the 1948 occupied territories. It resulted in the highest number of casualties and captives compared to any previous Palestinian battles or most Arab-Israeli wars. Israel, appearing confused and shocked, felt humiliated as it witnessed the collapse of its national security doctrine and the breakdown of both physical and psychological deterrence. Al-Qassam fighters stormed 20 settlements and 11 military sites within hours, demonstrating their capabilities.⁶³ A closer look at Operation al-Aqsa Flood, particularly evident during the ground war, reveals a highly sophisticated Palestinian military leadership, the likes of which has not been seen before.

2. The Strategic Implications of Operation al-Aqsa Flood

- a. Collapse of the Israel’s national security doctrine: This doctrine, based on the principles of deterrence, early warning and decisive capability, had a fourth principle, defense, was added in 2015. All four principles crumbled during this operation.
- b. Undermining the concept of Israel as a “Safe Haven for Jews”: Security is fundamental to Zionist ideology and the structure of the Israeli state, which claims to provide a safe haven for Jews worldwide and asserts its ability to crush and deter all forces and armies in its strategic environment. This severe blow to this core will diminish the Zionist project, weaken the allure of the “Promised Land,” and prompt Jewish residents to consider reverse migration and returning to their countries of origin.

- c. Failure of Israel's image as a Western stronghold: Israel's inability to effectively handle Palestinian resistance, the collapse of its national security doctrine, and the exposure of its vulnerability have led to genuine concerns in the West about Israel's reliability as a regional hegemon. This has undermined Israel's functional role and foundational purpose, disrupting the Western hegemonic system in the region, where Israel serves as a cornerstone of US and Western policy implementation.
- d. The Israeli normalization projects with the Arab and Muslim world have suffered a severe setback. The effective resistance and exposure of the brutal and savage actions of Israel, including massacres against civilians, have halted the drive towards normalization by ruling regimes

Moreover, normalization has lost a key justification, as Israel has long marketed itself as a reliable force in managing regional conflicts and tipping the balance in favor of its allies. The significant impact made by a small group of fighters on October 7th has severely damaged Israel's deterrence capability, making it less able to present itself as a trustworthy power to resolve conflicts and disputes.
- e. Operation al-Aqsa Flood has shaken Israel, and raised questions about the very existence and survival of the Israeli state. The Israeli leadership has referred to this battle as a "second war of independence"⁶⁴ or an "existential war."⁶⁵ Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant stated, "If the fate of Hamas is not complete dismantlement, we will not be able to live in the State of Israel."⁶⁶ The operation has also disrupted the internal political landscape, particularly the ruling Likud party, which has dominated the political scene for 15 consecutive years. Polls indicate that Likud would lose about half its seats in any upcoming elections.
- f. The significant achievement of Operation al-Aqsa Flood has sparked unprecedented hope among Arabs and Muslims for the possibility of liberating the holy land and holy sites. Many now view Israel as a "spider's web," fragile and defeatable, challenging the perceived inevitability of its dominance and occupation, and questioning the justification for the weakness of Arab and Muslim regimes.
- g. Operation al-Aqsa Flood reinforced the Islamic project for Palestine. Hamas, which carried out the attack and has been managing GS for 17 years, is an Islamic movement that adopts Islam as a creed, thought and method, serving as a reference for the project of liberating Palestine. Hamas has borne the brunt of

facing Israeli aggression. Alongside Hamas stands PIJ, its younger counterpart, which adopts the same principles and reference.

- h. Operation al-Aqsa Flood underscored the centrality of *al-Aqsa* and Jerusalem in Palestinian, Arab and Muslim consciousness, serving as significant sources of mobilization and inspiration. The persistent Israeli aggression on Jerusalem and attempts to Judaize *al-Aqsa* have, over the decades, fueled incitement and confrontation against the Zionist project. This was a primary catalyst for Operation al-Aqsa Flood, named after the holy site.
- i. The battle firmly established the resistance project as the effective and correct pathway for reclaiming Palestinian rights and expelling the occupation. This coincided with the collapse of the peace process and the failure of the PLO and PA to establish an independent Palestinian state based on the Oslo Accords, over the past 30 years, on the 1967 occupied territories.
- j. The battle highlighted the Israeli failure to subjugate the Palestinian people. Throughout 30 years of British occupation and 75 years since the establishment of Israel, the Palestinian people have not ceased resisting and revolting. These movements ebb and flow, yet they persist. None of the oppression, displacement, destruction and suffering inflicted upon them has succeeded in breaking their resolve.
- k. Operation al-Aqsa Flood exposed and highlighted the failure of the Western value system to the world. Although many of these values and their falsity have long been recognized in our Muslim world, this war has blatantly revealed them.

3. Developments of the Battle and the War on GS

Israel tried to pull itself together in order to comprehend the colossal historical magnitude of an attack that shocked it to the core, and recalled the “existential threat” to its survival and project in a hostile environment. Israel would first strive, with a great sense of urgency, to unify its internal front to demonstrate societal unity and cohesion. It sought to restore the powerful deterrent image destroyed by Operation Al-Aqsa Flood. Israel attempted this through launching a massive, devastating military campaign and assassinating several political and military resistance leaders, especially those of Hamas. Israel benefited from the full support of the US and Europe, who put aside any reservations about the extremist Israeli government and provided, from day one, both moral and material assistance and a cover for the aggression on GS.⁶⁷



Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the subsequent Israeli war on GS were characterized by the following:⁶⁸

- a. The form of the battle:** The battle began as an offensive initiative by Al-Qassam Brigades, using different weapons, tools and objectives than those associated with previous military confrontations, specifically taking the battle to “enemy territory.”
- b. Mass killing of civilians:** The response to Operation al-Aqsa Flood was marked by mass atrocities against civilians, which are considered war crimes and illegal acts of genocide that do not fall within the laws of war or can ever be justified by Operation al-Aqsa Flood.
- c. Objectives of the military operation:** These include eliminating the leadership of Hamas and its resistance in GS, plans to displace GS residents and depopulate it of Palestinians, ending it as a political entity, and reoccupying it if possible. Israel views this battle as an existential war linked to its fate. Thus, it seeks to achieve permanent deterrence by inflicting the maximum amount of losses while becoming more tolerant of casualties it would not have accepted in previous confrontations.
- d.** There are striking parallels between current developments and the establishment of the Zionist project in Palestine during the *Nakbah* (catastrophe) of 1948, particularly regarding the massacres, destruction and displacement caused by the occupation.
- e. Dehumanizing the people of GS** serves to justify their targeting from a different perspective. Examples include Israeli President Isaac Herzog’s assertion that “It is an entire nation out there that is responsible. It is not true, this rhetoric about civilians not aware, not involved. It’s absolutely not true. They could have risen up...,”⁶⁹ while Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said, “We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly.”⁷⁰
- f. Positions:** The “Western position,” led by the US, supports the occupation, viewing the war as its own. In contrast, the “Arab-Muslim countries’ position” can be best described as unable to assist Gaza, let alone support it, with some countries even accused of collusion and alignment with Israeli objectives, particularly in relation to the overthrow of Hamas.

Al-Qassam Brigades surprised Israel with Operation al-Aqsa Flood, launching a massive rocket barrage from GS towards the 1948 occupied territories early on

Saturday, 7/10/2023. Muhammad Daif announced that “the initial strike targeted enemy positions and fortifications with over 5 thousand rockets and shells,”⁷¹ alongside ground, naval and aerial attack. Al-Qassam fighters infiltrated settlements around Gaza. Several videos depicted Al-Qassam fighters entering “Israeli cities,” engaging in combat with Israeli forces, seizing control of key facilities and areas. Activists broadcast footage of resistance forces setting an Israeli tank ablaze near the GS border. *Yedioth Ahronoth* reported that Al-Qassam militants seized Israeli army armored vehicles and transported them to GS.⁷²

The Israeli army declared a “state of war alert following the shocking infiltration of hundreds of terrorists from Gaza into Israeli cities and kibbutzim.”⁷³ Defense Minister Yoav Gallant declared “an emergency situation within a range of 80 kilometers from GS.” The *Haaretz* newspaper confirmed that “The attack by Hamas, which caught Israeli intelligence agencies by total surprise, completely demolished the operational defensive conception on the Gaza Strip border.” Israel’s military said, “Palestinian fighters had penetrated at least three military installations around the frontier—the Erez border crossing, the Zikim base and the Gaza division headquarters at Reim.”⁷⁴ Israeli Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai announced in a statement that “We’re in a state of war. We are under a massive attack from the Gaza Strip. There are currently 21 active high confrontation locations in southern Israel.”⁷⁵

Al-Qassam Brigades stated that their air force participated with 35 Zouari kamikaze drones in all combat sectors, contributing to the preparatory bombardment that enabled their fighters to cross into the occupied territories.⁷⁶ Al-Qassam spokesperson Abu ‘Ubaidah confirmed in a televised speech on 8/10/2023, that Al-Qassam fighters reached the Mavki‘im area, south of Ashkelon, and engaged in fierce clashes that resulted in numerous Israeli casualties. He revealed that several fighters successfully withdrew from the Urim base, which houses Unit 8200 of the military intelligence division, after completing their mission there. Abu ‘Ubaidah announced that “a group of Al-Qassam fighters successfully captured new enemy prisoners and brought them to Gaza on Sunday,” and disclosed that “Al-Qassam fighters in combat zones documented cases of the enemy killing several of their own captives after they were taken hostage.”⁷⁷

Clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters continued for several days in areas within the settlements around GS. Israeli army radio announced the

decision to evacuate 25 settlements and kibbutzim in the Gaza Envelope. The Hebrew channel Reshet Kan reported that Hamas fighters infiltrated 20 settlements and 11 Israeli military sites, breached the fence at 80 points, and estimated the number of infiltrators to be between 800 and one thousand. It was noted that Hamas had been planning this operation for over a year without any partners in their secret plan.⁷⁸

Abu ‘Ubaidah confirmed that Hamas had meticulously planned Operation al-Aqsa Flood.⁷⁹ He stated, “The number of Israeli captives held by the Palestinian resistance ranges between 200 and 250. Al-Qassam holds about 200 captives, while the rest are distributed among other resistance factions.” Abu ‘Ubaidah acknowledged the presence of captives of other nationalities, asserting that they are guests of the Palestinian people. He added, “Foreign captives will be released when the conditions on the ground allow.”⁸⁰ PIJ Secretary-General Ziad Nakhleh confirmed that his movement held more than 30 Israeli captives at this time and declared, “They will not return to their homes until our prisoners are liberated.”⁸¹ In a related context, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced the appointment of retired Brigadier General Gal Hirsch as Coordinator for the Captives and Missing.⁸²

More than 1,200 Israelis were killed during the Gaza Envelope incursion on 7/10/2023, after initial government estimates had indicated more than 1,400 casualties. Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lior Haiat stated on 10/11/2023, that the number of casualties was revised on 9/11/2023, because “there were lot of corpses that were not identified” belonging to individuals who participated in the 7/10/2023 attack.⁸³

Muhammad Daif emphasized that the leadership of Al-Qassam Brigades decided to put an end to all occupation crimes, declaring, “The time for unchecked aggression is over.” He stated, “Today, the wrath of *al-Aqsa* and the anger of our *Ummah* and our noble fighters erupts. This is your day to make the enemy understand that their time is up.” He asserted that “starting today, security coordination ends, and anyone with a weapon should bring it out, as its time has come.” Daif called on people to “begin the march now towards Palestine and not allow borders, regimes or constraints to deprive you of the honor of jihad and participation in liberating *al-Aqsa* Mosque.” Addressing the people of Jerusalem and the 1948 occupied territories, he said, “Our people in Jerusalem, expel the

occupiers and demolish the walls. And to our people in the interior, the Negev, the Galilee and the Triangle, ignite the ground under the occupiers' feet."⁸⁴

Isma'il Haniyyah, the head of the Hamas political bureau, said that the Palestinian resistance in GS is fighting a "heroic epic battle for *al-Aqsa*, our holy sites and our prisoners," emphasizing the "battle of honor, resistance and dignity to defend *al-Aqsa* Mosque." He stressed that "this Flood began in Gaza and will extend to the [West] Bank and abroad, to every place where our people and our *Ummah* are present."⁸⁵ In a speech on Al-Aqsa TV, Hamas Deputy Political Bureau Chief Saleh al-'Aruri said, "We must all engage in this battle, especially the resistance fighters in the [West] Bank," asserting that WB is the decisive factor in this battle and can initiate skirmishes with all settlements there.⁸⁶ In a call with Al Jazeera, al-'Aruri stated that Operation al-Aqsa Flood was a preemptive move against an Israeli attack on GS that was planned to occur immediately after the Jewish holidays. He noted that while the plan anticipated "prolonged battles with the Gaza Division, Al-Qassam fighters were surprised by the division's complete collapse within a short time, highlighting that the defensive plan for after the operation was stronger than the offensive one."⁸⁷

In response, the Israeli Security Cabinet "approved the war situation and, to this end, the taking of significant military steps, as per Article 40 of Basic Law: The Government."⁸⁸ The Israeli army announced on the X platform the launch of Operation Iron Swords and that it "is initiating a large-scale operation to defend Israeli civilians against the combined attack launched against Israel by Hamas."⁸⁹

On 11/10/2023, Netanyahu and opposition member Benny Gantz announced in a joint statement the formation of an "emergency wartime government," with Gantz's National Unity party joining.⁹⁰ On 12/10/2023, Netanyahu declared war before the Knesset's special plenum session, which then voted to grant the "emergency government" confidence for the duration of the war. The cabinet also announced the application of Article 40 of the Basic Law concerning taking "significant military action."⁹¹

In a video speech, Netanyahu said, "Hamas has started a brutal and evil war. We will be victorious in this war despite an unbearable price. This is a very difficult day for all of us. Hamas wants to murder us all." He emphasized, "We will destroy them and we will forcefully avenge this dark day that they have forced on the State of Israel and its citizens," adding, "I say to the residents of Gaza: Leave now

because we will operate forcefully everywhere.” At the end, he stated, “This war will take time. It will be difficult. Challenging days are ahead of us.”⁹² Netanyahu told US President Joe Biden in a phone call that “We were struck Saturday by an attack whose savagery we have not seen since the Holocaust.”⁹³

The Israeli aggression on the GS was accompanied by a campaign of lies and misleading claims about the operation carried out by Hamas, including accusations of killing children, committing rapes and other false claims that were later debunked.

In a press statement, Hamas firmly denied the fabricated allegations promoted by some Western media, which unprofessionally adopted the Israeli narrative filled with lies and slander against the Palestinian people and their resistance. The latest claims include accusations of killing children, beheading them and deliberately targeting civilians. Hamas emphasized that it “targeted the Israeli military and security system in Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which are legitimate targets.”⁹⁴ Al-Qassam Brigades broadcast videos showing their fighters dealing with settler children in Kibbutz “Holit” during Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023.⁹⁵ An Israeli settler recounted how the Palestinian resistance fighters refused to harm her and her children during Operation al-Aqsa Flood, noting that “this surprised me and reassured me as well.”⁹⁶

In a step described by Human Rights Watch as a “call to commit war crime,”⁹⁷ Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant announced a series of measures in response to Hamas’s attack on 7/10/2023. He stated, “I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed,” adding, “We are fighting human animals, and we are acting accordingly.” Additionally, Energy Minister Yisrael Katz stated, “I instructed that the water supply from Israel to Gaza be cut off immediately.”⁹⁸ Gallant emphasized that “Hamas made a grave mistake this morning and started a war against the State of Israel,”⁹⁹ vowing to “destroy Hamas infrastructures, Hamas headquarters, Hamas military establishment, and take these phenomena out of Gaza and out of the Earth.”¹⁰⁰

In the same context, the leaders of the United States, Germany, Britain, France and Italy issued a joint statement expressing their “steadfast and united support to the State of Israel.” The statement, issued by US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Italian Prime

Minister Giorgia Meloni, and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, stated that “Over the coming days, we will remain united and coordinated, together as allies, and as common friends of Israel, to ensure Israel is able to defend itself, and to ultimately set the conditions for a peaceful and integrated Middle East region.”¹⁰¹

The White House announced that “The U.S. government has no intention of putting military on the ground,”¹⁰² but “The President also conveyed that additional assistance for the Israeli Defense Forces is now on its way to Israel with more to follow over the coming days.”¹⁰³ Biden affirmed, “We stand with Israel. And we will make sure Israel has what it needs to take care of its citizens, defend itself, and respond to this attack,” adding, “The United States has also enhanced our military force posture in the region to strengthen our deterrence,” and we have “moved the USS Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group to the Eastern Mediterranean and bolstered our fighter aircraft presence. And we stand ready to move in additional assets as needed.”¹⁰⁴

4. Ground Offensive

After the significant preemptive strike on Israel’s military and security establishment on 7/10/2023, Israeli statements emphasized the necessity of launching a ground war in GS. This was to achieve the objectives announced by Netanyahu and his war government members: the release of prisoners held by the resistance factions in GS, the eradication of Hamas, the end of its rule in the Strip, the displacement and depopulation of the Strip, ending it as a political entity, and reoccupying it if possible.

Despite the large and unprecedented number of killed, wounded and missing, and the extensive and comprehensive destruction of GS, Israeli forces were unable to break Hamas and its military structure. Most of the Israeli forces’ actions were directed at unarmed civilians, infrastructure and government offices. The Israeli mentality relies on violence to achieve its goals; what cannot be achieved by force can be achieved through escalating violence.

With these motives, the Israeli army began its ground operation in northern Gaza on 27/10/2023, instructing residents to move south, claiming it was a safe area. However, the course of the aggression confirmed that there is no safe place in the Strip, as Israeli massacres spread across all GS areas.

Al-Qassam Brigades announced that their readiness to confront the Israeli forces’ incursion on all fronts. Al-Qassam spokesperson Abu ‘Ubaidah stated that

the threat of a ground war is laughable and that they are prepared for a long battle and all possibilities.¹⁰⁵ Addressing Israeli leaders, Abu ‘Ubaidah said, “I foresee Netanyahu and his warlords kneeling by the end of the battle, and the war in Gaza will be his political end,” confirming that the resistance still has much in store and that Gaza will be a graveyard for the enemy and a quagmire for its soldiers and political and military leaders.¹⁰⁶ He stressed that the number of Israeli dead is much higher than what the Israeli leadership announces, promising to make Gaza “the curse of history” on this entity.¹⁰⁷ Abu ‘Ubaidah emphasized that the release of all Palestinian prisoners is the price for the large number of Israeli captives held by the resistance.¹⁰⁸

After a seven-day humanitarian truce between 23 and 30/11/2023, 240 Palestinian prisoners (75 women and 165 minors) were released, and the Palestinian resistance freed 80 Israeli prisoners (44 women and 36 minors), including some with dual citizenship and 27 foreigners. On 3/12/2023, the Israeli army announced the expansion of its ground operation in Gaza. The Israeli army radio reported a ground operation north of Khan Yunis, in the southern Strip, while the Israeli government spokesperson confirmed the focus on Khan Younis. A senior Al-Qassam Brigades source told Al Jazeera that the Israeli ground operation concentrated in the southern GS, involved limited maneuvers in the north, with 70% of Israeli forces withdrawing from northern Gaza due to unsuccessful operations and resistance strikes.¹⁰⁹

By the end of December 2023, the Israeli army expanded its ground assault to include al-Bureij, al-Nuseirat and al-Maghazi RCs in central Gaza. The Israeli army ordered the evacuation of these central Gaza areas, directing residents to move south to Deir al-Balah.

5. Casualties

The number of Palestinians killed in GS during Operation al-Aqsa Flood, from 7/10 to 31/12/2023, after 86 days of continuous Israeli aggression, reached 21,822, with 56,451 injured, and over 7 thousand missing, 70% of whom are children and women, in more than 1,825 massacres. Among the killed were around 9 thousand children, 6,450 women, 312 medical staff, 40 civil defense personnel, 106 journalists and 136 UN employees. The educational sector saw over 4,037 students killed and 209 educational staff, with 7,259 students and 619 staff among the injured.¹¹⁰

The Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor reported that by the evening of 26/12/2023, a total of 29,124 Palestinians had been killed, including 26,706 civilians, among them 11,422 children, 5,822 women, 481 health personnel and 101 journalists, with 56,122 injured, hundreds of whom being critically wounded. The latter number includes thousands of victims who are still stuck under the rubble of buildings. The Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor accused Israel of “stepping up its genocide war on Gazan civilians in an effort to intensify its enforced displacement policy, which is in violation of international laws,” and may constitute a war crime. The monitor confirmed that “Israel has deliberately targeted civilian infrastructure in order to cause as many casualties, material losses, and destruction as possible... as a form of retaliation and collective punishment.”¹¹¹

Among the prominent leaders killed in GS are the acting PLC Speaker and the Hamas leader Ahmad Bahr, Palestinian parliamentarian and Hamas political bureau member Jamila Shanti, head of Hamas’s National Relations Department in GS Zakaria Abu Mu‘ammar, and head of Hamas’s Economic Department in GS Jawad Abu Shamala. Al-Qassam Brigades mourned several key leaders, including Ahmad al-Ghandour, a member of the Military Council and commander of the northern GS, Ayman Nofal, commander of the central region, and leaders Wa’el Rajab, Ra’fat Salman and Ayman Siyam.¹¹²

Isma‘il al-Thawabta, director of the Government Media Office in GS, revealed to *Al-Youm al-Sabi‘* newspaper, in early 2024, the extent of explosives dropped by the Israeli army on GS. He stated that more than 65 thousand tons of explosives were dropped on the Strip, equivalent to three nuclear bombs like those dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. He confirmed the Israeli army’s use of internationally banned weapons in its bombardment, adding that two-thirds of the bombs and missiles dropped by Israeli fighter jets were unguided and inaccurate, known as “dumb bombs,” leading to indiscriminate and unjustified killings in violation of international law and agreements.¹¹³

The Israeli fighter jets dropped over 45 thousand rockets and massive bombs on the GS, some weighing 2 thousand pounds (about 906 kg) of explosives. Al-Thawabta highlighted the most prominent internationally prohibited weapons used by the Israeli army, including BLU–113 and BLU–109 bunker-buster bombs, Small Diameter Bombs (SDBs) such as GBU–28 bombs (4 thousand pounds (1,814.3 kg)), GPS-guided bombs, internationally banned white phosphorus bombs,



bombs used for mass killing of civilians and destroying facilities and homes known as “dumb bombs” or unguided bombs, and Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) equipped bombs. Al-Thawabta confirmed that the use of these weapons leads to permanent harm to the victims, such as deformities, permanent disabilities and amputations, in addition to significant environmental pollution.¹¹⁴

PCBS reported that there are about 1.9 million Palestinians in GS have been displaced from their homes. The Ministry of Public Works and Housing in GS announced that 369 thousand housing units were damaged, with at least 79 thousand completely destroyed and more than 290 thousand partially damaged, from the beginning of the war on 7/10/2023 until 9/3/2024. Over 25,010 buildings and 161 mosques were destroyed.¹¹⁵ The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs in GS stated on 21/1/2024 that one thousand out of 1,200 mosques were destroyed, requiring reconstruction efforts estimated at about \$500 million.¹¹⁶ Additionally, three churches, 140 government headquarters, and 433 schools and universities (99 completely and 334 partially) were destroyed. Thirty hospitals and 53 health centers are out of service, with 25 hospitals damaged and 122 ambulances destroyed.¹¹⁷ Fifty media outlet headquarters were also affected.¹¹⁸ About 18% of the GS agricultural areas were damaged, with the most significant impact seen in the northern Gaza governorates. Approximately 39% of agricultural lands in North Gaza and 27% in the Gaza governorate were affected.

Furthermore, residents of GS lack basic necessities of life, such as housing, food and water. UNRWA reported that at least 40% of Gaza’s population is at risk of famine, highlighting the severe hunger crisis that has made Gaza one of the most famine-stricken areas in the world.¹¹⁹

The Israeli Army Radio indicated that military estimates suggest the war will not succeed in completely eliminating Hamas’ capabilities to launch rockets at Israel. The radio quoted army officials saying that deepening the fighting and ground operations contribute to degrading Hamas’ capabilities and those of other organizations, but do not completely eliminate them. Military officials noted that the army’s ability to intercept long-range rocket launch platforms has improved, but it is challenging to reduce short-range rocket fire on Gaza Envelope areas to zero.¹²⁰

Despite Israel’s claims of achievements, it suffered significant losses, the largest in its history, during that confrontation, which was described as unprecedented. On

7/10/2023, Israel admitted to having 242 captives held by Hamas, of which 137 are still detained in Gaza.

One of the significant achievements of Operation al-Aqsa Flood was the announcement by Al-Qassam Brigades on the first day of the operation that the “Gaza Division” had been completely defeated. This division, operating under the command of the Southern Military Region of the Israeli army, is an elite force stationed at the Re'im military base, 7 km from GS. The Re'im base was among the primary targets of Al-Qassam Brigades. The “Gaza Division” is responsible for border security adjacent to Gaza, conducting assassination operations and neutralizing discovered tunnels in the Gaza Envelope. It consists of two brigades: Northern and Southern.

Hamas Deputy Political Bureau Chief Saleh al-'Aruri (assassinated later on 2/1/2024), revealed that Operation al-Aqsa Flood was designed around Al-Qassam fighters storming the Gaza Envelope and targeting the “Gaza Division,” responsible for the Gaza siege, assassinations, and killings carried out against Palestinians in GS. Although the plan anticipated “battles with the Gaza Division to last long hours, Al-Qassam fighters were surprised by the division’s rapid collapse within a few short hours. This allowed them easy access to its command center, airport, kibbutzim and nearby settlements,” after surviving Israeli soldiers fled, while many others killed or captured.¹²¹

Nearly three months after the events, Israeli Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi “formed a team of former military officials to probe the army’s operational failures in the lead-up to” the events of 7/10/2023, focusing on security, military and intelligence aspects. The team includes several former military officials, including former Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz, who will head the team, former Military Intelligence Directorate head Aharon Ze'evi-Farkash, former Southern Command leader Sami Turgeman and former Operations Directorate chief Yoav Har-Even.¹²²

The New York Times newspaper conducted an investigation “based on internal Israeli government documents and a review of the military’s cache of materials, known as Pandora, that contains tens of thousands of videos, including footage from body cameras worn” by Hamas fighters and closed-circuit surveillance cameras. The newspaper interviewed dozens of officers, enlisted troops and eyewitnesses, who reported that the military failure experienced by Israel during the 7/10/2023 attack was due to the fact that the Israeli Forces “did not even have a plan to

respond to a large-scale Hamas attack on Israeli soil,” “coupled with a series of intelligence missteps in the months and years before the attack.”¹²³

The number of Israelis killed in the conflict, whose names were allowed to be published, stands at 1,200 Israelis, with over 7,262 injured, including 5 thousand soldiers, of whom 3 thousand are expected to be permanently disabled. The Israeli military has confirmed the deaths of more than 181 of its soldiers since the start of the ground operation in Gaza on 27/10/2023, with 2,707 others injured. Additionally, they acknowledged the deaths of more than 1,200 on 7/10/2023, including 328 officers and soldiers, 57 police officers, 10 Shabak members and 845 “civilians.”¹²⁴ The Israeli Ministry of Health reported an increase in injuries to 5,431 as of 22/10/2023, most occurring on 7/10/2023.¹²⁵ Palestinian resistance factions in Gaza have caused 15 deaths and about 700 injuries by firing approximately 12 thousand rockets at Israeli cities.¹²⁶

Israeli affairs expert Muhannad Mustafa noted that the casualty rate among officers in the Israeli army is the highest in Tel Aviv’s wartime history.¹²⁷ Officers accounted for 23% of total Israeli military casualties in the war on GS as of 28/12/2023, whose names were allowed to be published. Among them were 56 platoon leaders, 43 company commanders, 8 battalion commanders and 5 brigade commanders.¹²⁸

The Israeli Public Broadcasting Corporation KAN reported “that 29 soldiers were killed in ‘friendly fire and operational incidents’ during the ground offensive in Gaza.” Meanwhile, *The Jerusalem Post* revealed that “the Military Rabbinate has pronounced 15 soldiers dead, despite their bodies being missing or held by Hamas.”¹²⁹ On 18/11/2023, David Oren Baruch, director of the Mount Herzl Military Cemetery, stated in a video released by the Israeli Ministry of Defense that “Only in the Mount Herzl cemetery did we bury 50 soldiers in 48 hours,” and added “We are now going through a period every hour there is a funeral, every hour and a half a funeral.”¹³⁰

Reports from the battlefield by Palestinian resistance factions at the end of 2023 indicate that the resistance disabled more than 896 military vehicles, including tanks, bulldozers and troop carriers, either partially or completely, since the beginning of the ground incursion. The Palestine Information Center—Mo3ta analyzed 885 announcements by Al-Qassam Brigades about operations carried out by their fighters across various fronts during the ground battle. These included

38 announcements confirming the killing of 278 officers and soldiers in targeting infantry soldiers, special units and rescue teams. Another 42 announcements confirmed that 299 officers and soldiers were either killed or injured, and 92 announcements indicated that officers and soldiers were either killed or injured without specifying numbers, using phrases like “a large number,” “dozens,” “all members of the force,” “all fallen,” or “eliminating the remainder.” Additionally, the fate of the crews of destroyed vehicles, whether wholly or partially, was not mentioned.¹³¹

Highlighting the discrepancy between the casualty numbers announced by the Israeli army and those estimated by Palestinian resistance factions, *Haaretz* revealed that discrepancies arose as the numbers of wounded Israeli soldiers reported by the Israeli army were found to be significantly lower than figures reported by Israeli hospitals. The Israeli newspaper noted that the army announced 1,593 wounded since the beginning of military operations in Gaza by 10/12/2023, while partial lists released by hospitals showed they received 4,591 wounded during the same period. This coincided with *Yedioth Ahronoth*'s report that the number of wounded soldiers reached 5 thousand, with more than 2 thousand officially recognized as disabled, before the newspaper retracted the report and reduced the number to 2 thousand instead of 5 thousand. Soroka Hospital in Beersheba announced that it had received 2,034 wounded soldiers with varying degrees of severity since the start of the ground war on 27/10/2023.¹³²

The Israeli Mental Health Center Directors' Forum sent a desperate letter to the relevant authority “concerning the difficult situation of the mental health system in Israel,” noting the growing demand for psychiatrists since the outbreak of the Gaza war. They stated that “the events of October 7 resulted in an estimated 300,000 additional patients who require treatment by a trained professional,” warning that the mental health consequences of the war are concerning.¹³³ Military sources reported that about 1,600 soldiers have suffered from signs of stress, shell shock, and combat fatigue since the start of the war in Gaza. Most of the soldiers sought treatment in the first four weeks after October 7, before the start of the ground operation in GS. About 3 thousand soldiers and reservist soldiers called the Israeli army mental health hotline, and 90 soldiers have been discharged from service due to psychological difficulties.¹³⁴

The Israeli economy experienced substantial losses, detailed in Chapter 5 of this report.



6. The WB During Operation al-Aqsa Flood

As previously mentioned, the WB experienced an unprecedented escalation in resistance activities during 2022–2023, unseen for many years. The Israeli occupation feared an uprising in WB in response to Operation al-Aqsa Flood, especially since most of the reasons for such an uprising were present: Most of the prisoners are from WB, and *al-Aqsa* Mosque and Jerusalem are geographically within WB, where these two issues are the main drivers of Operation al-Aqsa Flood. Additionally, the involvement of WB in Operation al-Aqsa Flood would likely be more painful for Israel, given the intermingling of Palestinian towns and settlements and the relative possibility of entering the 1948 occupied territories. Therefore, the Israeli authorities quickly imposed a comprehensive lockdown on WB, isolating cities from each other with military checkpoints, and unleashed settler militias to spread terror in the contact areas.¹³⁵ Meanwhile, the PA attempted to suppress any signs of escalation and uprisings, closed universities, and continued its security coordination with Israel.

From the start of Operation al-Aqsa Flood until the end of 2023, 319 Palestinians were killed in WB, including 74 children, five elderly people and nine prisoners, with the occupation still holding the bodies of 34 of them. Additionally, 3,822 were injured and 4,876 were arrested.¹³⁶ During the same period, WB, including East Jerusalem, witnessed a series of significant events demonstrating the Palestinian people's will to continue resisting and defending their legitimate rights. The Palestine Information Center—Mo3ta documented 4,438 resistance acts, including 1,360 impactful attacks (armed). These various resistance actions across different areas of WB resulted in the killing of eight Israelis and injuries to more than 122 others. These figures reflect the steadfast determination and defiance prevailing in WB, overcoming the Israeli efforts to neutralize it from the scene of resistance and support for GS.¹³⁷

Throughout Operation al-Aqsa Flood, daily shootings targeted settlements and military checkpoints, accompanied by popular confrontations, particularly in contact areas, and demonstrations in city centers. The intensity of unrest escalated daily. There is no doubt that the general mood in WB is supportive of resistance and highly agitated, with particularly hot spots in Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarm and Jericho.¹³⁸

7. Lebanon

Since the beginning of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, attention has turned towards Hizbullah in southern Lebanon and its stance on joining the confrontation, as its level of participation represents a significant factor in the course of the war. The group began targeting the occupied Lebanese Shebaa Farms on the morning of the second day of the war. On 8/10/2023, the “Imad Mughniyeh Groups in the Islamic Resistance,” affiliated with Hizbullah, announced they had “bombarded three Israeli occupation sites in the occupied Lebanese Shebaa Farms with a large number of artillery shells and guided missiles, hitting the sites directly,” according to a resistance statement. This was followed by a political announcement by the head of Hizbullah’s Executive Council, Hashem Safieddine, declaring, “The resistance in Lebanon is not neutral in the ongoing battle between the Palestinian resistance and the occupation forces.”¹³⁹

Subsequently, the intensity of the mutual attacks between Hizbullah and the Israeli army along the southern Lebanese border escalated, becoming the most violent since 2006. The attacks expanded to include deep areas within Lebanese territory, clearly violating UN Resolution 1701. These military operations raised questions about the outbreak of war on a second front... Hizbullah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah agreed with Hamas Deputy Political Bureau Chief Saleh al-‘Aruri and PIJ Secretary-General Ziad Nakhleh to “continue coordination and daily follow-up on developments in the ongoing war since 7/10/2023.”¹⁴⁰ In his first speech since Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Nasrallah said on 3/11/2023 that the Gaza war had extended to more than one front, stressing that it was a fully legitimate battle both humanly and morally. He emphasized that Israel should worry about the war’s expansion and escalation, and that Hizbullah succeeded in relieving pressure on the Gaza front by forcing the Israeli army to move a significant portion of its ground, air and naval forces to the northern front.¹⁴¹

Hizbullah announced that 147 of its members had been killed in confrontations with the Israeli army at the border as of 4/1/2024.¹⁴² The Israeli army acknowledged the killing of nine soldiers in attacks claimed by both Hizbullah and the Palestinian Islamic Resistance at the Lebanon border since the fighting began.¹⁴³

Nasrallah stated that the “Islamic Resistance carried out more than 670 operations over 3 months, targeting 48 border sites multiple times” since 8/10/2023. In a speech on 5/1/2024, he confirmed that “the Islamic Resistance conducted

494 attacks, including targeting 50 border points more than once.” He noted that “the Islamic Resistance also targeted and completely destroyed technical and intelligence equipment along the border.” Nasrallah announced the destruction of a large number of vehicles and tanks along the border, stating that “the operations were very exhausting for the enemy, which exercised extreme secrecy about its significant losses.”¹⁴⁴

In the same context, al-Fajr Forces, the military wing of *al-Jama‘ah al-Islamiyyah* in Lebanon, announced their support for the Palestinian people in Gaza. They reported launching multiple rocket attacks on Israeli sites, claiming direct hits. They confirmed that “our rocket salvos will continue and increase as long as the Zionist enemy persists in its aggression against our people in southern Lebanon and Gaza Strip,” also asserting “our ability to expand our response to deter their aggression.”¹⁴⁵ The Secretary-General of *al-Jama‘ah al-Islamiyyah*, Sheikh Muhammad Takkoush, said in an interview with *al-Akhbar* newspaper that the number of operations carried out by the al-Fajr Forces, against the Israeli forces after years of hiatus was “greater than announced,” indicating that the group is establishing a framework for those wishing to join the resistance. He noted that what Hizbullah and other Lebanese and Palestinian factions are doing on the southern front is effective in engaging the enemy and supporting the people of GS.¹⁴⁶

In Lebanon, the military wings of Hamas and PIJ have engaged in military operations from Lebanon, targeting Israeli sites and launching rocket barrages toward Israeli cities.

Since 7/10/2023, Hamas in Lebanon has intensified its operations along the southern Lebanese front, culminating in the establishment of Al-Aqsa Flood Vanguard on 4/12/2023. Alongside Hizbullah, Al-Qassam Brigades in Lebanon have played a prominent role in launching operations targeting Israeli sites and settlements along the Lebanese border. This underscores Hamas’s growing influence in Lebanon in recent years. Al-Qassam Brigades in Lebanon have claimed responsibility for multiple rocket launches toward Israel on several occasions. ‘Ali Baraka, head of the Hamas Department of National Relations Abroad, described these actions as “a symbolic show of solidarity with the Palestinian people, and a message to the Zionist enemy that we will not allow the Gaza’s resistance to be isolated.”¹⁴⁷

Al-Qassam Brigades in Lebanon launched concentrated rocket attacks, firing hundreds of rockets in multiple volleys towards cities and settlements in Galilee from southern Lebanon as part of Operation al-Aqsa Flood. In a military statement, the brigades described these attacks as “a step towards liberation and return,” “a show of solidarity with Jerusalem and the blessed *al-Aqsa* Mosque,” and a response to the massacres of Palestinian civilians in Gaza.¹⁴⁸

Hamas and Al-Qassam Brigades also reported that 11 of their members were killed in Lebanon. On 14/10/2023, Al-Qassam Brigades announced that three of their members from the Palestinian RCs in Lebanon were killed: Ahmad ‘Uthman, Yahya ‘Abdul Razzaq and Suhaib Kayed. They were killed during an operation against Israeli forces in the northern occupied territories, after successfully infiltrating the area and engaging in combat with the Israeli army.¹⁴⁹ Additionally, on 21/11/2023, Al-Qassam Brigades announced the killing of Al-Qassam commander Khalil Hamed Khraze (Abu Khalid), who was assassinated by Israeli treachery in southern Lebanon, along with four others in an Israeli airstrike.¹⁵⁰

On 2/1/2024, Israel assassinated Hamas Deputy Political Bureau Chief Saleh al-‘Aruri and 6 of his comrades in an airstrike on the southern suburbs of Beirut. Hamas Political Bureau Chief Isma‘il Haniyyah described al-‘Aruri’s assassination as “an act of terrorism and a violation of Lebanon’s sovereignty,” and announced that Israel had also assassinated Al-Qassam Brigade leaders Samir Fendi and ‘Azzam al-Aqra‘, along with four other Hamas members: Mahmud Shahin, Muhammad Bashasha, Muhammad al-Rayyis and Ahmad Hammud.¹⁵¹

The PIJ reported that 7 of its fighters were killed, on the Lebanese southern border. The group stated that during the ongoing Operation al-Aqsa Flood, fighters from Al-Quds Brigades infiltrated an Israeli northern site on 9/10/2023. They engaged in a close-quarters combat, resulting in the killing of two Israeli officers, including the deputy commander of the 300th Brigade, and injuries to five soldiers. During the operation, two Al-Quds Brigades fighters, Hamzah Musa and Riyadh Qablaway, were killed.¹⁵² On 21/10/2023, the brigades announced that Muhammad Musa was killed in southern Lebanon while performing his resistance duty in support of Gaza.¹⁵³ On 30/10/2023, they also announced that Ibrahim ‘Uthman and Mustafa Hussain were killed during a firefight near the Lebanese border while attempting to breach the Israeli security fence at the Hanita military site.¹⁵⁴ On 29/12/2023, Ahmad Jibril and Muhammad al-Farij were killed on the borders in southern Lebanon, while fulfilling their duties in Operation al-Aqsa Flood.¹⁵⁵

8. Yemen

On 31/10/2023, the 25th day of the Israeli war on GS, Yemen, through the caretaker government affiliated with the Ansar Allah Movement (Houthis), officially announced the entry of Yemeni forces into Operation al-Aqsa Flood. This announcement came after targeting Israeli sites with missiles and drones in two operations, stating that it was “in support of our oppressed brothers in Palestine and that the Yemeni forces will continue to carry out more qualitative strikes with missiles and drones until the Israeli aggression stops.”¹⁵⁶

The leader of the Ansar Allah Movement in Yemen, ‘Abdul Malik al-Houthi, confirmed in the early days of Operation al-Aqsa Flood that there was coordination among the “Axis of Jihad and Resistance,” and that “the coordination includes defined levels for events and [clear] red lines, including if the US intervenes directly, we are ready to participate with missile and drone strikes and military options.”¹⁵⁷ The head of the Caretaker Government of the Ansar Allah Movement in Yemen, ‘Abdul ‘Aziz bin Habtour, also threatened to target Israeli ships in the Red Sea.¹⁵⁸

Subsequently, the military operations carried out by the Houthis from Yemen increased, reaching the point of intercepting ships heading to Israel, and prompting the activation of the Israeli missile interception system in southern Israel.¹⁵⁹ On 14/11/2023, Ansar Allah announced the start of a new phase of targeting Israel, involving “taking all practical measures to implement the issued directives regarding the appropriate handling of any Israeli ship in the Red Sea,” until the war on GS stops. The group declared that it would target all types of ships flying the Israeli flag, operated by Israeli companies, or owned by Israeli companies. They urged all countries to “withdraw their citizens working on the crews of these ships, avoid shipping on these ships or dealing with them, and notify their ships to stay away from these vessels.”¹⁶⁰

Indeed, on 19/11/2023, Ansar Allah seized an Israeli ship and tugged it to Yemeni shores.¹⁶¹ Subsequently, the number of operations against these ships increased. On 4/1/2024, US Vice Admiral Brad Cooper stated that the Houthis had carried out 25 attacks in the Red Sea since that date. The Houthi attacks disrupted international shipping, prompting some companies to suspend Red Sea transit operations and switch to longer, more expensive routes around Africa.¹⁶²

The repeated Houthi attacks increased pressure on the US president to respond militarily. On 18/12/2023, the US, UK and other countries launched Operation Prosperity Guardian to protect ships targeted by the Houthis in the Red Sea.¹⁶³ Ten Yemenis were killed, and two others were injured on 31/12/2023, in a US strike targeting boats that attacked a container ship in the southern Red Sea.¹⁶⁴

9. Syria and Iraq

Following Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the continuous Israeli war on GS, missile and drone attacks on US targets in both Iraq and Syria intensified. These attacks followed threats from Iraqi factions to target US interests in Iraq due to US support for Israel in its war on GS. Under the banner of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI), a coalition that announced its formation and mission post-Operation al-Aqsa Flood, expanded its target scope. Its factions claimed responsibility for targeting critical locations in Eilat, the Israeli Karish gas rig off Israel's northern coast,¹⁶⁵ and a "critical target" in Haifa using al-Arqaq upgraded long-range cruise missile.¹⁶⁶ They also launched rockets towards the occupied Syrian Golan, asserting that the attacks hit their targets directly.

These operations pressured the US administration, with increasing potential losses among US soldiers. In the period from 17/10 to 31/12/2023, US forces had faced at least 128 attacks in Syria and Iraq. The IRI and others targeted several US bases with missiles or drones, including Ayn al-Asad, Kharab al-Jir, al-Shaddadi, Harir, al-Tanf, al-Rmelan, al-Malikiyah, and around the Conoco and Omar oil fields, as well as US forces near Erbil Airport and the Green Village.¹⁶⁷ In response, the US carried out multiple strikes on those factions.

10. Tunnels in GS

Tunnels in GS play a crucial role in ground warfare, shifting defenders into attackers and vice versa. Israeli forces entered GS with their tanks encountering no initial resistance or front lines, allowing the resistance to seize the initiative. These tunnels have significantly challenged Israeli tanks, aircraft and drones, disrupting their traditional superiority. They have been pivotal in bolstering the resistance's resilience during past wars with Israel, enabling the resistance to emerge with minimal losses each time. During Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the subsequent Israeli war, the resistance maintained its military capabilities and surprised the Israeli army, inflicting heavy losses.



These tunnels have remained effective, despite the fact that at the end of 2021, Israel completed a 65-kilometer “upgraded barrier” with GS. The fence includes an underground barrier that stretches along the entire border with Gaza, along with a maritime border wall. It has a system of advanced sensor and monitoring devices to detect tunnels, and is combined with a 6-meter high above-ground fence similar to the one that runs along the Israeli-Egyptian border. Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said the barrier “deprives Hamas of one of their capabilities, and places an iron wall, sensors and concrete between it and the residents of the South.”¹⁶⁸

It is estimated that there are three main types of tunnels used in GS:¹⁶⁹

- a. Offensive tunnels:** These tunnels are utilized for border penetration and launching attacks behind Israeli forces’ lines. They also serve as launch sites for rocket launchers and mortar positions.
- b. Defensive tunnels:** Within Palestinian territories, these tunnels are employed to set up ambushes and transport fighters away from the view of Israeli aircraft and raids.
- c. Logistical tunnels:** Functioning as command and control centers, these tunnels oversee operations and direct fighters. They accommodate field commanders, store ammunition and military equipment, and assemble forces. Internal communication rooms within these tunnels facilitate coordination among resistance members.

The Israeli military failed to detect Hamas’ offensive tunnels aimed at settlements in the “Gaza Envelope” as part of the preparations for Operation al-Aqsa Flood. On 17/12/2023, the Israeli army announced the discovery of a 4 km tunnel north of Gaza near the Envelope settlements, presenting it as an achievement despite uncovering it 60 days into their incursion.

A military expert highlighted that Gaza has approximately 1,300 tunnels, deeming the discovery insignificant after more than two months of conflict.¹⁷⁰

The “tunnel failure” was highlighted in an investigative report published by *Yedioth Ahronoth* on 24/12/2023, authored by investigative journalist and military and intelligence affairs specialist Ronen Bergman. The failure became evident when the Al-Qassam Brigades announced that the discovered tunnel was an offensive one, prepared and used in Operation al-Aqsa Flood. Bergman reviewed

the failure to uncover the offensive tunnels leading toward the “Gaza Envelope” that Hamas continued to dig in March 2023, in preparation for the surprise attack on 7 October, without detection by the various Israeli security agencies. Bergman emphasized that the Israeli army was not adequately prepared for tunnel detection and destruction operations.¹⁷¹

When the ground campaign began on 27/10/2023, most Israeli security agencies had two primary estimates: first, that Hamas had 100–200 km of tunnels under Gaza; second, that by the end of 2020, it had no offensive tunnels toward the “Gaza Envelope” settlements. However, according to the Israeli newspaper report, these estimates were proven incorrect when, in the early days of the war, a Hamas tunnel near the Beit Hanoun/ Erez crossing was discovered.¹⁷²

Regarding the initial estimates about the tunnel network length, the newspaper’s investigation revealed they “were not correct,” and the Israeli army now estimates that Hamas has 500–600 km of tunnels under GS. The failure was not only in estimating the tunnel network’s length but also in its width, depth, fortifications, the extent of its winding paths, sudden directional changes (zigzags), and the amount of fuel, food and water reserves stored in them, thus determining the duration Hamas militants can endure in them. The investigation added that the Israeli army admitted the difficulty of detecting and demolishing tunnels without endangering its soldiers while also ensuring their destruction without causing the collapse of entire residential neighborhoods. The Israeli army plans to implement a work plan lasting up to two years to “dismantle the tunnels.” However, Bergman wrote that the plan is vague and unclear, especially regarding “deepening” Israeli control over the Strip. This goal is unlikely to be achieved due to battles and international pressures, pushing the army to withdraw to the security fence, leaving the plan unfulfilled.¹⁷³

The aftermath of the ground war highlights the preparedness of the resistance leadership behind Operation al-Aqsa Flood, anticipating the ground assault amidst unprecedented levels of genocide and destruction in Israel’s 75-year history. The meticulous preparation of tunnels was evident. Six months post-war, the resistance maintains readiness with sufficient equipment and resources, reflecting the sacrifices in lives, finances, engineering and years of effort. This underscores the advanced leadership within Gaza’s resistance.



Fifth: The Killed and Wounded

In 2022, a total of 224 Palestinians were killed (see table 4/4), including 53 in GS and 171 in WB. The Palestinian Ministry of Health reported that 53 children were among the dead.¹⁷⁴ In 2023, a total of 22,404 Palestinians were killed, with 22,141 from 7/10/2023 until the end of the year, 98% of whom were in GS (21,822 killed), including about 9 thousand children and 6,450 women. In WB, 319 were killed since 7/10/2023, including 111 children and 4 women. Additionally, over 7 thousand people were reported missing in GS, 67% of whom were children and women.¹⁷⁵ In 2022, 10,500 Palestinians were injured,¹⁷⁶ while more than 60,273 Palestinians were injured in 2023 (56,451 in GS and 3,822 in WB).¹⁷⁷

The Shabak recorded the killing of 31 Israelis in 2022, while in 2023, it recorded the killing of 43 Israelis¹⁷⁸ (excluding those recorded during Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which indicate the killing of about 1,400 Israelis),¹⁷⁹ due to operations carried out by Palestinians. In 2022, 281 Israelis were injured, compared to 181 Israelis in 2023¹⁸⁰ (excluding those recorded during Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which indicate over 7,262 injuries)¹⁸¹ (see table 4/4).

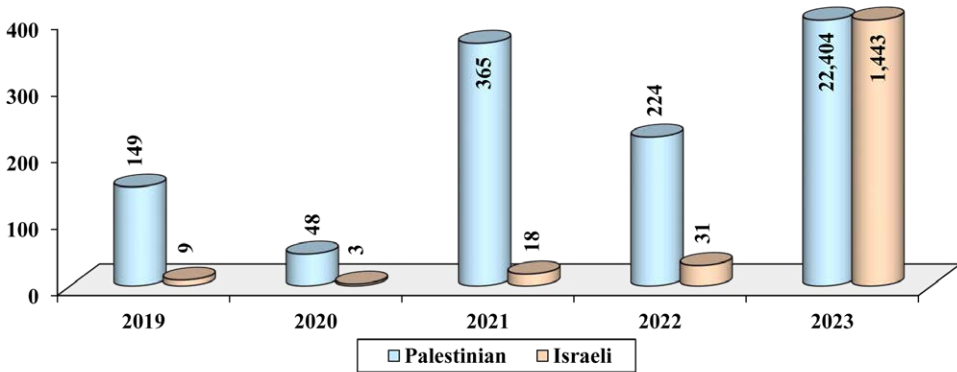
Table 4/4: The Killed and Wounded Among Palestinians and Israelis in WB and GS 2019–2023¹⁸²

Year	Killed		Wounded	
	Palestinian	Israeli	Palestinian	Israeli
2019	149	9	15,287	65
2020	48	3	2,614	46
2021	365	18	17,042	190
2022	224	31	10,500	281
2023	22,404*	1,443**	60,273	7,443**

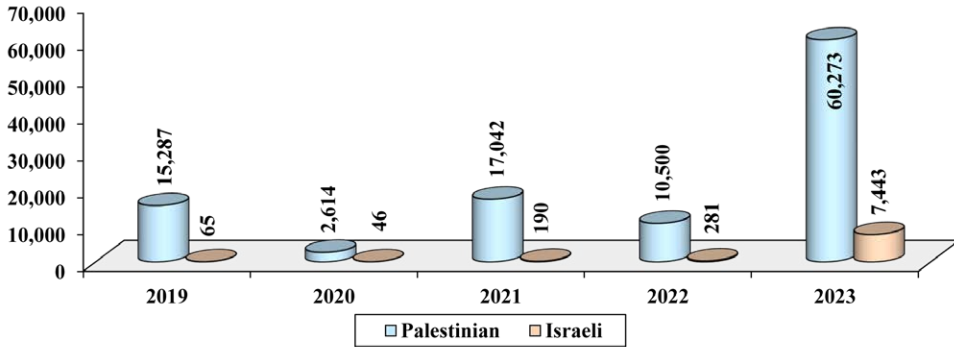
* Additionally, more than 7 thousand are missing.

** Information released by Israeli authorities until the report was prepared.

Palestinians and Israelis Killed in WB and GS 2019–2023



Palestinians and Israelis Wounded in WB and GS 2019–2023



Sixth: Prisoners and Detainees

In 2022 and 2023, there were significant changes in the arrest operations carried out by Israeli forces, primarily related to the increasing resistance against the occupation. Systematic arrest operations have always been a central Israeli policy in its attempts to undermine the resistance that could contribute to the realization of self-determination and freedom for the Palestinian people.

On 12/12/2022, there were 4,700 prisoners in Israeli prisons, including 34 women, 150 children, and 5 PLC members. Of these, 4,400 were from WB, including 400 from East Jerusalem, 200 from GS, and 100 from the 1948 occupied territories, along with dozens of Arab detainees of various nationalities. 835 were classified as administrative detainees, or detainees pending trial, or what Israel calls “unlawful combatants” (see table 5/4).

By the end of December 2023, the number of prisoners had reached 8,800, excluding detainees from GS after 7/10/2023. Precise statistics for categories such as children, women (62 women in Damon prison alone), and elderly prisoners are not available. The number of administrative detainees was 3,291 and those classified by Israel as unlawful combatants were 661. This indicates the total number of prisoners increased by 3,550 since before 7/10/2023, and the number of administrative detainees increased by 1,971 (see table 5/4).

The Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association—Addameer reported a significant increase in arrests in 2023, with the issue of Palestinian prisoners and detainees undergoing major changes not seen since the years of the *Intifadahs*. This change coincided with the rise of the most extreme government in the history of the Israeli state at the beginning of the year, with the most significant shift occurring after 7/10/2023, due to ongoing comprehensive aggression against the Palestinian people and the genocide in GS.

Addameer stated that the Israeli forces conducted about 11 thousand arrests in 2023 in WB, including East Jerusalem, and GS before 7/10/2023. This included 1,085 children and 300 women.¹⁸³ Furthermore, there were over 2,600 arrests in GS after 7/10/2023,¹⁸⁴ reflecting a 95% increase compared to 2022, which saw 7 thousand arrests, including 882 children and 172 women.¹⁸⁵

The number of Palestinian prisoners from GS detained by Israeli forces has reached record levels since the war began on 7/10/2023. The Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor noted that the Israeli army permitted its soldiers to carry out arbitrary, random and widespread arrests in GS under the provisions of the “Unlawful Combatants Law.” This law “deprives prisoners and detainees of all rights accorded to them by international humanitarian law and human rights standards, including legal protections.” Amended at the start of the genocide in GS, it allows for the detention of Palestinians from GS for a maximum of 75 days, “with the possibility of an indefinite extension, based on secret evidence that neither the detainee nor his attorney is allowed to view, depriving them of their right to a fair trial and legal presentation.” According to data provided by the Israel Prison Service (IPS) cited by the monitor, the number of Palestinians detained from Gaza under this law reached about 800 detainees by 9/3/2024, alongside thousands more held in military detention facilities.¹⁸⁶ The Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor reported on 23/2/2024 that the number of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons from GS since the beginning of the aggression had reached 3,120.¹⁸⁷

The arrests in 2022 and 2023, as in previous years, affected all segments and groups of Palestinian society, including children, women, academics, released prisoners, patients, the elderly, human rights activists, journalists and parliamentarians. These arrests involved storming homes or hospitals, abductions from the street and workplaces, the kidnapping of the sick and injured, or abductions by “Arabized undercover security units,” as well as detentions at crossings and checkpoints. Moreover, dozens of fishermen were arrested at sea in GS.

The pattern of arrests fluctuated throughout 2022, averaging 583 arrests per month, or about 19 daily arrests. In 2023, the arrest rate was significantly higher than 2022, with a monthly average of 1,133 detainees and a daily rate of about 37. The largest number of arrests in 2022 and 2023 occurred in the Jerusalem area, with over 3 thousand arrests in 2022, accounting for about 43% of total arrests, and 3,261 arrests in 2023, comprising about 24% of total arrests.¹⁸⁸

The Israeli authorities issued 2,409 administrative detention orders in 2022, including new orders and renewals, marking a significant aspect of the changes that year. Administrative detention saw a sharp increase in 2023, with the highest numbers in over 30 years, exceeding 5,500 orders, including 3,819 new orders and 1,689 renewals. More than 2,670 orders were issued after 7/10/2023, accounting for about 49% of the orders issued in 2023.¹⁸⁹

In 2022, the Israeli courts issued five life sentences, followed by seven life sentences in 2023. The tally of death from the prisoner movement rose to 243, with six prisoners dying in 2022 and 10 in 2023. Notably, 17 killed from the prisoner movement had their bodies withheld by the Israeli authorities until the end of 2023, including eight who died in 2023. Among these was Khader ‘Adnan, who died on 2/5/2023 after an 86-day hunger strike in protest against his arbitrary detention. Additionally, six prisoners died inside Israeli prisons after 7/10/2023. Israeli media reported that other detainees from GS died in the Sde Teiman detention camp in Beersheba, but Israeli authorities refuse to disclose any information about the fate of GS detainees.¹⁹⁰

In 2022 and 2023, there was an increase in raids and searches by special units in the sections housing prisoners in Israeli prisons and detention centers. This increase was particularly noticeable after the extremist Itamar Ben-Gvir became Minister of National Security of Israel and oversaw prison administration. Prisoner organizations documented numerous testimonies of prisoners subjected

to assaults and abuse by special repression forces, including direct beatings and severe mistreatment amounting to torture. In 2023, significant shifts occurred, with prisoners conducting comprehensive protest actions in all prisons in response to these measures. Ben-Gvir aimed to strip prisoners of their remaining rights, affecting basic rights such as the allowed duration for showers and the amount of water reaching their sections. In addition, there was an escalation in repeated raids, suppression, isolation and imposition of punishments such as fines, denial of family visits and denial of access to the cantina. These measures affected all prisoners, including women and children.

With the start of the GS war, Israeli authorities and IPS tightened their grip and retaliated against Palestinian prisoners. The repression and brutality peaked since 7/10/2023, with numerous injuries recorded among male and female prisoners assaulted by repression units. The abuse methods included deprivation of water and food, withdrawal of essential life supplies, leaving only the bare minimum, isolation from the outside world, and placing dozens of detainees in small, cramped cells. As winter set in, the harsh conditions in the prisons worsened. Israeli forces prevented the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from conducting any prison visits, and family visits were completely halted.¹⁹¹

As a result of the IPS policies towards prisoners, including medical neglect, violations, administrative detention and unjust trials, prisoners conducted numerous hunger strikes, both collective and individual, during 2022 and 2023. The hunger strikes and “Battles of Empty Stomachs” were used as a weapon to mitigate oppressive policies, regain their freedom and secure their rights.

Table 5/4: Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli Prisons 2019–2023¹⁹²

Year	Total no. of detainees	WB*	GS	Serving life sentences	Women	Children
2019	5,000	4,634	296	541	41	180
2020	4,400	4,075	255	543	41	170
2021	4,550	4,250	230	544	32	170
2022	4,700	4,400	200	551	34	150
2023	9,000**	8,520	280**	561	70	200

* Approximate figures according Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association—Addameer.

** Does not include GS detainees after 7/10/2023.

Administrative Detention

Despite being prohibited under international law and violating basic human rights, the Israeli forces continued to issue administrative detention orders throughout 2022 and 2023 targeting various segments of Palestinian society, including PLC members, human rights activists, workers, students, lawyers and traders. As of 6/11/2023, the number of administrative detainees held by Israel without specific charges or trial had risen to 2,070, including 16 PLC members, compared to 835 at the end of 2022, including 5 PLC members; 500 at the end of 2021, 380 at the end of 2020, and 461 at the end of 2019.¹⁹³

Table 6/4: Administrative Detainees 2019–2023¹⁹⁴

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Administrative detainees	461	380	500	835	2,070

In opposition to this criminal practice of administrative detention, 50 administrative detainees initiated an open hunger strike on 25/9/2022 under the slogan “Our strike is freedom.” Concurrently, these detainees boycotted all military court hearings related to administrative detention. Throughout 2022, approximately 75 prisoners undertook multiple hunger strikes to protest various oppressive measures imposed by the Israeli authorities. Some of these strikes successfully met the prisoners’ demands, many of which were aimed at ending administrative detention. In 2023, notable events included the death of detainee Khader ‘Adnan and a 75-day hunger strike by administrative detainee Kayed al-Fasfous, which ended with the onset of Operation al-Aqsa Flood.¹⁹⁵

Seventh: Israeli GS Siege

Israel maintained a continuous siege on GS for the 17th consecutive year, marking the longest such blockade in modern history. The measures included heightened restrictions on both commercial crossings and individual movement, with no significant structural changes observed in 2022 and 2023. Despite purported easing by Israeli authorities, the core restrictions on movement of people and goods remained unchanged.

In 2022 and 2023, the Rafah border crossing remained open for humanitarian cases and returning individuals stranded outside GS. However, operational capacity was severely limited and slow in 2022, allowing only 144,042 departures and 132,162 returns. Meanwhile, Egyptian authorities refused travel for 5,476 Palestinians, while those registered with the Palestinian Ministry of Interior faced ongoing barriers to exit, according to the Gaza Crossings and Borders Authority. Returnees to GS endured prolonged, repetitive and unjustified inspection procedures by Egyptian authorities.¹⁹⁶

Regarding the movement of goods and commercial commodities, Israel maintained strict restrictions on the import of goods classified as “dual-use materials” throughout 2022 and 2023. These materials, despite their civilian applications, are deemed by Israeli authorities as potentially enhancing the combat capabilities of Palestinian resistance groups. The official list encompasses 62 types of dual-use materials, which include hundreds of essential goods and materials. For instance, the category of “communication equipment” alone encompasses dozens of specific items. The presence of these materials on the dual-use list is crucial for daily life, and their restricted import contributes to deteriorating conditions in infrastructure, economics, health and education. The materials include communication equipment, pumps, large generators, rebars, steel pipes of all diameters, metal welding devices, welding rods, various types of wood, X-ray imaging devices, cranes, heavy machinery, batteries of various types and numerous fertilizers...

For the 17th consecutive year, Israeli authorities maintained a ban on exporting all goods from GS to WB, the 1948 occupied territories, and elsewhere globally. The only exception was a limited allowance for the export of minimal quantities of Gazan products, predominantly agricultural commodities. In 2022–2023, these exports accounted for just 12.7% of the Strip’s total monthly exports before closure was imposed in June 2007. This export ban has significantly worsened economic conditions, leading to the closure of thousands of factories and contributing to rising unemployment and poverty rates.¹⁹⁷

The Israeli authorities remained its naval blockade along the GS shores, as they denied fishermen’s access to fishing breeding areas. Despite the proclaimed authorization for fishermen to fish at a distance between 6–15 nautical miles, the Israeli authorities decreased the fishing area or closed the sea completely dozens

of times alleging the security situations and the launch of incendiary balloons and rockets from Gaza.¹⁹⁸

In a move that resulted in a severe deterioration of the humanitarian, economic and social conditions for more than two million Palestinians living in the Strip, a step described by Human Rights Watch as a “call to commit war crime,”¹⁹⁹ Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant announced a series of measures in response to Hamas’s attack on 7/10/2023. He stated, “I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed.” Additionally, Energy Minister Yisrael Katz stated, “I instructed that the water supply from Israel to Gaza be cut off immediately.”²⁰⁰

These actions amount to an official Israeli acknowledgment of deliberate starvation and dehydration, alongside acts of killing and widespread destruction, under an unprecedented cloak of international silence that borders on complicity. Since the onset of aggression on 7/10/2023, GS has been subjected to a total blockade by Israeli forces, severely restricting the entry of essential supplies like food, water and medicine. Only a handful of trucks were permitted access, primarily designated for the southern GS. Moreover, the Israeli forces have not hesitated to bomb bakeries, shops, markets, food warehouses, poultry farms and vast agricultural areas, directly targeting Gaza’s farmers. These actions suggest a deliberate policy aimed at exhausting the Strip’s remaining food resources and intentionally starving its civilian population.

On 11/10/2023, GS plunged into complete darkness as its sole power plant ceased operations. Only facilities and houses equipped with alternative energy sources remained powered... This outage significantly impacted various services in GS, including water supply, telecommunications and internet access, leaving Gaza in almost complete isolation from the world with strict closures at entry and exit points. The Israeli bombing also damaged numerous municipal facilities, impairing their ability to provide water and essential services to residents. This has led to the breakdown of waste disposal systems and portends an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe. Hundreds of thousands have been forced to use contaminated water due to the lack of clean water sources, posing serious health risks.²⁰¹

Before Operation al-Aqsa Flood, individual movement in GS was heavily restricted by Israeli authorities at the Beit Hanoun/ Erez crossing in northern GS.



Most residents were denied exit or re-entry, with limited exceptions made for specific groups: critically ill patients and their companions, Palestinian citizens holding Israeli citizenship, foreign journalists, staff of international humanitarian organizations, merchants, businessmen, families of prisoners in Israeli prisons, and some travelers via al-Karamah border crossing.²⁰²

Israel imposed restrictions even on those eligible to travel under the few exceptions to the closure policy, and most residents of GS do not qualify for these exceptions. They also prevented young Palestinian Christians in GS from visiting Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth during the Christmas holidays for religious observances.²⁰³

In addition to the regular stringent restrictions on Palestinian movement, Israel frequently uses border closures as punitive measures. For instance, during the GS war in August 2022 and May 2023, and Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Israel completely shut down the Beit Hanoun/ Erez crossing and maintained additional restrictions on movement even after reaching a ceasefire.

Eighth: The Peace Process

During the period covered by this report, there were no significant efforts or initiatives aimed at reviving the “peace process.” Instead, statements were made by US President Joe Biden and his administration, as well as the EU, affirming their commitment to the “two-state solution.” However, these statements were coupled with the assertion that progress would be delayed indefinitely, without specifying which party primarily obstructs advancement towards this goal. During a visit to Israel on 18/10/2023, just days after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Biden reiterated his commitment to establishing a Palestinian state despite the ongoing war between Israel and the resistance in Gaza, stating, “As hard as it is, we must keep pursuing peace. We must keep pursuing a path so that Israel and the Palestinian people can both live safely, in security, in dignity, and in peace.”²⁰⁴

The European stance consistently supports the “two-state solution,” as reiterated by the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, at the 8th Regional Forum of the Union for the Mediterranean, “There will not be peace or security for Israel without a Palestinian state.”²⁰⁵

When discussing this topic, both parties involved often face blame for the ongoing stalemate in the peace process. The Israeli government is not ready, and the Palestinian side remains divided, lacking a unified Palestinian representative. However, an objective evaluation reveals that the primary obstacle to resuming negotiations and reaching an agreement has been the successive Israeli governments. In early 2023, a new Israeli government adopted a programmatic goal of annexing “Judea and Samaria” to Israel, viewing them as an integral part of Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel). This coalition included the Religious Zionism party, which promotes a “Decisive Plan,” asserting that the Israeli government can achieve what previous administrations have not—resolving the conflict outright rather than managing or mitigating it, swiftly and decisively pursuing colonial, settlement, racist and aggressive goals.

The official Palestinian side continued to pursue negotiations as its approach to the conflict, calling for talks to resume from where they left off, advocating for an international peace conference, and requesting the UN and other countries to recognize the full membership of the State of Palestine. They also demanded that the Israeli government commit to negotiations and obligations stemming from the Oslo Accords and its annexes, even though Israeli governments have long unilaterally undermined the Oslo Accords, reneging on their commitments. The Israeli governments have not officially withdrawn from the Oslo process to avoid bearing responsibility for its demise and to maintain an excuse for the official Palestinian side to cling to it. This stance also helps avoid angering the US, Europe and other international community members. Israel’s reluctance to officially repeal the Oslo Accords has not prevented it from effectively bypassing them through continued creeping annexation, gradual land grabs, and creating occupation, settlement and racist realities on the ground, imposing a situation that makes the Israeli solution the only practically possible outcome.

President Mahmud ‘Abbas touched on these demands in his speeches during 2022 and 2023, especially at the UN General Assembly. In the 77th session of the General Assembly on 23/9/2022, he said:

Israel, which disavows the resolutions of international legitimacy, has decided not to be our partner in the peace process. Israel is the one that destroyed the Oslo Accords it signed with the Palestine Liberation Organization. It is the one that, with its current policy, has premeditated and determined to destroy the two-state solution, which proves with conclusive



evidence that they do not believe in peace, but in the policy of imposing a fait accompli by brute force and aggression, and therefore there is no longer an Israeli partner with whom to talk. It thus ends the contractual relationship with us, and makes the relationship between the State of Palestine and Israel a relationship between an occupying state and an occupied people, and nothing else. We will not deal with Israel except on this basis, and we demand the international community to deal with it on this basis as well.²⁰⁶

Despite the criticism in ‘Abbas’s speech, the official leadership’s policies remained focused on waiting and survival. This effectively led to an increasing coexistence with Israel’s occupation policy as a fait accompli, pursued by successive Israeli governments.

‘Abbas also requested the implementation of “General Assembly resolution 181, which formed the basis for the two-state solution in 1947, as well as resolution 194 calling for the right of return of Palestine refugees.” He praised the speeches of US President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid for supporting the two-state solution, noting that “this is positive,” but pointed out that the:

real test of the seriousness and credibility of this position is for the Israeli government to sit at the negotiating table immediately to implement the two-State solution on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative and the cessation of all unilateral measures that undermine the two-state solution.²⁰⁷

The president also renewed his call for holding an international peace conference, during the first China-Arab summit held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on 9/12/2022, and to “achieve international protection for the Palestinian people, and implement UN resolutions related to the Palestinian cause.”²⁰⁸

A Chinese initiative for a solution was proposed, indicating a bid to activate the Chinese role. During his meeting with Palestinian President Mahmud ‘Abbas, Chinese President Xi Jinping renewed his country’s desire to mediate between Palestinians and Israelis for a comprehensive, just and durable solution to the Palestine issue.

President Xi put forward a three-point proposal:

1. The establishment of an independent state of Palestine that enjoys full sovereignty on the basis of the 1967 borders and with east Jerusalem as its capital.

2. Palestine's economic and livelihood needs should be met, and the international community needs to step up development assistance and humanitarian aid to Palestine.
3. The historical status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem should be respected, and excessive and provocative words and actions should be avoided. A large-scale, more authoritative and more influential international peace conference should be convened so as to create conditions for the resumption of peace talks.²⁰⁹

The Chinese peace envoy made multiple visits to the region and met with several officials, including the Palestinian president. However, this had little impact as the primary player in the "peace process" has always been the US, which has effectively frozen peace efforts in accordance with Israel's wishes.

The official Palestinian leadership threatened to replace the US as the sponsor of the "peace" process or invite new sponsors to the international Quartet, but this remained rhetorical and did not materialize.

The European powers, in cooperation with Arab countries, attempted to launch a political initiative to revive the "peace process." They held several meetings on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, calling it "Peace Day." These efforts aimed to address the Palestine issue and prevent other players from stepping in. However, they did not result in significant progress or an initiative capable of advancing the so-called "peace process," which has long been an endless endeavor without achieving "peace."

In this context, the EU, Saudi Arabia and the Arab League, in cooperation with Egypt and Jordan, launched the Peace Day Effort for Middle East Peace. A joint statement was issued in September 2023 regarding this initiative, at the UN headquarters in New York, attended by about 50 foreign ministers from around the world. The initiative aimed to "to produce a 'Peace Supporting Package' that will maximize peace dividends for the Palestinians and Israelis once they reach a peace agreement."²¹⁰

According to the statement, "The renewed effort is based on the urgent need to preserve the Two-State Solution," "respect for international law" and the "respect for and full implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) related to the Palestinian question." It stressed the importance of "upholding unchanged the Status Quo of Jerusalem's Holy Sites," and revitalizing "a meaningful peace process to achieve the Two-State Solution, in accordance with international

law, UNSC resolutions, the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative and the 2013 EU peace supporting offer.” The statement added that the Peace Day Effort wants to lay out a “vision for a comprehensive regional peace,” and that this effort aims to halt “unilateral measures that undermine the Two-State Solution.” The conveners called on all “to support Palestinian economic development and overcome all obstacles in that regard.”²¹¹

Russia also made efforts and held meetings, calling for the revival of the “peace process,” yet these efforts proved futile.

President Mahmud ‘Abbas reiterated these and other demands in his speech at the 78th session of the General Assembly on 21/9/2023, where he called for “holding of an international peace conference, in which all countries concerned with achieving peace in the Middle East will participate,” which “may be the last opportunity to salvage the two-State solution and to prevent the situation from deteriorating more seriously, threatening the security and stability of our region and the entire world.”²¹² He also called for “practical steps on the basis of the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy and international law,” and called on “the States that have not yet recognized the State of Palestine to declare their recognition and for the State of Palestine to be admitted to full membership in the United Nations.” He added:

I can neither understand, nor accept, that some States, including America and European States, are reluctant to recognize the State of Palestine, which the United Nations has accepted as an observer State. These States confirm every day their support for the two-State solution, but they recognize only one of them, which is Israel. Why? What is the danger posed by the State of Palestine obtaining full membership in the United Nations?²¹³

As expected, all these demands remained unimplemented, with no steps taken to change course, despite the decisions by the PCC and PNC from the former’s session in March 2015 until the writing of this report.

The persistence of the official leadership in maintaining the same failed policy and its continuous reproduction can be attributed to their reliance on a singular strategy without supplementing it with additional approaches, particularly those aimed at consolidating power and exerting pressure. This includes various forms of resistance, notably armed resistance, and tactics such as boycotts, which have proven effective. Additionally, resorting to international courts like the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the ICJ has not been sufficiently leveraged.

National unity, although used as a tactical pressure tool, has not been adopted as a permanent strategy due to fears of potential confrontations resulting from policy changes. Furthermore, the preservation of interests, influence, power, and extensive networks built over decades of occupation and nearly 17 years of division plays a crucial role in maintaining the same failed policy. An integrated structure and diverse interest groups have emerged, with their interests, roles and even survival intricately linked to maintaining the current status quo.

Israeli governments have gone further, especially since Benjamin Netanyahu took office in Israel in 2009. They have invested in the Palestinian schism, as Netanyahu has repeatedly stated, and in separating WB from GS, imposing economic and security “peace” as the only solution and ceiling for dealing with Palestinians in WB and GS. This has reached the point of refusing to hold any political meeting with President Mahmud ‘Abbas or any Palestinian leadership; indeed there has been no political meeting, and the few meetings that were held were security and economic in nature without the president’s participation. This is what the official Palestinian leadership practically dealt with, although it officially rejected it. However, as noted above, this leadership has not implemented the decisions of the Palestinian consensus, including those of the PCC and PNC, over which it has complete control. Hamas and PIJ have not been admitted to these councils, and key factions, most notably the PFLP, have boycotted them in opposition to the unilateral approach and the failure to implement decisions aimed at reconsidering the relationship with Israel and abandoning the Oslo Accords and their political, economic and security obligations.

In this context, the ‘Aqaba security summit and Sharm El-Sheikh summit were held with a focus on security and economic issues. The final statement of the Sharm El-Sheikh summit stated, “The five Parties held thorough discussions on ways and means to de-escalate tensions on the ground between Palestinians and Israelis, in order to pave a way forward towards the peaceful settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians.”²¹⁴

The statement added:

The Parties reaffirmed their commitment to advancing security, stability and peace for Israelis and Palestinians alike, and recognized the necessity of de-escalation on the ground, the prevention of further violence, as well as of pursuing confidence building measures, enhancing mutual trust, creating political horizon, and addressing outstanding issues through direct dialogue.²¹⁵



Israel and the PA “reaffirmed their joint readiness and commitment to immediately work to end unilateral measures for a period of 3–6 months. This includes an Israeli commitment to stop discussion of any new settlement units for 4 months, and to stop authorization of any outposts for 6 months.”²¹⁶

Participating in the ‘Aqaba security summit and Sharm El-Sheikh summit indicates a continued reliance on the security approach. These are also new attempts to strengthen the increasingly weak PA, which continually loses its legitimacy due to the failure of its political program and its avoidance of elections to maintain power. The PA has practically become the end rather than the means, neglecting the objective of ending the occupation and realizing the independence of the State of Palestine, which was recognized as a non-member observer state by the UN, with the US using its veto in the UN Security Council to prevent full membership.

1. Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the Peace Process

Without a doubt, Operation al-Aqsa Flood had a significant impact on the peace process, changing everything. It brought the Palestine issue to the forefront as never before and strongly reaffirmed that all attempts, initiatives and plans to liquidate the Palestine issue, bypass it, or imagine that Arab-Israeli normalization could marginalize it, have failed. Operation al-Aqsa Flood shattered Netanyahu’s dream of completing normalization and reaching an agreement with Saudi Arabia, which announced the suspension of talks and reaffirmed its commitment to the Arab Peace Initiative and the implementation of the “two-state solution.”

After Operation al-Aqsa Flood, regardless of the ultimate outcome of this war, the Palestine issue will impose itself on various international players. This does not signify a great opportunity to reach an agreed-upon solution between the official Palestinian and Israeli leaderships. Any opportunity is constrained by the lack of an Israeli partner for “peace,” the absence of international will, especially from the US, to pressure Israel, and the Biden administration’s adaptation to the reality of right-wing Israeli governments opposed to “peaceful settlement” and the very principle of establishing a Palestinian state, even a nominal one. Washington’s only demand from Tel Aviv is to show some flexibility regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state without actually establishing it, to lure Saudi Arabia and other Arab and Muslim countries into normalization.

The Biden administration does not want a Palestinian state because if it did, it would have pressured Israel. It knows that creating a de facto reality of settlements

in WB, where the number of settlers has reached about a million, makes the establishment of a state very difficult, if not impossible.

What exacerbates the situation is the weakness of the official Arab stance, which coexists with the reality created by Israeli governments, leading to a continuous lowering of the Arab position's ceiling. Normalization with Israel has become an open secret, and the trend towards joining the Abraham Accords without solving the Palestine issue has become dominant. The final touches for Saudi-Israeli normalization were almost completed before 7/10/2023, in exchange for improving the lives of Palestinians and starting a political process that would end—rather than start—with the establishment of a Palestinian state.

This approach means attempting the same strategies that have failed before, but under even less favorable conditions and with full knowledge of their likely outcome. In other words, there are no grand illusions or risky gambles. A significant portion of the official Arab leadership now believes that normalization with Israel is inevitable, even if it comes at the expense of the Palestine issue.

In this context, it is important to understand the strong push for the so-called “two-state solution,” even during the height of the war, and the ongoing calls for its implementation. The frequent emphasis on the “two-state solution” in statements from President Biden and members of his administration has, as reported by Israeli media, drawn criticism from the Israeli government. Figures such as Benny Gantz and Yair Lapid, the opposition leader, have urged the White House to cease this rhetoric, arguing that it raises Palestinian and Arab expectations, embarrasses Israel and undermines its position. Additionally, the EU's insistence on the two-state solution—without initiating its own proactive measures—has remained consistent with the US stance. Despite the EU's needs and interests, which might have warranted a broader maneuvering space, as evidenced by Borrell's initiatives aimed at imposing “peace” rather than merely advocating for it, the EU has continued to align with the US position.²¹⁷

However, experience has taught us that Europe does not stray far from the US position and only acts, in the interim, when the US administration is preoccupied, to prevent other undesirable players from filling the void.

In contrast, Isma'il Haniyyah, the head of Hamas's political bureau, stated in a speech on 1/11/2023, at the height of the war, that his movement presented a comprehensive vision. This vision began with stopping the aggression, opening the

crossings, negotiating a prisoner exchange deal, and concluded with “opening the political path towards establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and the right to self-determination.”²¹⁸ This was to be achieved while maintaining Hamas’s principles, foremost of which is non-recognition of Israel.

2. Will the “Two-State Solution” Materialize?

There is little chance that the “two-state solution” will materialize after the war ends, despite any political movement that might arise. The current level of support, interaction and pressures is insufficient to realize this solution. It is more likely that the situation will revert to a status similar to pre-war conditions, with increased efforts towards a peaceful settlement. This could potentially lead to an international conference and a new political process aimed at reaching an agreement, which may serve to justify the actions of Israel and attempt to revive the normalization process.

It is also possible that proposals may emerge for a Palestinian state akin to the one proposed by Donald Trump in the “Deal of the Century.” Such a proposal would fall short of achieving true statehood and could be seen as a means to further dilute the Palestine issue from various dimensions.

Here, caution is essential. Any attempt to return to or reproduce negotiation processes must be rejected, as these have contributed to the current crisis. Instead, the Palestinian and broader Arab side should insist that any negotiation or international conference should focus on shifting the balance of power, gathering leverage and pressure, primarily through resistance, and establishing a clear political framework from the outset. Negotiations should not involve compromising Palestinian rights or leaving them in the hands of Israel, which rejects these rights and seeks to undermine the Palestine issue.

This approach requires holding the US and Western countries, and all countries advocating for the two-state solution accountable. We must demand recognition of the Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital, and seek UN recognition in the Security Council to obtain full membership. Only then can a serious political process begin to establish and ensure the sovereignty of the Palestinian state.

The reason this scenario is unlikely to be the first or most probable is that Israel, with its diverse factions and shifting directions—not just the Netanyahu

government—lacks any faction committed to a “peaceful settlement.” Even if the current Israeli government collapses and is replaced by one led by Benny Gantz, it would still be unlikely to engage seriously in a political process with a real prospect of achieving a comprehensive agreement. While a new Israeli government might agree to resume “peace” negotiations under pressure from the Biden administration, Biden’s re-election is not guaranteed. The potential success of Donald Trump or any Republican candidate in the upcoming US presidential election diminishes the likelihood of reaching a settlement.

3. Challenges to the Peace Process

Several significant challenges hinder the initiation of a meaningful path toward a peaceful settlement, including:

- a. The reality on the ground in WB, shaped by the Israeli occupation and the presence of nearly a million settlers, along with the physical barriers and various challenges this creates, makes any settlement consideration require substantial pressure on Israel, both internally and externally, which is currently lacking. While there are some pressures, they only permit new interim solutions with the promise of future final agreements.
- b. Continued Palestinian schism, for despite the indiscriminate nature of the war waged against Palestinians, and Netanyahu’s refusal to return to the Oslo Accords or any similar agreements (viewing Oslo as the root of all problems), the schism among Palestinians persists. Netanyahu rejects both “Fatahstan” and “Hamastan,” refusing to allow the PA to return to GS. His national security advisor, Tzachi Hanegbi, has suggested that the government might reconsider if the PA makes substantial changes to align with Israeli conditions and interests, effectively transforming the PA from a collaborator with the occupation to a client authority.
- c. Palestinian resilience and support for resistance: The steadfastness of the Palestinians and their widespread support for resistance, exemplified by the surprise attack on 7/10/2023, and the ongoing resistance during the ground war, have prevented a decisive defeat for either side. Victory is expected to be gradual, with the Palestinians paying a significant price. However, this also signifies a form of victory, as the weaker side has thwarted the stronger side’s objectives, indicating that the war has not ended despite entering a new phase. The failure of



previous stages to meet the goals of the Israeli emergency government suggests that the war will evolve into new political, military and economic dimensions. These changes aim to achieve objectives that could not be met through military means alone, potentially extending the conflict for several months or even years.

- d. As of the time of writing, Netanyahu's emergency government remains in power and could stay until the end of the war, which might last several months or even over a year. This government rejects any political proposals or initiatives that could lead to reunification of WB and GS. It bets on the US administration entering a "lame duck" phase (start of the election campaign) after three months and postponing all matters to the elections, betting on the victory of Donald Trump or any other Republican candidate who would support it to varying degrees and adopt a plan similar to the "Deal of the Century."

The most crucial factors influencing the peace process and all other paths are the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and the strength of the resistance; the significant losses inflicted on Israel and the efforts to transform popular and field unity into political and institutional unity. This should be based on a new comprehensive vision and unified leadership with a minimum common program, aiming for a national democratic militant unity. This unity should be founded on genuine partnership and temporary national consensus, with goal of appealing to the people through elections as soon as possible thereafter.

Proposing a comprehensive political, economic, cultural and resistance program for the current phase, can outline achievable goals, even if fully realizing them may be unlikely. However, it can help avert dangers, reduce costs and obstruct Israeli plans. The battle on the ground and in politics revolves around the fate of WB and GS. The political struggle must be fought to the end with the same competence shown by the military resistance, ensuring that political movements do not infringe upon or contradict fundamental rights. Instead, these movements should be a crucial step and an indispensable lever in the long conflict, where Operation al-Aqsa Flood is just a phase—a significant one, yes, but followed by more rounds.

A unified stance and a single Palestinian leadership could garner Arab and global support, leveraging various forms of struggle to end the occupation, achieve freedom, ensure the right of return and attain independence paving the way toward the liberation of all of Palestine and the dismantling of the racist settler colonial project.

Conclusion

The 2022–2023 period represents one of the most significant stages of military resistance since the establishment of Israel in 1948. The resistance in WB saw substantial qualitative leaps not witnessed in nearly twenty years (since *al-Aqsa Intifadah*). For the first time, resistance strongholds were established in Jenin, Nablus and Tulkarm, and the number of quality operations and Israeli losses doubled.

In GS, there were intense confrontations during the Unity of the Arenas and Revenge of the Free battles. However, Operation al-Aqsa Flood marked the most significant resistance action within the occupied territories over 75 years, shaking the foundations of Israel, toppling its national security doctrine, and shattering the concept of a safe haven for Jews. It struck at Israel's functional role as a forward bastion of the Western project and a regional policeman.

Despite the brutal and intense Israeli offensive on GS, which resulted in tens of thousands of casualties, and widespread destruction of infrastructure, Hamas and other resistance forces demonstrated exceptional military capability. They inflicted unprecedented losses on Israeli forces and thwarted their objectives. This resistance showcased innovative tactics in military strategy, guerrilla warfare and urban combat. A notable aspect of their efforts was the substantial popular support they garnered, which effectively countered Israeli attempts to isolate the resistance from its civilian base. The harsh realities of the occupation have undoubtedly derailed efforts toward normalization in the Arab region, isolating Israel on the international stage and branding it as a pariah.

The 2022–2023 period demonstrated the effectiveness of the resistance project, significantly increasing its support among Palestinians inside and outside Palestine. During this time, the PA's credibility diminished, with the majority of the Palestinian people losing trust in it. In opinion polls, the PA garnered minimal support compared to the resistance.

Under these circumstances, the failure of the peace process was solidified, the Oslo Accords collapsed, and Israel has moved beyond them, effectively abandoning the two-state solution, and seeking to impose its Zionist vision to close the Palestine issue. The Palestinian people have shifted away from this path. Despite calls from Western leaders and others to revive the two-state solution,

those with power to influence and apply pressure, particularly the US, are not genuinely committed (and it is unlikely under current conditions) to supporting the establishment of a fully sovereign Palestinian state in WB and GS, including East Jerusalem, or to upholding the long-recognized right of return—rights that have long been universally recognized. Consequently, resistance remains the option that nearly all Palestinians support.

Endnotes

- ¹ For more see Monthly and Annual Reports of Israel Security Agency—ISA (*Shabak*), <https://www.shabak.gov.il/english/publications/Pages/monthlyreports.aspx>
- ² Israel-Hamas Conflict 2023: Humanitarian Efforts, site of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, 16/12/2023, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/israel-hamas-conflict-2023-humanitarian-efforts>
- ³ Shabak Monthly and Annual Reports.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2022, Mo3ta, 3/1/2023.
- ⁶ Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2023, Mo3ta, 2/1/2024.
- ⁷ For more, see Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2022, Mo3ta, 3/1/2023; and Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2023, Mo3ta, 2/1/2024.
- ⁸ Ibid. For more, see Periodic Reports, Mo3ta, https://mo3ta.ps/?page_id=826
- ⁹ Army chief spurns Smotrich's W. Bank powers: IDF reports only to defense minister, The Times of Israel, 13/1/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-chief-denounces-governments-west-bank-plans-in-farewell-interviews/>
- ¹⁰ Wafa, 9/2/2022, <https://www.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/41150> (in Arabic)
- ¹¹ Wafa, 26/1/2023, <https://www.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/63659> (in Arabic); and Wafa, 3/7/2023, <https://www.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/74132> (in Arabic)
- ¹² Wafa, 18/10/2023, <https://www.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/82112> (in Arabic)
- ¹³ Security coordination between the occupation and the Palestinian Authority What does it mean and will it continue?, Aljazeera.net, 26/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Aljazeera.net, 19/9/2022. (in Arabic); and *Asharq al-Awsat*, 27/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶ Israel's DM Gantz speaks with Palestinian leader Abbas, stresses cooperation, site of i24NEWS, 28/12/2022, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/diplomacy/1672248663-israel-s-gantz-speaks-with-palestinian-leader-abbas-stresses-cooperation>
- ¹⁷ See Security coordination between the occupation and the Palestinian Authority What does it mean and will it continue?, Aljazeera.net, 26/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸ Raialyoum, 13/9/2022.
- ¹⁹ Arab 48, 19/2/2023.
- ²⁰ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 27/2/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²¹ Security coordination between the occupation and the Palestinian Authority What does it mean and will it continue?, Aljazeera.net, 26/12/2023. (in Arabic)
See also Reem Cohen, A Functional Palestinian Authority: An Essential Israeli Interest, Insight No. 1796, INSS, 11/12/2023, <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/functioning-pa/>
- ²² Secretary Antony J. Blinken Remarks to the Press, site of U.S. Department of State, 5/11/2023, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-remarks-to-the-press-16/>
- ²³ Alaa 'Amleh, Resistance Groups in the West Bank... Details of Emergence and Development, Masarat, 19/9/2023.

- ²⁴ Jenin Battalion.. Established to Defend Escaped Prisoners and Became the Jenin RC's Shield, Aljazeera.net, 22/12/2023, <https://aja.ws/15er94> (in Arabic)
- ²⁵ For more, see Quds Press, 8/6/2023; Aljazeera.net, 2/7/2023, <https://aja.me/nfte9n> (in Arabic); and Aljazeera.net, 21/8/2023, <https://aja.me/8ggupe> (in Arabic)
- ²⁶ Mahmud Rantissi, The Evolution of Resistance in the West Bank, Aljazeera.net, 22/8/2023, <https://aja.me/jc8nx> (in Arabic)
- ²⁷ *Al- 'Arabi al-Jadid*, 4/7/2023; Quds Press, 5/7/2023, <https://qudspress.com/61864/>; and Felesteen Online, 18/8/2023.
- ²⁸ The Jenin Battalion and the Lions' Den Exclusive interviews, details and secrets about the escalating resistance in the West Bank, Aljazeera.net, 8/1/2023, <https://aja.me/22ojca> (in Arabic)
- ²⁹ Jenin Battalion.. Established to Defend Escaped Prisoners and Became the Jenin RC's Shield, Aljazeera.net, 22/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ For more, see Quds Press, 27/11/2022, <https://qudspress.com/9342>; Quds Press, 2/5/2023, <https://qudspress.com/44485>; *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 18/7/2023; and Aljazeera.net, 18/7/2023, <https://aja.me/ned545> (in Arabic)
- ³² *Alquds*, 17/7/2023 (in Arabic); and *Asharq al-Awsat*, 19/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³³ Jenin Battalion.. Established to Defend Escaped Prisoners and Became the Jenin RC's Shield, Aljazeera.net, 22/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁴ The Jenin Battalion and the Lions' Den Exclusive interviews, details and secrets about the escalating resistance in the West Bank, Aljazeera.net, 8/1/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁵ Alaa 'Amleh, Resistance Groups in the West Bank... Details of Emergence and Development, Masarat, 19/9/2023.
- ³⁶ Shehab News Agency (@ShehabAgency), site of X (Twitter), 26/10/2022, 6:37 p.m., <https://twitter.com/ShehabAgency/status/1585294483071160320>
- ³⁷ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 29/4/2023 (in Arabic); and *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 3/5/2023.
- ³⁸ Al-Mayadeen Channel, 9/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁹ Al-Mayadeen Channel, 9/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁴⁰ Aljazeera.net, 25/4/2024, <https://aja.ws/p3xgdo> (in Arabic)
- ⁴¹ Aljazeera.net, 17/12/2023, <https://aja.ws/ijo90v> (in Arabic)
- ⁴² Aljazeera.net, 30/8/2023, <https://aja.me/kkz8x1> (in Arabic)
- ⁴³ Aljazeera.net, 18/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁴⁴ For more, see Quds Press, 6/3/2023, <https://qudspress.com/30392>; and Quds Press, 6/10/2023, <https://qudspress.com/82119>
- ⁴⁵ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 3/8/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁴⁶ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 6/8/2022 (in Arabic). See also *Haaretz*, 5/8/2022.
- ⁴⁷ Al-Mayadeen Channel, 5/8/2022 (in Arabic); and Aljazeera.net, 6/8/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁴⁸ Arabi21, 5/8/2022.
- ⁴⁹ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 7/8/2022 (in Arabic); and Aljazeera.net, 8/8/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁰ Prime Minister's Office, Israel, 8/8/2022. See also The Times of Israel, 7/8/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/with-gaza-ceasefire-imminent-lapid-tells-mayors-israel-has-achieved-its-goals/>
- ⁵¹ Ceasefire Between Israel, Palestinian Militants 'Fragile', Middle East Coordinator Tells Security Council, Urging All Parties to Uphold Truce, Safeguard Past Gains, UN, Security Council, 9107TH Meeting (PM), SC/14994, 8/8/2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14994.doc.htm>

- ⁵² Monthly Report August 2022, Shabak, <https://www.shabak.gov.il/media/xkxf3fws/082022.pdf>
- ⁵³ Felesteen Online, 8/8/2022. See also Ceasefire Between Israel, Palestinian Militants ‘Fragile’, Middle East Coordinator Tells Security Council, Urging All Parties to Uphold Truce, Safeguard Past Gains, UN, Security Council, 9107TH Meeting (PM), SC/14994, 8/8/2022.
- ⁵⁴ Aljazeera.net, 8/8/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁵ Ceasefire Between Israel, Palestinian Militants ‘Fragile’, Middle East Coordinator Tells Security Council, Urging All Parties to Uphold Truce, Safeguard Past Gains, UN, Security Council, 9107TH Meeting (PM), SC/14994, 8/8/2022.
- ⁵⁶ Felesteen Online, 8/8/2022.
- ⁵⁷ Aljazeera.net, 9/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁸ Monthly Report May 2023, Shabak, <https://www.shabak.gov.il/media/iwcjetrv/%D7%90%D7%A0%D7%92%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%9E%D7%90%D7%99.pdf>
- ⁵⁹ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 14/5/2023 (in Arabic); and Quds Press, 14/5/2023, <https://qudspress.com/48677>
- ⁶⁰ *Al-Ayyam*, Ramallah, 15/5/2023.
- ⁶¹ Felesteen Online, 14/5/2023.
- ⁶² PIC, 7/10/2023, <https://palinfo.com/?p=852723> (in Arabic); and Safa, 7/10/2023, <https://safa.ps/p/363487>
- ⁶³ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, Al-Aqsa Flood.... Dealing with the Day After, al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 16/10/2023, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2023/10/16/political-analysis-al-aqsa-flood-dealing-with-the-day-after/>
- ⁶⁴ Maayan Jaffe-Hoffman, Netanyahu: Israel fighting second War of Independence, *The Jerusalem Post*, 27/10/2023, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-770514>
- ⁶⁵ Netanyahu: ‘We are in an existential war, Israel has to win,’ The Times of Israel, 7/3/2024, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-we-are-in-an-existential-war-israel-has-to-win
- ⁶⁶ Emanuel Fabian, Gallant: If Hamas isn’t totally dismantled, we won’t be able to live in Israel, The Times of Israel, 17/1/2024, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/gallant-if-hamas-isnt-totally-dismantled-we-wont-be-able-to-live-in-israel/
- ⁶⁷ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, Al-Aqsa Flood.... Dealing with the Day After, al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 16/10/2023.
- ⁶⁸ Sa’id al-Haj, Facts about the occupation that bode well for its demise, Aljazeera.net, 1/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ⁶⁹ Paul Blumenthal, Israeli President Suggests That Civilians In Gaza Are Legitimate Targets, site of Huffpost, 13/10/2023, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/israel-gaza-isaac-herzog_n_65295ee8e4b03ea0c004e2a8
- ⁷⁰ Emanuel Fabian, Defense minister announces ‘complete siege’ of Gaza: No power, food or fuel, The Times of Israel, 9/10/2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/defense-minister-announces-complete-siege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/
- ⁷¹ PIC, 7/10/2023, <https://palinfo.com/?p=852723> (in Arabic); and Safa, 7/10/2023, <https://safa.ps/p/363487>
- ⁷² Felesteen Online, 7/10/2023.
- ⁷³ Israel at War: Over 1300 murdered, dozens of civilians taken hostage, in surprise Hamas attack, site of Calcalistech, 7/10/2023, <https://www.calcalistech.com/ctechnews/article/bjudnkrla>

- ⁷⁴ Emanuel Fabian, Gallant declares emergency situation in south, center; gatherings restricted, *The Times of Israel*, 7/10/2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/gallant-declares-emergency-situation-in-south-center-gatherings-restricted/; Amos Harel, Analysis | Israel-Gaza War: A Catastrophic Failure That Will Send Political Shockwaves, *Haaretz*, 8/10/2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-10-08/ty-article/.premium/a-failure-of-all-systems-with-political-shock-waves-like-73/0000018b-0c06-dae3-a1cb-bd0f3be90000>; and Dan Williams, How the Hamas attack on Israel unfolded, site of Reuters News Agency, 7/10/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/how-hamas-attack-israel-unfolded-2023-10-07/>
- ⁷⁵ Israel's police chief: "We're in a state of war," *Haaretz*, 7/10/2023, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-10-07/ty-article-live/israel-under-attack-terrorists-infiltrate-from-gaza-amid-massive-rocket-barrages/0000018b-088b-dae9-adcb-abbff50f0000?liveBlogItemId=1317892253&utm_source=site&utm_medium=button&utm_campaign=live_blog_item#1317892253
- ⁷⁶ Quds Press, 8/10/2023, <https://qudspress.com/82969>
- ⁷⁷ PIC, 9/10/2023, <https://palinfo.com/?p=853173> (in Arabic); and site of Ezzedeen al-Qassam Brigades, 8/10/2023, <https://www.alqassam.ps/arabic/news/details/19625>
- ⁷⁸ *Alquds*, 9/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁷⁹ Aljazeera.net, 12/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁰ Aljazeera.net, 16/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁸¹ Alray—Palestinian Media Agency, 8/10/2023, <https://alray.ps/ar/post/282783> (in Arabic)
- ⁸² PM's Office Statement from Coordinator for the Captives and Missing Brig.-Gen. (Ret.) Gal Hirsch, Prime Minister's Office, Israel, 9/10/2023, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/spoke-pmo091023>
- ⁸³ Jacob Magid, Israel revises death count from Oct. 7 Hamas onslaught, dropping it from 1,400 to 1,200, *Times of Israel*, 10/11/2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/israel-revises-death-count-from-oct-7-hamas-onslaght-dropping-it-from-1400-to-1200/; and Emine Sinmaz, Gaza's largest hospital being bombarded, WHO says, *The Guardian* newspaper, 10/11/2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/10/netanyahu-says-israel-is-not-seeking-to-occupy-gaza>
- ⁸⁴ PIC, 7/10/2023, <https://palinfo.com/?p=852723> (in Arabic); and Safa, 7/10/2023, <https://safa.ps/p/363487>
- ⁸⁵ Felesteen Online, 7/10/2023.
- ⁸⁶ Quds Press, 7/10/2023, <https://qudspress.com/82193>
- ⁸⁷ Aljazeera.net, 12/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁸ Security Cabinet approves war situation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, 8/10/2023, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/security-cabinet-approves-war-situation-8-oct-2023>
- ⁸⁹ Israel Defense Forces (@IDF), X (Twitter), 7/10/2023, 11:59 a.m., <https://x.com/IDF/status/1710580568302223374>
- ⁹⁰ Jeremy Sharon, Carrie Keller-Lynn and Amy Spiro, After days of indecision, Netanyahu, Gantz agree to establish emergency war government, *The Times of Israel*, 11/10/2023.
- ⁹¹ Carrie Keller-Lynn, Knesset okays war cabinet; PM: Saturday "most horrible day for Jews since Holocaust," *The Times of Israel*, 12/10/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/knesset-okays-war-cabinet-pm-saturday-most-horrible-day-for-jews-since-holocaust/>
- ⁹² Correction: Statement by PM Netanyahu, Prime Minister's Office, Israel, 7/10/2023, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/event-statement071023>
- ⁹³ PM Netanyahu to US President Joe Biden: "We've never seen such savagery in the history of the State. They're even worse than ISIS and we need to treat them as such," Prime Minister's Office, Israel, 10/10/2023, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/spoke-biden101023>

- ⁹⁴ Anadolu Agency, 11/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁹⁵ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 13/10/2023.
- ⁹⁶ Aljazeera.net, 10/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁹⁷ Human Rights Watch (@hrw), X (Twitter), 9/10/2023, 7:54 p.m., <https://x.com/hrw/status/1711424885908791505>
- ⁹⁸ Emanuel Fabian, Defense minister announces ‘complete siege’ of Gaza: No power, food or fuel, The Times of Israel, 9/10/2023; and Energy minister instructs authorities to cut off water to Gaza, The Times of Israel, 9/10/2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/energy-minister-instructs-authorities-to-cut-off-water-to-gaza/
- ⁹⁹ Emanuel Fabian, Defense Minister Gallant: ‘Israel will win this war,’ Hamas made ‘grave mistake’ with surprise attack, The Times of Israel, 7/10/2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/defense-minister-gallant-hamas-made-grave-mistake-with-surprise-widespread-attack/
- ¹⁰⁰ Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Joint Press Conference With Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in Tel Aviv, Israel, site of U.S. Department of Defense, 13/10/2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3556642/secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-joint-press-conference-with-israeli-def/>
- ¹⁰¹ Joint Statement on Israel, site of The White House, 9/10/2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/10/09/joint-statement-on-israel/>
- ¹⁰² U.S. not planning to put military on ground following attack on Israel, Reuters, 10/10/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-not-planning-put-military-ground-following-attack-israel-2023-10-09/>
- ¹⁰³ Readout of President Biden’s Call with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel, The White House, 8/10/2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/10/08/readout-of-president-bidens-call-with-prime-minister-netanyahu-of-israel/>
- ¹⁰⁴ Remarks by President Biden on the Terrorist Attacks in Israel, The White House, 10/10/2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/10/10/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-terrorist-attacks-in-israel-2/>
- ¹⁰⁵ Aljazeera.net, 10/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁰⁶ Aljazeera.net, 31/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁰⁷ Aljazeera.net, 2/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁰⁸ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 28/10/2023.
- ¹⁰⁹ Aljazeera.net, 3/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁰ Aljazeera.net, 31/12/2023. (in Arabic); and Aljazeera.net, 1/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹¹ Nearly 30,000 Palestinians killed during 82-day Israeli genocide in Gaza, site of Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, 27/12/2023, <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6064/Nearly-30,000-Palestinians-killed-during-82-day-Israeli-genocide-in-Gaza#:~:text=The%20death%20toll%20of%20Israel’s,the%20human%20rights%20organisation%20said.>
- ¹¹² Aljazeera.net, 26/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹³ *Al-Youm al-Sabi*, 2/1/2024.
- ¹¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁵ See Israeli Occupation Aggression on Palestine since 7/10/2023, PCBS, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps> (Accessed on 9/3/2024)
- ¹¹⁶ Aljazeera.net, 22/1/2024, <https://aja.ws/lz7og0> (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁷ See Israeli Occupation Aggression on Palestine since 7/10/2023, PCBS. (Accessed on 9/3/2024)

- ¹¹⁸ Aljazeera.net, 31/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁹ For more, see H.E. Dr. Ola Awad, President of PCBS presents a brief on the status of the Palestinian people at the end of 2023, PCBS, 31/12/2023, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4676>
- ¹²⁰ Aljazeera.net, 31/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹²¹ Aljazeera.net, 12/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹²² Emanuel Fabian, IDF to probe operational failures in lead-up to Oct. 7, drawing rage from ministers, *The Times of Israel*, 5/1/2024, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-announces-probe-of-failures-in-lead-up-to-oct-7-drawing-rage-from-ministers/#:~:text=Israel%20Defense%20Forces%20Chief%20of,criticism%20from%20right%20wing%20ministers>.
- ¹²³ *The New York Times* newspaper, 30/12/2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/30/world/middleeast/israeli-military-hamas-failures.html>
- ¹²⁴ For more, see Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2023, Mo3ta, 2/1/2024; site of the Israeli Army, <https://www.idf.il> (in Hebrew); and *The Times of Israel*, 8/10/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/authorities-name-44-soldiers-30-police-officers-killed-in-hamas-attack> (accessed on 3/1/2024)
- ¹²⁵ Anadolu Agency, 23/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁶ *The New York Times*, 27/12/2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/27/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-rockets.html>
- ¹²⁷ Aljazeera.net, 26/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁸ Aljazeera.net, 28/12/2023 (in Arabic); and site of the Israeli Army (in Hebrew). See also *The Times of Israel*, 3/1/2024.
- ¹²⁹ Abdelraouf Arnaout, 29 Israeli soldiers killed in ‘friendly fire, operational incidents’ during Gaza battles, Anadolu Agency, 1/1/2024; and Yaki Adamker, Over 15 IDF soldiers pronounced dead in Gaza without bodies, *The Jerusalem Post*, 28/12/2023, <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-779893>
- ¹³⁰ Aljazeera.net, 19/11/2023 (in Arabic); *The Palestine Chronicle* (@PalestineChron), X (Twitter), 20/11/2023, 1:14 a.m., <https://x.com/PalestineChron/status/1726378376389165155>
- ¹³¹ Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2023, Mo3ta, 2/1/2024.
- ¹³² Ido Efrati and Yaniv Kubovich, IDF Reports 1,593 Wounded Since October 7, but Hospital Data Is Much Higher, *Haaretz*, 10/12/2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-10/ty-article/.premium/idf-reports-1-593-wounded-since-october-7-but-hospital-data-is-much-higher/0000018c-552d-df4b-a78e-d52f47ac0000>; and Aljazeera.net, 11/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹³³ *Haaretz* newspaper, 31/12/2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-31/ty-article/.premium/as-mental-health-system-in-israel-collapses-psychiatrists-are-leaving-for-britain/0000018c-c026-d3e0-abac-d8af89aa0000>
- ¹³⁴ Ido Efrati, 1,600 Israeli Soldiers Suffer From PTSD Since Start of War; 90 Discharged From Service, *Haaretz*, 3/1/2024, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-03/ty-article/.premium/1-600-israeli-soldiers-suffer-from-ptsd-since-start-of-war-90-discharged-from-service/0000018c-cfb7-d4e1-ad8f-ffb7ac230002>
- ¹³⁵ Ahmad Abu al-Haija, The West Bank and the Conflict of Paths.. Why is It Absent From the “Al-Aqsa Flood” Scene?, Aljazeera.net, 14/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹³⁶ See Israeli Occupation Aggression on Palestine since 7/10/2023, PCBS. (Accessed on 31/12/2023)
- ¹³⁷ Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2023, Mo3ta, 2/1/2024.
- ¹³⁸ Ahmad Abu al-Haija, The West Bank and the Conflict of Paths.. Why is It Absent From the “Al-Aqsa Flood” Scene?, Aljazeera.net, 14/11/2023. (in Arabic)

- ¹³⁹ *Al-Akhbar*, 9/10/2023, <https://al-akhbar.com/Politics/370817>
- ¹⁴⁰ Aljazeera.net, 25/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴¹ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 3/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴² Anadolu Agency, 4/1/2024 (in Arabic); and see Martyrs on the Path to Jerusalem, site of al-Manar TV, 4/1/2024, <https://www.almanar.com.lb/qods-martyrs>
- ¹⁴³ For more, see site of the Israeli Army (in Hebrew). See also The Times of Israel, 3/1/2024.
- ¹⁴⁴ Site of al-Manar TV, 5/1/2024, <https://www.almanar.com.lb/11488160>
- ¹⁴⁵ For more, see PIC, 18/10/2023, <https://palinfo.com/?p=855481> (in Arabic); and NNA, 29/10/2023.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Al-Akhbar*, 27/10/2023.
- ¹⁴⁷ Aljazeera.net, 12/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁸ NNA, 10/10/2023; Quds Press, 19/10/2023, <https://qudspress.com/87482>; Quds Press, 29/10/2023, <https://qudspress.com/90578>; NNA, 2/11/2023; NNA, 6/11/2023; and Anadolu Agency, 19/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁹ PIC, 14/10/2023, <https://palinfo.com/?p=854466> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁰ NNA, 22/11/2023.
- ¹⁵¹ Aljazeera.net, 2/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵² NNA, 10/10/2023.
- ¹⁵³ Site of Elnashra, 21/10/2023, <https://www.elnashra.com/>
- ¹⁵⁴ Aljazeera.net, 30/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁵ NNA, 29/12/2023.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 1/11/2023; and Arabi21, 1/11/2023.
- ¹⁵⁷ Site of al-Alam TV, 10/10/2023, <https://www.alalam.ir/>
- ¹⁵⁸ Arabi21, 22/10/2023.
- ¹⁵⁹ For more, see *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 6/11/2023; and *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 9/11/2023.
- ¹⁶⁰ Site of al-Manar TV, 5/12/2023, <https://www.almanar.com.lb/11339957>
- ¹⁶¹ Aljazeera.net, 19/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶² Aljazeera.net, 5/1/2024 (in Arabic). See also Erin Banco, Lara Seligman and Alexander Ward, The war in Gaza may widen. The Biden admin is getting ready for it, site of POLITICO, 4/1/2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/01/04/war-gaza-widen-biden-getting-ready-00133949>
- ¹⁶³ Statement from Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III on Ensuring Freedom of Navigation in the Red Sea, U.S. Department of State, 18/12/2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3621110/statement-from-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-on-ensuring-freedom-of-n/#:~:text=Therefore%2C%20today%20I%20am%20announcing,security%20in-%20the%20Red%20Sea.>
- ¹⁶⁴ Site of Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), 31/12/2023.
- ¹⁶⁵ PIC, 3/11/2023, <https://palinfo.com/?p=859299> (in Arabic); and PIC, 28/12/2023, <https://palinfo.com/?p=869485> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶⁶ RT, 7/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶⁷ Michael Knights, Amir al-Kaabi and Hamdi Malik, Tracking Anti-U.S. Strikes in Iraq and Syria During the Gaza Crisis, site of Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 16/5/2024, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/tracking-anti-us-strikes-iraq-and-syria-during-gaza-crisis>
- ¹⁶⁸ Anna Ahronheim, Israel completes upgraded barrier with the Gaza Strip, *The Jerusalem Post*, 7/12/2021, <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/israel-completes-upgraded-barrier-with-the-gaza-strip-688089>

¹⁶⁹ TRT, 21/10/2023.

¹⁷⁰ Aljazeera.net, 21/12/2023. (in Arabic)

¹⁷¹ *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper, 25/12/2023, <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra13729290> (in Hebrew)

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Annual Report 2022: The Israeli Aggression Against Palestinians in 2022, Palestinian Ministry of Health: Emergency Operation Center, Facebook, 2/2/2023, <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=548011950759105&set=a.274345968125706>

¹⁷⁵ See Israeli Occupation Aggression on Palestine since 7/10/2023, PCBS. (Accessed on 31/12/2023)

¹⁷⁶ Annual Report 2022: The Israeli Aggression Against Palestinians in 2022, Palestinian Ministry of Health: Emergency Operation Center, Facebook, 2/2/2023.

¹⁷⁷ See Israeli Occupation Aggression on Palestine since 7/10/2023, PCBS. (Accessed on 31/12/2023)

¹⁷⁸ For more, see Shabak Monthly and Annual Reports.

¹⁷⁹ For more, see Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2023, Mo3ta, 2/1/2024; and site of the Israeli Army, (in Hebrew). See also The Times of Israel, 3/1/2024.

¹⁸⁰ For more, see Shabak Monthly and Annual Reports.

¹⁸¹ For more, see Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2023, Mo3ta, 2/1/2024; and site of the Israeli Army (in Hebrew). See also The Times of Israel, 3/1/2024.

¹⁸² As for the number of Israelis and Palestinians killed and wounded in 2019–2021, see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestine Strategic Report 2018–2019*, p. 213; and Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestine Strategic Report 2020–2021* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2022), p. 218.

For the number of Israelis killed and wounded in 2022–2023, see Shabak Monthly and Annual Reports; Annual Report on Resistance Activities in the West Bank for the Year 2023, Mo3ta, 2/1/2024; and site of the Israeli Army (in Hebrew).

For the number of Palestinians killed and wounded in 2022–2023, see Annual Report 2022: The Israeli Aggression Against Palestinians in 2022, Palestinian Ministry of Health: Emergency Operation Center, Facebook, 2/2/2023; and Israeli Occupation Aggression on Palestine since 7/10/2023, PCBS. (Accessed on 31/12/2023)

¹⁸³ During 2023: About 11,000 Palestinians were detained by the Israeli occupation forces, half of them after October 7, site of Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association—Addameer, 3/1/2024, <https://www.addameer.org/ar/news/5257> (in Arabic)

¹⁸⁴ See Israeli Occupation Aggression on Palestine since 7/10/2023, PCBS. (Accessed on 31/12/2023)

¹⁸⁵ 2022 In Review, Addameer, 1/1/2023, <https://www.addameer.org/media/4968>

¹⁸⁶ Palestinian prisoners are victims of torture and systematic executions as international organisations are silent, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, 9/3/2024, <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6215/Palestinian-prisoners-are-victims-of-torture-and-systematic-executions-as-international-organisations-are-silent>

¹⁸⁷ The Israeli Genocide in the Gaza Strip: 7 October – 23 February 2024, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, 23/2/2024, https://euromedmonitor.org/uploads/IMG_8905.png

¹⁸⁸ 2022 In Review, Addameer, 1/1/2023; and During 2023: About 11,000 Palestinians were detained by the Israeli occupation forces, half of them after October 7, Addameer, 3/1/2024. (in Arabic)

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

- ¹⁹¹ During 2023: About 11,000 Palestinians were detained by the Israeli occupation forces, half of them after October 7, Addameer, 3/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁹² See Statistics of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons, Addameer, <http://www.addameer.org/ar/statistics> (in Arabic); and for the year 2023, figures published on 5/2/2024 were used.
- ¹⁹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁵ 2022 In Review, Addameer, 1/1/2023; and During 2023: About 11,000 Palestinians were detained by the Israeli occupation forces, half of them after October 7, Addameer, 3/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁹⁶ For more, see “Annual Report 2022,” site of Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), 26/6/2023, <https://pchrgaza.org/en/annual-report-2022/>; see also the monthly reports about the closure of the crossings in Gaza Strip, PCHR, <https://pchrgaza.org/en/category/closure-update-other-publications/>
- ¹⁹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁸ Ibid. (1 nautical mile = 1.852 km)
- ¹⁹⁹ Human Rights Watch (@hrw), X (Twitter), 9/10/2023, 7:54 p.m., <https://x.com/hrw/status/1711424885908791505>
- ²⁰⁰ Emanuel Fabian, Defense minister announces ‘complete siege’ of Gaza: No power, food or fuel, The Times of Israel, 9/10/2023; and Energy minister instructs authorities to cut off water to Gaza, The Times of Israel, 9/10/2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/energy-minister-instructs-authorities-to-cut-off-water-to-gaza/
- ²⁰¹ Initial reporting on the ongoing Israeli retaliatory attacks on Gaza: (Reporting Period, 7–28 October 2023) based on preliminary documentation, site of Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, 13/11/2023, <https://www.mezan.org/en/post/46305>
- ²⁰² For more, see “Annual Report 2022,” PCHR, 26/6/2023; and see also the monthly reports about the closure of the crossings in Gaza Strip, PCHR.
- ²⁰³ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 24/12/2022.
- ²⁰⁴ Remarks by President Biden on the October 7th Terrorist Attacks and the Resilience of the State of Israel and its People, The White House, 18/10/2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/10/18/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-october-7th-terrorist-attacks-and-the-resilience-of-the-state-of-israel-and-its-people-tel-aviv-israel/>
- ²⁰⁵ Israel/Gaza: Opening remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the 8th Regional Forum of the Union for Mediterranean, site of European Union External Action, 27/11/2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelgaza-opening-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-8th-regional-forum-union_en
- ²⁰⁶ President Abbas at UNGA: Our confidence in achieving peace based on justice and international law is waning, WAFA, 23/9/2022, <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/130977>
- ²⁰⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁰⁸ President Abbas calls for not dealing with any Israeli government that does not recognize international legitimacy, WAFA, 9/12/2022, <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/132282>
- ²⁰⁹ Xi Jinping Holds Talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, site of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The People’s Republic of China, 14/6/2023, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202306/t20230618_11099414.html#:~:text=On%20the%20afternoon%20of%20June,partnership%20between%20China%20and%20Palestine.
- ²¹⁰ MEPP: The European Union, Saudi Arabia, the Arab League, in cooperation with Egypt and Jordan, launch the Peace Day Effort for Middle East Peace, and invite the world to join, European Union External Action, 18/9/2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/mepp-european-union-saudi-arabia-arab-league-cooperation-egypt-and-jordan-launch-peace-day-effort_en

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² President Abbas calls on UN to convene international peace conference on Palestine, provide protection for Palestinians, WAFA, 21/9/2023, <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/137702>

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Joint Communique from the March 19 meeting in Sharm El Sheikh, U.S. Department of State, 19/3/2023, <https://www.state.gov/joint-communique-from-the-march-19-meeting-in-sharm-el-sheikh/>

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Europe between two wars, European Union External Action, 3/1/2024, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/europe-between-two-wars_en; and Josep Borrell, The urgency to put an end to the fighting in Gaza, European Union External Action, 13/1/2024, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/urgency-put-end-fighting-gaza_en

²¹⁸ Haniyyah: Hamas Presented a Comprehensive Concept to Stop the Aggression and Netanyahu is the Cause of the War, Aljazeera.net, 1/11/2023. (in Arabic)

Chapter Five

The Israeli Scene

The Israeli Scene

Introduction

If 2022 marked a breakthrough year in Israel's history, with the rise of its most extremist religious and nationalist governments, then 2023 represented a historic watershed as Israel experienced the most significant and extensive internal invasion since its establishment. Operation al-Aqsa Flood shook the foundations of Israel's stability, security strategy and the concept of a sanctuary for the Jewish Zionist settler community in Palestine. It also reignited debates about the justification for Israel's existence and the philosophy of its project, while compelling it to engage in a brutal war in GS to restore its lost image. The operation impacted Israel on military, security, economic, political and social levels, with its effects reverberating through its internal and regional environment as well as on its international image and status.

This chapter examines Israel's internal political conditions along with its demographic, economic and military conditions throughout 2022–2023.

First: The Internal Israeli Political Scene

The end of 2022 saw a reshaping of Israel's internal political landscape. This section explores the internal situation, focusing on the developments leading up to the events of 7/10/2023, the significant security failure and the subsequent war on GS, from an internal Israeli perspective.

1. The 25th Knesset Elections and Government Formation

The results of the 25th Knesset elections held on 1/11/2022 highlighted the rise of the religious and nationalist right. Likud increased its seats from 30 to 32, Shas from 9 to 11, and United Torah Judaism maintained its 7 seats. The biggest gain was made by the Religious Zionism Party, which saw its seats increase from 6 to 14. In contrast, on the center and left, Labor lost 3 of its 7 seats,



and Meretz exited the Knesset after losing all six of its seats. Although Yesh Atid improved its position by gaining 7 seats, it did not prevent the overall decline of the parties opposing Netanyahu and his coalition. The 3.25% electoral threshold benefited Netanyahu and his coalition, as Meretz narrowly missed it with 3.16%, and the National Democratic Assembly (Balad), an Arab party headed by Sami Abu Shehadeh, also fell short with about 138 thousand votes (2.9%).¹

The Israeli electoral battle was not, as reported, between the religious and nationalist right and the center-left coalition. A more accurate characterization is that it was between Netanyahu (Likud) and his potential allies, who are generally from the religious and nationalist movements, and Netanyahu's opponents, who reject his leadership of the government and are distributed among various right-wing, left-wing and centrist Zionist movements, in addition to Arab parties that do not fit into these categories. Therefore, the announcement that Netanyahu and his allies won 64 seats was, in fact, an announcement of his return to the premiership for the sixth time, continuing to be the longest-serving prime minister in the history of Israel.

In fact, the right-wing camp has long since moved beyond the issue of parliamentary majority. Even the so-called leftist and centrist forces have, in recent years, adopted "right-wing" proposals and adapted themselves accordingly to respond to the right-wing environment sweeping the Israeli society.

For example, Avigdor Lieberman's far-right Yisrael Beiteinu, which secured 6 seats, was grouped with the center-left coalition due to its opposition to Netanyahu's return as Prime Minister. The State Camp Party, with 12 seats, is actually a coalition between Benny Gantz's Blue and White Party and Gideon Sa'ar's New Hope, a right-wing faction that split from the Likud. Sa'ar was a prominent Likud leader and a competitor against Netanyahu for the party leadership. Additionally, Matan Kahana and Shirley Pinto, former members of Naftali Bennett's far-right Yemina Party, joined the State Camp Party, maintaining their right-wing alignment. In other words, the right-wing bloc won about 75–80 seats in these elections.

The Religious Zionism Party, which secured 14 seats, has underscored its anticipated pivotal role in Netanyahu's next government. The party represents a movement that has markedly strengthened, particularly over the past decade, and has expanded its influence within the military, judiciary and various Israeli institutions. Its ideology blends Jewish Orthodoxy with Zionist activism, favoring an active approach to religiosity over traditional forms, and integrates religious beliefs with nationalist Zionist extremism.

Netanyahu formed a government on 31/12/2022, comprising Likud and various religious parties, based on a parliamentary majority of 64 seats. This coalition is unified in its religious and nationalist extremism and shares common ground on numerous political and economic issues, particularly regarding Jerusalem, Judaization, settlements and the peace process. However, the significant presence of religious parties (32 seats: 14 for Religious Zionism, 11 for Shas and 7 for United Torah Judaism), equal to Likud's 32 seats, indicates that this government will lean more towards religious extremism. Consequently, Netanyahu will need to accommodate several demands and requirements from these parties, including key government positions (see table 1/5).

Benjamin Netanyahu's government can be considered the first "pure" right-wing government in Israel's political history. This government has set two primary objectives: first, to expand settlements and increase the number of settlers in WB, aiming to pave the way for its annexation or the annexation of parts thereof; second, to reform the structure of the Israeli political system through constitutional changes announced by the Israeli Minister of Justice at the beginning of 2023. These changes have sparked an unprecedented wave of tenacious and large-scale protests, marking a significant moment in Israel's history of political dissent.



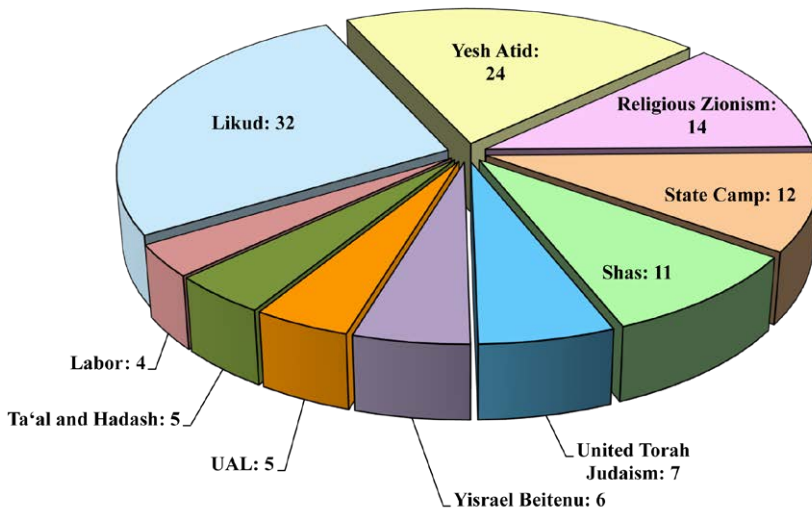
Table 1/5: Results of the 23rd, 24th and 25th Knesset Elections²

List*	25th Knesset 1/11/2022		24th Knesset 23/3/2021		23rd Knesset 2/3/2020	
	Valid votes	Seats	Valid votes	Seats	Valid votes	Seats
Likud	1,115,336	32	1,066,892	30	1,352,449	36
Yesh Atid**	847,435	24	614,112	17	—	—
Religious Zionism	516,470	14	225,641	6	—	—
State Camp	432,482	12	—	—	—	—
Shas	392,964	11	316,008	9	352,853	9
United Torah Judaism	280,194	7	248,391	7	274,437	7
Yisrael Beiteinu	213,687	6	248,370	7	263,365	7
UAL	194,047	5	167,064	4	—	—
Ta'al and Hadash	178,735	5	—	—	—	—
Labor	175,992	4	268,767	7	—	—
Blue and White**	—	—	292,257	8	1,220,381	33
Yemina (United Right: April 2019)	—	—	273,836	7	240,689	6
Joint List (Hadash, Balad, Ta'al)	—	—	212,583	6	—	—
New Hope	—	—	209,161	6	—	—
Meretz	—	—	202,218	6	—	—
Joint List (UAL, Hadash, Balad, Ta'al)	—	—	—	—	581,507	15
Labor – Gesher – Meretz	—	—	—	—	267,480	7
Number of eligible voters	6,788,804	—	6,578,084	—	6,453,255	—
Total valid votes	4,764,742	—	4,410,052	—	4,553,161	—

* The names of lists, parties and alliances are abbreviated to simplify the table, where UAL: United Arab List — *Ra'am*; Hadash: Democratic Front for Peace and Equality; Balad: National Democratic Assembly; and Ta'al: Arab Movement for Renewal.

** Yesh Atid joined the Blue and White Party before the April 2019 elections, then it got separated from it and ran independently in the 24th and 25th Knesset elections.

Results of the 25th Knesset Elections on 1/11/2022



2. Constitutional Changes

On 4/1/2023, Yariv Levin, Israel's Minister of Justice, announced proposals for judicial and constitutional amendments designed to drastically change the role and authority of the judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court. Levin has long been a vocal critic of the Supreme Court of Israel, and Netanyahu's decision to appoint him as Minister of Justice represented a fulfillment of the right-wing agenda to reform judicial powers—an agenda that has gained prominence in recent years. Levin's proposals³ focus on four core areas:

- a. The "override" clause: The proposal includes enacting an "override" clause that would amend the Basic Law of the Judiciary allowing the Knesset to "re-legislate a law struck down by the [High] court, with a majority of 61 MKs."
- b. Banning the Supreme Court from using a "reasonableness" standard in judicial review, which has been used by the court to determine whether or not a government or ministerial decision or regulation is lawful. To clarify, the first two clauses are concerned with amending the Basic Law of the Judiciary.
- c. Changing the composition of the judicial selection committee: To strengthen the government's influence in judicial appointments, including the role of the president of the Supreme Court, Levin is considering canceling the "seniority" system by which the most veteran judge is appointed president. This system



would be replaced with a new approach that permits appointing the president of the Supreme Court from outside the judiciary.

- d. Changing the status of judicial advisors by converting the position into one of trust, which would enable ministers to appoint their own legal advisors.

The plan met strong objection from the Israeli opposition, and even from the judiciary, as the then president of the Supreme Court Esther Hayut came out with a fiery speech against the Minister of Justice's plan. She declared that "the sweeping changes to the legal system would fatally undermine judicial independence, give the Knesset a 'blank check' to pass any legislation it pleases—even in violation of basic civil rights." She added, "The new justice minister's plan is not one to fix the justice system—it is a plan to crush it," and concluded, "the significance of this bad plan is therefore to change the democratic identity of the country beyond recognition."⁴

Among the components of the draft constitutional changes, the government successfully passed the reasonableness clause. On 24/7/2023, the Knesset enacted this clause by amending the Basic Law of the Judiciary, thereby eliminating the Supreme Court's authority to intervene in and supervise the government's administrative decisions. All 64 members of the government coalition voted in favor of the law, while the opposition boycotted the vote and walked out. This result indicates that no member of the government coalition missed the vote, likely due to Netanyahu's threat to fire any minister who did not support the amendment.

The Supreme Court repealed the reasonableness law in late December 2023, during the war on GS, effectively ending the constitutional changes project that had been halted at the onset of the war. This marks the first instance of the Supreme Court repealing an amendment to a basic law. The court's decision was made "by a majority of eight justices who opposed the law against seven who supported it."⁵

3. The Repercussions of the Constitutional Reform Bill

Immediately after the announcement of the project, which was supported by all components of the government coalition, the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee began active sessions to transform the project into a series of bill proposals to be voted on. The government's project for constitutional reforms carried significant repercussions, even affecting relations with the US, which demanded that Netanyahu not make the changes without reaching a consensus.

Three key repercussions can be noted at the internal level: the launch of an unprecedented popular protest movement in Israeli history, the beginning of a disobedience movement among reserve soldiers and economic impacts, particularly on the most important economic sector, high technology industries or “high-tech.”

a. The Launch of a Popular Protest Movement

The constitutional changes triggered a wave of large-scale popular protests that escalated over time, eventually becoming almost weekly demonstrations involving hundreds of thousands of Israelis. The protest movement believed that the constitutional changes aimed to establish an undemocratic political system, referring to them as a “political coup.” The movement included various social segments, with the most prominent being the secular Ashkenazi groups and segments of the liberal right. It also included secular Eastern elites and other segments, though these were less prominent in the protests.

The protest movement involved various professional sectors, most notably the Israeli high-tech sector, a large part of the Israeli academic establishment, doctors from the health system and reserve officers from the military. The movement perceived the constitutional changes as an attempt by the nationalist-religious right to impose their vision on “state” institutions by weakening Israel’s judiciary. The protest peaked after Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant’s speech in March 2023, in which he declared that the constitutional changes have become a threat to Israel’s national security and demanded that they be halted or a consensus be reached. Following his speech, Netanyahu announced Gallant’s dismissal, which escalated the protests and led Netanyahu to freeze both the dismissal and the constitutional changes temporarily. The protests resumed in July 2023 against the backdrop of legislating and amending the reasonableness clause, and they effectively ended with the outbreak of the war on GS. Significant efforts to reach a consensus on the constitutional changes were made from March through June 2023, but all were unsuccessful.

The protests highlighted the deep divisions within Israeli society, as each side felt threatened by the other. Those opposing the constitutional changes believed that the changes aimed to alter the character of the “state” and its political and systemic structure in a way that contradicts its values, political orientations and historical legacy. They viewed the political system as a heritage passed down from the founding fathers. On the other hand, the religious and nationalist right believed



their political dominance would be meaningless without reshaping the political system according to their views. They also felt that the “state” should serve their colonialist agendas and religious projects.

b. Military Repercussions

The plan for constitutional changes had significant repercussions for the military institution, in an unprecedented manner in its history. Thousands of voluntary reservists announced the suspension of their service in the army due to the constitutional changes. The numbers increased following the enactment of the reasonableness law, affecting various units in the military, including Cyber, Military Intelligence, Technology, Engineering, Navy, Air Force and Special Forces.

In addition, over a thousand Air Force members and about 10 thousand reservists from various military units signed petitions announcing their voluntary suspension from the reserve system, with hundreds following through after the reasonableness law was enacted. This raised concerns about military readiness in active units, and threatened the internal unity of the military.⁶

The protest by reserve officers, especially in key units, significantly impacted the army. These units, particularly the elite ones like the Air Force, rely on voluntary service rather than regular personnel. This situation jeopardized the army’s readiness, and introduced external political divides within its ranks. The army appeared fragmented, with elite units and infantry divided over the protest, which was perceived as having a class and ideological biases. Political discord arose between individuals and units, regulars and reservists, and prestigious units and other divisions.

Tamir Hayman, former head of Military Intelligence and now the INSS head, notes that, in the long run, the military has been greatly affected by the constitutional changes, and he lists three implications in this respect:⁷

1. In the short term: The repercussions are related to the army’s unity and internal cohesion, as the army was brought into the political arena.
2. In the medium term: The repercussions of the constitutional changes will be on the readiness and capabilities of the army, as the more officers who do not report to the reserve and the longer that takes, the more the army loses its capabilities.

3. In the long term: The consequences have to do with the motivation to enlist, which is vital to the quality and identity of the army.⁸

Reservist Colonel Ariel Heimann agrees with this trend, estimating “the risk in the longer term is eminently greater than the significant risk that exists in the short term.”⁹

c. Economic Repercussions

The constitutional changes posed several threats to the strength of Israel’s economy. Dozens of Israeli economists have cautioned about the potential negative impact on the economy, its international standing and, crucially, on foreign investment in Israel, particularly in the high-tech sector.

A letter signed by 200 Israeli prominent economists, led by Professor Jacob Frenkel, former governor of the Bank of Israel, warned that the proposed constitutional changes could adversely affect economic growth and on the quality of life of citizens in the long term.¹⁰

Two hundred former employees of the Ministry of Finance’s budget department have warned about the economic consequences of the constitutional changes. They highlighted concerns about the weakening of the shekel, declining economic growth and rising inflation, all of which are expected to lead to higher interest rates and an increased cost of living.¹¹

Warnings about the economic ramifications of the constitutional changes were not confined to the local level; they extended to the international stage as well. The global financial-services company JPMorgan Chase published a report on the Israeli economy, indicating that “judicial reforms can have medium-term investment and growth implications that are hard to quantify.” The report also noted that a “credit rating downgrade is also a risk,” drawing a parallel to the situation in Poland. “Israel’s local markets have seen a flare-up in idiosyncratic risk as increased geopolitical tensions were added to investor concerns over plans for judicial reforms,” the report stated.¹²

The primary concern in the Israeli high-tech sector was the potential exodus of numerous companies from Israel. The implementation of constitutional changes could have led to a withdrawal of foreign investments in the sector, causing many Israeli companies to relocate their operations abroad.¹³ The sector’s concern was further amplified by a decline in its ability to attract new investments by the end



of 2022, which resulted in the dismissal of thousands of employees. According to data from Israeli Mapped in NY, there are 400 Israeli high-tech companies operating in New York. In the past year, dozens of companies have moved to the US, particularly New York, due to the internal political situation marked by extreme polarization, the rise of non-working social groups (Haredim), and the dominance of extremist religious discourse in Israel.¹⁴

The high-tech has entered a state of uncertainty regarding the fate of investments following the onset of constitutional changes. Many investors have halted their investment plans until the implications of these changes becomes clear. One investor mentioned that there were “orders from above [within his company] not to invest in the Israeli high-tech sector until the direction of the undemocratic and discriminatory changes becomes clear.” He likened this situation to why the company does not invest in Hungary and Türkiye.¹⁵

In conclusion, the constitutional changes and the resulting internal division have had significant repercussions that will impact Israel for a long time. These repercussions include the collapse of “state” institutions, a decline in military readiness and the weakening of political and bureaucratic elites, which was evident during Operation al-Aqsa Flood.

4. The Failure of 7 October and the War on GS

The framing of Operation al-Aqsa Flood has taken many forms in Israeli discourse, reflecting the magnitude of the trauma experienced by Israeli society. Some have compared the operation to the September 11 attacks in the US, while others see it as akin to the military and political failure in the October 1973 war. Others describe it as the largest “pogrom” or mass attacks on Jews since the Holocaust, even labeling Hamas “Nazi.”¹⁶ Uri Bar-Joseph, a professor of international relations at Haifa University and an author on the 1973 war, argued that the failure on October 7 was far greater than in 1973. He noted that during the October 1973 war, the military’s readiness and preparedness were high, whereas the current failure reflects a significant breakdown in both military and political leadership. Bar-Joseph also emphasized that the failure in 1973 was due to the shortcomings of certain political and military officials, whereas the failure in October 2023 was an institutionalized failure affecting the entire military and political establishment.¹⁷

These framings reflect the state of shock and the production of consciousness and memory in Israeli society regarding Operation al-Aqsa Flood with a tendency to characterize the incident as part of the “Jewish catastrophe.” Those who carried it out are often depicted as either “Nazis” or “Daesh” and the operation is described as the biggest catastrophe to hit the Jewish community since the Holocaust. This framing has triggered a wave of extremist attitudes within Israeli society towards GS, not just Hamas. Phrases such as “the Gaza Strip must be wiped out” or “leveled to the ground” have spread, with no willingness to accept any kind of equality between Israeli civilian deaths and Palestinian civilian deaths. This trauma explains the significant recruitment in the Israeli society and the collective support for a harsh Israeli military operation in GS, whether from the air or by supporting a ground operation to eliminate Hamas rule in the strip.¹⁸

5. Formation of the Emergency Government

After the war began, an emergency government was formed in Israel, including Benny Gantz’s State Camp Party. The concept of a wartime emergency government dates back to 1967 when Menachem Begin, head of Herut Party (later Likud), joined the Labor Party government led by Levi Eshkol on the eve of the June War. This government lasted for the duration of the war, after which Begin left returned to the opposition. During the October 1973 war, a miniature war council was established in Israel, consisting of four members who made decisions regarding military operations without consulting the broader the government, which approved the council’s decisions retroactively. It appears that this experience inspired the State Camp to propose the idea of a mini war cabinet to Netanyahu.

An emergency government differs from a government of national unity in that the latter distributes portfolios among its members and continues to function as a normal government until new elections are held. In contrast, an emergency government operates during wartime without actually allocating portfolios to new members. Decisions made by the war cabinet are not legally binding until they are approved by the mini-ministerial council to be legal.

During a meeting of the heads of the coalition lists on 10/10/2023, the parties agreed to form an emergency government, with the participation of the State Camp Party, led by Benny Gantz. A very small cabinet (war council) was established, including Netanyahu, Gantz, Gadi Eisenkot of the State Camp, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer.¹⁹ The government

approved the formation of this small council at the request of the State Camp, which made its participation in the emergency government conditional on the formation of this council and the exclusion of many current ministers, including National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, Foreign Minister Eli Cohen and Justice Minister Yariv Levin.

Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid Party and Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu refused to join the emergency government. Lapid conditioned his participation on the dismissal of far-right ministers Ben-Gvir and Smotrich, while Lieberman required the elimination of Hamas and its leaders in GS. Despite these conditions being declared, Lieberman did not join the government, possibly because Netanyahu himself was not enthusiastic about his inclusion and did not trust him.

Netanyahu aimed to distribute responsibility for the war's outcomes by forming an emergency government. He is aware that an official commission of inquiry will be established after the war to examine, among other things, the responsibility for the conduct of the war, its results and the price paid. Therefore, with the current government in place, the responsibility will rest solely on Netanyahu's shoulders. Defense Minister Gallant had warned Netanyahu in March 2023 about the security consequences of the constitutional changes and Israel's weakened image in the eyes of its enemies due to internal division. Therefore, forming an emergency government would spread the responsibility to other parties. Additionally, Netanyahu needs to gain legitimacy for upcoming military actions, and his legitimacy would be higher with an emergency government that includes former generals, particularly former chiefs of staff such as Gantz and Eisenkot.

The State Camp is interested in leading the war effort and positioning itself as the savior of Israel amidst a failing government and an incompetent cabinet, particularly given that he has the support of two highly experienced and respected military figures, Gantz and Eisenkot. Its involvement in the government aligns with a political strategy it adopted since the constitutional crisis began, which is to present itself as a unifying force beyond partisan and political divides for the sake of the "state," similar to its approach during the constitutional crisis when it engaged in talks to reach a consensus on constitutional changes. Gantz hopes that after the war, his party will emerge as the dominant political force, particularly given Netanyahu's uncertain political future following this major setback, regardless of the results of the war's outcome.

The Israeli society has rallied together during the war, demonstrating unanimous support for the war and a desire for victory. Despite significant military losses, economic strain, ongoing emergency conditions, and the evacuation of hundreds of thousands from the north and south, support for the war remains strong among the Israeli public.

6. Netanyahu's Future and the War

It has become evident that Netanyahu is managing the war according to his internal political interests and his desire to remain in the political arena following the events of 7/10/2023, which occurred under his leadership. He views the extension of the war as crucial for his political survival and for restoring his standing. Netanyahu's interests align with those of the Israeli military establishment, as both sides are focused on continuing the war until military objectives are met, particularly the elimination of Hamas, even if it takes several months or years. Despite the ongoing tension between Netanyahu, his government and the military—tensions that predate 7/10/2023 and persisted during the war on GS—both sides agree on the need to continue the war, each pursuing its own goals. Netanyahu seeks political survival, while the military aims to restore its prestige, which was damaged on 7/10/2023, showing little interest in Israel's internal political debates. There is no doubt that the army would have preferred to replace Netanyahu with someone from within the military establishment, while still ensuring the continuation of the war.²⁰

In addition to prolonging the war and repeatedly stating that he will not end it until Hamas is eliminated, Netanyahu has focused on stabilizing his government by addressing the interests of its various components. He preserved the budgets allocated to the Orthodox religious parties in the 2023 budget following the war and refrained from implementing significant cuts to funding for religious education. He also backed National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's efforts to distribute weapons to the public and establish approximately 750 armed local guard squads in Jewish towns. Furthermore, he supported the settler right, represented by the Religious Zionism Party headed by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, in freezing funds allocated to the PA, and asserted that he would prevent the PA's return to GS.

In addition to his commitment to prolonging the war and stabilizing his government, Netanyahu has crafted a right-wing narrative of the events of 7/10/2023 to present to his right-wing base, focusing on the following points:



- The military and security establishments are accountable for the failure on 7/10/2023, as it was their duty to alert of Hamas's preparations for such an operation in southern Israel.
- The popular protests in Israel against his government's proposed constitutional changes, and the accompanying military mutiny—particularly within the Israeli Air Force—are blamed for creating an impression of internal division and perceived weakness in the military due to the refusal to perform military service.
- The Oslo Accords and the 2005 disengagement from GS are held responsible for the current situation in WB and GS, as they contributed to the rise of Hamas as a military force, due to the lack of military and security control over these territories.

Netanyahu seeks to project an image of victory in the war to mask the failure of 7/10/2023, stabilize his government and rebuild his electoral support around his leadership of the right and Israel.²¹ He understands that his political survival hinges on persuading his supporters to back him after the war; thus, betting on the lack of consensus among Israelis regarding his departure. Analysis of polls conducted since the war began reveals that Netanyahu's main shift has been in consolidating his traditional support base around his leadership. A recent Channel 13 poll showed that 72% of Israelis favor Netanyahu's resignation either immediately or soon after the war (31% immediately, and 41% after the war). Among those who voted for the current government components, the poll found that 70% support Netanyahu staying in power after the war, while only 20% believe he should resign.²²

7. The Israeli Debate over the War's Objectives

The debate within Israeli society reveals a gradual erosion of confidence in the ability to achieve the war's stated objectives of eliminating Hamas and recovering Israeli captives in GS. The debate centers on the following points:

- a. The fundamental contradiction between the two goals of the war: Eliminating Hamas and freeing the captives cannot be achieved simultaneously, and pursuing one goal will likely compromise the other. On one hand, engaging in a prolonged war aimed at dismantling Hamas's civilian and military infrastructure risks endangering the captives' lives, potentially leading to their deaths either through Israeli military actions or, as some experts suggest, at the hands of their captors if they anticipate their own imminent defeat. On the other hand,

successfully recovering the Israeli captives alive would require abandoning the goal of dismantling the civilian and military infrastructure of Hamas, which has declared that any negotiations for prisoner and hostage exchanges will only take place after a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from GS. This has led former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to advocate for ending the war with the primary objective of freeing the Israeli captives, which he believes should be the war's foremost goal.²³

- b. The realism of the idea of eliminating Hamas: For many Israelis, this goal has become increasingly unrealistic and unattainable. Achieving this objective would likely involve a prolonged war and the occupation of GS, leading to significant economic, military, humanitarian and international costs. Consequently, public support for this goal has shifted towards questioning its feasibility, particularly whether it can be achieved solely through military means.²⁴
- c. Neutralizing politics during wartime: At the outset of the war, there was a broad consensus to set aside political and partisan differences, emphasizing unity in wartime. This included opposition figures refraining from calling for Prime Minister Netanyahu's resignation and even participating in a national unity government, which eventually led to the formation of an emergency government. Opposition leader Yair Lapid initially agreed to support the government and avoided demanding Netanyahu's resignation following the events of 7/10/2023. However, this consensus eroded a few weeks later, when Lapid reversed stance and called for Netanyahu to step down.²⁵ The war slogan "Together We Win" has also lost its unanimity within Israeli society. Political divisions have resurfaced, with factions such as the State Camp Party headed by Benny Gantz advocating for a government withdrawal²⁶ and demonstrations erupting in calls for Netanyahu's resignation.

Israel lacks a clear and consensual political vision for an exit strategy, leading to divergent orientations within its government. This divergence has become a point of contention between Israel and the US. Ironically, while the US supports Israel militarily, diplomatically and economically in its war efforts, Israel remains a major obstacle to the US political vision for the aftermath, assuming Israel achieves its goals. The US envisions the return of a revitalized PA to GS, while Israeli visions range from the forcible transfer of Palestinians and resettlement in GS to the establishment of a local Palestinian civil administration akin to the



village associations in WB in the late 1970s, alongside continued military security control of GS. Netanyahu outlined his vision for Gaza in an article in *The Wall Street Journal*, listing three prerequisites: eliminating Hamas, demilitarizing GS and deradicalizing Gaza!²⁷ However, the core issue remains the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, the confiscation of their property, violation of their dignity and denial of their natural human rights. Netanyahu refuses to resolve the issue in the government because of his fear of dismantling it and going to elections in which he will inevitably lose.

Second: Demographic Indicators

CBS estimated the population of Israel at the end of 2023 at 9.842 million, including 7.208 million Jews, or 73.2% of the population. This is compared to 9.662 million people, including 7.101 million Jews, or 73.5% of the population at the end of 2022. The CBS estimated the number of Arabs, including residents of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, at 2.079 million in 2023, compared to 2.039 million in 2022, or 21.1% of the population (see table 2/5). If the residents of East Jerusalem (approximately 389 thousand)²⁸ and the Golan (approximately 25 thousand) are excluded, the number of the 1948 Palestinians (Palestinian territories occupied in 1948) will be about 1.665 million in 2023, or about 16.9% of the population.

In 2023, the CBS classified about 554 thousand people as “others,” or 5.6%, compared to about 522 thousand in 2022. These “others” are mostly immigrants from Russia, the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe who are not recognized as Jews, identify Judaism as a nationality rather than a religious affiliation, or who are non-Jews or non-Arab Christians.

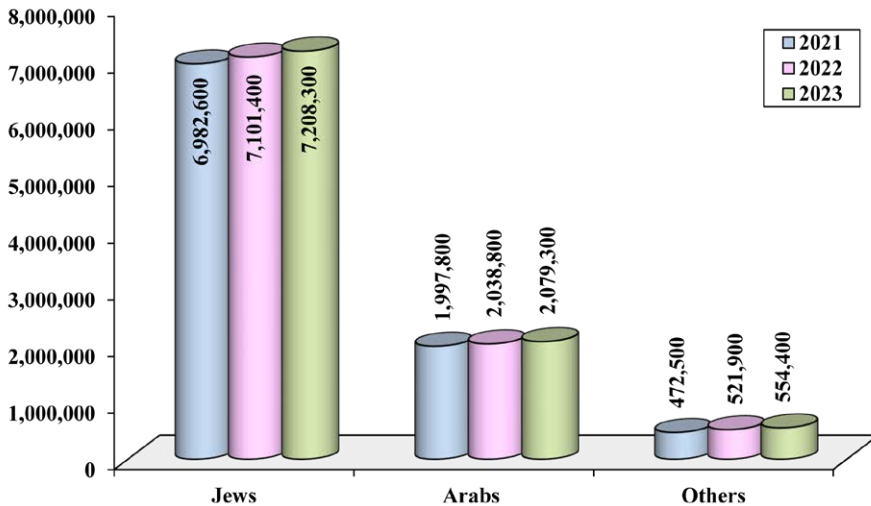
According to the CBS, Jerusalem is the largest city in “Israel” (occupied Palestine), and its population represents 10% of the total population in Israel. The population of Jerusalem at the end of 2022 was about 979 thousand, including about 595 thousand settlers and about 384 thousand Palestinians, or about 39.2%.²⁹ According to Israeli estimates, the number of Jewish settlers in WB, including East Jerusalem, is about 845 thousand settlers in 2023 compared to about 800 thousand in 2021. The WestBankJewishPopulationStats.com report stated

that the growth rate of settlers increased to 2.5% in 2022 and 3% in 2023, while Palestinian estimates issued by the Applied Research Institute (ARIJ) stated that the number of settlers reached about 954 thousand in 2022.³⁰

Table 2/5: Population of Israel – Selected Years³¹

Year	Total	Jews	Arabs (including East Jerusalem and Golan)	Others
2005	6,990,700	5,313,800	1,377,100	299,800
2010	7,695,100	5,802,400	1,573,100	319,600
2015	8,463,400	6,334,500	1,757,800	371,100
2020	9,289,800	6,873,900	1,957,300	458,600
2021	9,453,000	6,982,600	1,997,800	472,500
2022	9,662,000	7,101,400	2,038,800	521,900
2023	9,842,000	7,208,300	2,079,300	554,400

Population of Israel 2021–2023



In 2022, Israel's population growth rate was 2.2%. This rate is higher than the usual annual indicators is because 38% of the increase was due to the arrival of a significant number of Jewish immigrants, primarily from Russia and Ukraine (0.84% of the 2.2% increase rate), meaning that the actual increase from natural

growth (births) did not exceed 1.4%.³² In 2023, the population growth rate was approximately 1.86%, with the increase for Jews at 1.5% and for Arabs, including those in East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, at 1.99%. Based on population growth data, Israel's population is expected to reach 10 million by the end of 2024, under normal conditions. However, Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which has profoundly shaken Israeli security doctrine and the concept of a Jewish haven, has disrupted all projections of Jewish population growth. Therefore, making any future population projections is challenging, as the conflict is ongoing at the time of writing this report.

According to 2021 statistics of the CBS and the Jewish Virtual Library, the average life expectancy in Israel reached 80.5 years for men and 84.6 years for women, placing Israel eighth in the world for high average life expectancy, ahead of many developed countries such as the US, Canada, Italy, France and others.³³ Of the Jewish population aged 20 and over, 44% of Jews self-identify as secular, 21% as traditional but not very observant, 12% as traditional and observant, 12% as religious, and 11% as ultra-Orthodox.³⁴

In 2018, the fertility of Jewish women exceeded that of Arab women for the first time, and the rate among Jewish women living in Israel and WB settlements reached 3.05 compared to 3.04 for Arab women living there. The overall fertility rate reached 3.17 children per woman in 2018. This ratio dropped to 3.03 in 2022, and the decline was mostly in Muslim (3.2 to 2.91), Druze (2.16 to 1.85), and Christian (2.06 to 1.68) communities.³⁵

1948 Palestinians

It should be noted that Israeli statistics include Palestinians from East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights with the 1948 Palestinians; and this should be taken into consideration. As for the religious distribution of the 1948 Palestinians, as of the end of 2022, there are about 1.747 million Muslims (Sunnis) (85.7%), about 150 thousand Druze (7.4%) and about 140 thousand Christians (6.8%).³⁶

The 1948 Palestinian community has endured significant hardships due to the spread of crime, organized crime and the proliferation of unlicensed weapons. They have also faced challenges from the inaction of responsible authorities and the collusion of the Israeli police with criminal gangs, in what appears to be part of an undeclared Israeli effort to create an expulsive environment for Palestinians.

With the far-right Israeli government taking office at the end of 2022, there was a sharp escalation in the number of victims of violence and crime within the

Palestinian Arab community in Israel in 2023 compared to 2022. According to the annual report of AMAN—Arab Center for Safe Society, the number of victims of violence and crime in the Arab community by the end of 2023 reached an unprecedented record of 247 victims, marking a 122% increase from 2022, which saw 111 victims. Lod is the Arab town most affected by violence and crime, with 18 murders, followed by Nazareth with 16 murders and Rahat with 14 murders. Available data also indicates a 33% increase in the number of minor victims under the age of 17, with 14 victims in 2023, including a fetus in his mother's womb, compared to 9 victims in 2022; and a 45% increase in the number of female victims in 2023 reaching 16 victims, compared to 11 victims in 2022.³⁷

The New York Times newspaper reported that after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, at least 256 thousand Israelis applied for gun licenses. The paper quoted Tomer Lotan, former director general of the Israeli Ministry of National Security, as saying that the Israeli government issued 13 thousand firearms licenses in all 2022, and 23 thousand from the beginning of 2023 until 7/10/2023. Lotan added that after Operation al-Aqsa Flood and until late November 2023, roughly 26 thousand new licenses had been fully approved in less than 8 weeks, while another 44 thousand Israelis had received “conditional approval.” Lotan warned that Israel “will pay a big price, as a society, for this proliferation of private weaponry: more gunfire accidents, more suicides, more kids playing with guns, more daily conflicts escalating to drawn guns.”³⁸

On the other hand, incitement within Israeli Zionist circles against the 1948 Palestinians and Palestinians in general has increased. According to the “Index of Racism and Incitement 2022” report, published by the Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media on 28/3/2023, the year 2022 witnessed a significant rise in violent discourse in Israeli digital spaces targeting the Arab and Palestinian public. Racist and inciteful content increased by 10% compared to 2021, with the number of violent Hebrew posts published on social networks reached 685 thousand up from 620 thousand in 2021.³⁹

Jewish Immigration

According to the CBS, 45,985 immigrants arrived in Israel in 2023 compared to 74,714 and 25,497 in 2022 and 2021 respectively. The number of Jewish immigrants to Israel tripled in 2022, likely due to the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war, with 58% coming from Russia and 21.3% from Ukraine.⁴⁰ However, since October 2023, there has been a significant decrease in immigration to Israel

due to Operation al-Aqsa Flood, ongoing war conditions and aggression against GS (see table 3/5).

Since Israel's establishment in 1948, 3.4 million immigrants have arrived, with 46.2% coming after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990.⁴¹ Immigration rates from 2005 to 2023 have been relatively stable but remain low compared to the last decade of the twentieth century, due to the depletion of the Jewish population available for large-scale immigration and tendency of Jews to remain in developed countries in North America and Europe, where Jews find no incentive to immigrate extensively.

Preliminary data indicate that reverse Jewish migration from Israel has escalated due to Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the loss of the Israeli community's sense of security and stability, with at least 370 thousand Jews leaving Israel in the first two months of the war.⁴²

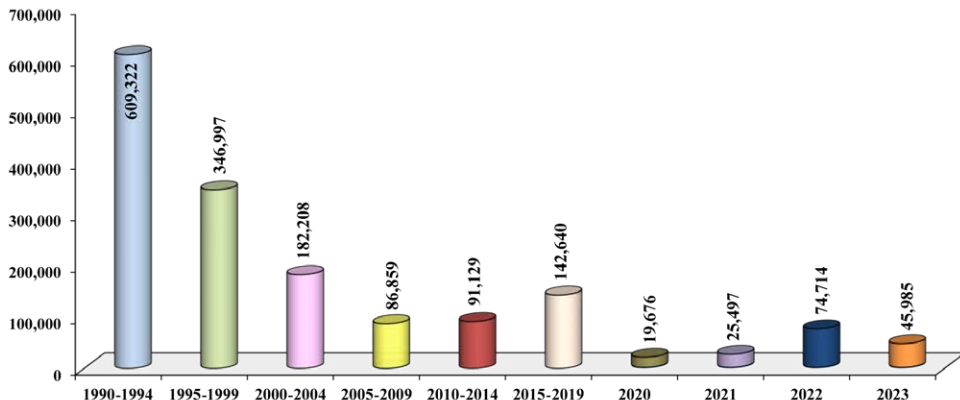
Table 3/5: Number of Jewish Immigrants to Israel 1990–2023⁴³

Year	1990–1994	1995–1999	2000–2004	2005–2009	2010–2014
No. of immigrants	609,322	346,997	182,208	86,859	91,129

Year	2015–2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
No. of immigrants	142,640	19,676	25,497	74,714	45,985	1,625,027

The following chart shows the evolution of the number of Jewish immigrants to Israel for every five-year period from 1990–2019, except for 2020–2023.

Number of Jewish Immigrants to Israel 1990–2023



According to CBS, there were 560–596 thousand Israelis living abroad in 2016, not including children born of Israelis born overseas.⁴⁴

World Jewish Population

As of the beginning of 2023, world Jewish population was estimated at 16.783 million Jews, the vast majority of whom lived in the US and Israel. This figure is a jump in estimates of the number of Jews compared to previous years. The “sudden” increase in the figures that the same sources used to publish is because they recently included those Jews who do not believe in Judaism as a religion, and children whose parents are Jewish, mostly in the US.

As of early 2023, approximately 7.5 million Jews lived in the US, which represents the largest gathering of Jews in the world at 44.7%, followed by Israel with about 7.2 million (42.9%), and then France, Canada, UK and others.

According to the Jewish Agency for Israel, about 27 thousand Jews live in Muslim-majority countries, with about 14 thousand Jews in Türkiye, 9 thousand in Iran and 2 thousand in Morocco. The Agency also noted that if Jews eligible for Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return (which includes those with at least one Jewish grandparent) are included, the global Jewish population would reach 25.5 million.⁴⁵

Sergio DellaPergola, a demographer and Jewish Agency activist, estimated the number of Jews in the US at around 6 million in 2020. However, a Pew Research Center survey that year reported 7.5 million Jews in the US, an increase of 800 thousand since 2013. This number was later adopted by the Jewish Virtual Library as of early 2023. Alternatively, the American Jewish Yearbook by Ira Sheskin and Arnold Dashefsky estimated 7.3 million Jews in the US in 2020, closely aligning with the Pew survey. According to Sheskin, most American sociologists consider this variation reasonable, noting that DellaPergola’s estimate did not include the 1.5 million individuals who identify as “Jews without religion,”⁴⁶ viewing Judaism as a nationality rather than a religion. Therefore, this report relies on the updated figures from leading specialized sources.

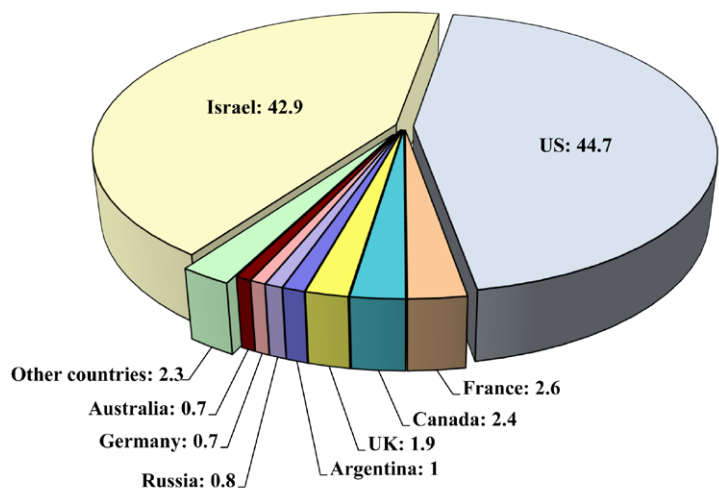
Undoubtedly, this significant disparity in estimating the number of Jews, primarily due to varying definitions of who is considered Jewish, causes confusion. However, it does not negate the small global Jewish population, their concentration of over 87% in two countries, and their generally slow population

growth. It also highlights the state of “assimilation” in other societies and the impact of globalization’s challenges on the Jewish community worldwide.

Table 4/5: World Jewish Population by Country 2023⁴⁷

Country	US	Israel	France	Canada	UK	Argentina	Russia	Germany	Australia	Other countries	Total
Estimates (thousands)	7,500	7,208	440	398	312	171	132	125	117	380	16,783
Percentage (%)	44.7	42.9	2.6	2.4	1.9	1	0.8	0.7	0.7	2.3	100

World Jewish Population by Country 2023 (%)



Third: Economic Indicators

Israel enjoys a relatively advanced economic status compared to other Middle Eastern countries, but it relies on the exploitation of Palestinian land, resources and people, as well as American support and influence in the Western world. Additionally, it benefits from the lack of official Arab threats and normalization agreements with many Arab countries. However, Operation al-Aqsa Flood has severely impacted the Israeli economy, leading to instability and insecurity and creating an environment that deters investment.

From 2020 to 2023, the Israeli economy faced several challenges, including the coronavirus pandemic and Palestinian resistance. The government deficit rose to 11.6% and the public debt to 72.6% of national income in 2020,⁴⁸ with additional losses of \$2.14 billion from the Sword of Jerusalem Battle in May 2021.⁴⁹ Operation al-Aqsa Flood wiped out several years of economic growth, with direct and indirect losses surpassing all previous negative figures and statistics from Israel's past wars.

The shekel declined by more than 5% against the dollar, reaching its lowest level since 2012 at 4.08 shekels. Despite the Bank of Israel's intervention, which involved injecting about \$30 billion and selling \$8.2 billion of foreign exchange in October to stabilize the currency, the shekel continued to struggle.⁵⁰

On 22/1/2024, Bank of Israel Governor Amir Yaron warned that the war in Gaza could cost up to 255 billion shekels (\$68 billion).⁵¹ The Bank of Israel estimated economic growth of only 1.5% in 2023. While pre-war projections of Bank of Israel and IMF data indicated economic growth in 2024 of 3.4%, post-war estimates have revised this down to just 0.4%.⁵² In April 2024, the Bank of Israel reported that a downturn in the construction market could significantly impact the Palestinian economy, potentially reducing annual GDP by about 25 billion shekels (about \$6.8 billion). The report estimated that a 50% contraction in the construction sector would cause direct damage of 14 billion shekels (about \$3.8 billion), double the initial estimates of the Israeli Ministry of Finance.⁵³ Accurate predictions remain challenging due to ongoing aggression in GS, the strength of the resistance, and instability in the Israeli security, economic, military and social situation.

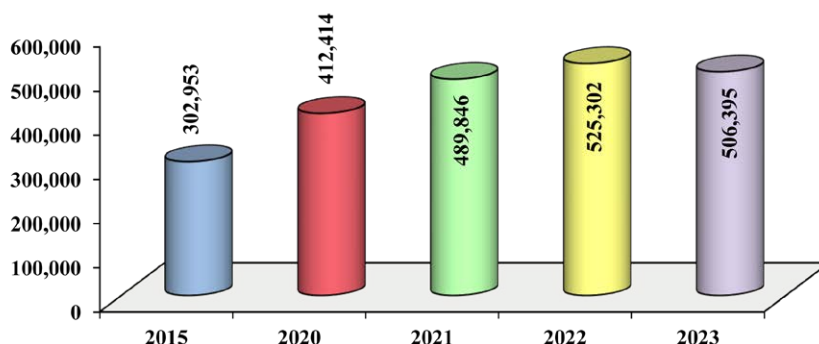
GDP

The Israeli CBS estimated GDP for 2023 at 1,868.4 billion shekels (about \$506 billion), compared to 1,763.8 billion shekels (about \$525 billion) in 2022 and 1,582 billion shekels (about \$490 billion) in 2021. These estimates indicate GDP growth in local currency terms of 5.9% in 2023, 11.5% in 2022 and 11.6% in 2021. However, when considering the fluctuation of the shekel against the dollar, the growth rate decreased by 3.6% in 2023, while it increased by 7.2% in 2022 and by 18.8% in 2021 (see table 5/5). Note that these statistics are derived from official sources, which update data periodically.



Table 5/5: Israeli GDP 2015 and 2020–2023 at Current Prices⁵⁴

Year	GDP (million shekels)	GDP (\$ million)	Shekel exchange rate (according to Bank of Israel)
2015	1,176,638	302,953	3.8839
2020	1,417,344	412,414	3.4367
2021	1,581,860	489,846	3.2293
2022	1,763,806	525,302	3.3577
2023	1,868,446	506,395	3.6897

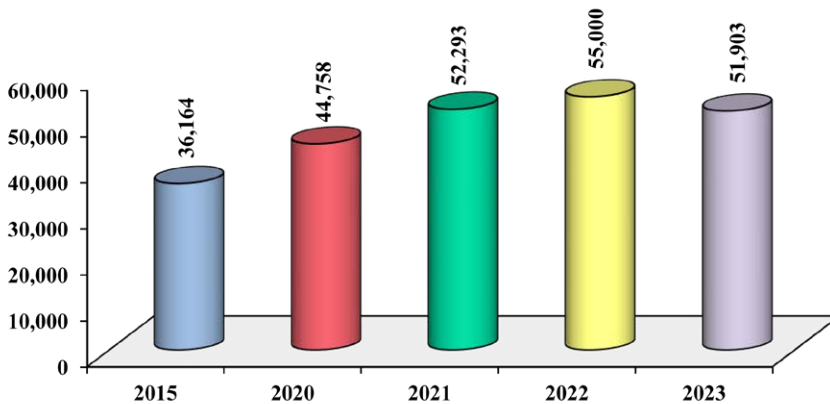
Israeli GDP in 2015 and 2020–2023 at Current Prices (\$ million)

GDP per Capita

According to the statistics, Israel's GDP per capita in 2023 amounted to 191,508 shekels (about \$52 thousand), compared to 184,672 shekels (\$55 thousand) in 2022 and 168,869 shekels (\$52,293) in 2021. This indicates a growth in GDP per capita in local currency by 3.7% in 2023, 9.4% in 2022 and 9.8% in 2021. However, due to fluctuations in the shekel's value against the dollar, the growth rate in dollars showed a decline of 5.6% in 2023, while it increased by 5.2% in 2022 and by 16.8% in 2021. Therefore, one should avoid jumping to inaccurate conclusions without considering the differences in local currency values against the dollar (see table 6/5).

Table 6/5: Israeli GDP per Capita 2015 and 2020–2023 at Current Prices⁵⁵

Year	GDP per capita (shekels)	GDP per capita (\$)
2015	140,459	36,164
2020	153,820	44,758
2021	168,869	52,293
2022	184,672	55,000
2023	191,508	51,903

Israeli GDP per Capita 2015 and 2020–2023 at Current Prices (\$)

Poverty Indicators

According to the annual poverty report of the Israeli organization Latet, published on 19/12/2023, the income of Israelis decreased by 20% after Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the Israeli aggression against GS. The report estimated that approximately 710 thousand households (22%) in Israel were experiencing acute food insecurity, compared to 522 thousand households in 2021. Additionally, 85% of those surveyed indicated difficulty in ensuring the supply of hot water or electricity needed for household appliances. The poverty line was set at 5,107 shekels (about \$1,400) per person per month. The report also noted that 81.8% of aid recipients were in debt, 81.6% of elderly aid recipients lived below the poverty line, and none of the organizations dedicated to supporting the poor have received any aid from the Israeli government since the beginning of the war.⁵⁶



The annual poverty report issued by the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NII) on 28/12/2023 set the poverty line at 3,076 shekels (about \$850) for 2022. It indicated that about 1.98 million individuals lie below the poverty line in Israel, with a poverty rate of 21% among individuals and 20.2% among families. The report added that the poverty rate among Arabs was 39%, and 14% among non-Haredi Jews.⁵⁷

Israeli Government Budget

According to Israel's CBS, total payments in the approved budget for 2023 amounted to 698.149 billion shekels (about \$182.8 billion); however, the total budget performance payments in 2022 were 674.27 billion shekels (\$200.8 billion) (see table 7/5). The final figures for 2023, which have yet to be released, are expected to show a significant increase due to Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the associated war expenses in GS.

The budget is allocated across three areas. The first is the ordinary budget, which includes the expenses of the presidency, premiership and ministries. The second area covers the development budget and debt repayment and the third includes business enterprises. From the 2022 budget performance, the ordinary budget received 441.458 billion shekels (about \$131.5 billion), of which 83.446 billion shekels (about \$24.85 billion) were spent on the army, 21.375 billion shekels (about \$6.4 billion) on national security, 86.758 billion shekels (about \$25.8 billion) on education, 69.679 billion shekels (about \$20.75 billion) on social affairs and services, and 53.632 billion shekels (about \$15.97 billion) on health. Debt repayment also accounted for a significant portion of total expenditures, amounting to 126.565 billion shekels (about \$37.69 billion) in 2022, compared to 119.78 billion shekels (about \$37.1 billion) in 2021.⁵⁸

In contrast, total receipts for 2022 was 655.07 billion shekels (about \$195.1 billion), compared to 670.43 billion shekels (about \$207.6 billion) in 2021. Much of the revenue comes from income tax (214.3 billion shekels, about \$63.8 billion) and value-added tax (129.6 billion shekels, about \$38.6 billion) as outlined in the 2022 budget performance.⁵⁹

The following table shows the actual public receipts and payments of the Israeli government during 2021–2023:

Table 7/5: Budget Performance of Israeli Government Receipts and Payments 2021–2023⁶⁰

		2021		2022		2023	
		Million shekels	\$ Million	Million shekels	\$ Million	Million shekels	\$ Million
Receipts	Current receipts	390,922	121,055	445,551	132,695	446,257	116,852
	Capital receipts	201,176	62,297	105,256	31,348	164,489	43,071
	Earmarked income in government ministries	32,435	10,044	47,333	14,097	48,595	12,725
	Business enterprises	45,897	14,213	56,931	16,955	38,808	10,162
Receipts grand total		670,429	207,608	655,072	195,095	698,149	182,809
Payments	Ordinary budget	452,785	140,212	441,458	131,476	460,940	120,697
	Development budget and debt repayment	167,379	51,831	175,915	52,392	198,401	51,951
	Business enterprises	45,779	14,176	56,892	16,944	38,808	10,162
Payments grand total		665,944	206,219	674,266	200,812	698,149	182,809
Deficit (%)		–0.67		–2.9		0	

Note: Figures for 2021 and 2022 represent the actual budget performance for receipts and payments, while those for 2023 reflect the approved budget.

According to the Israeli Ministry of Finance, total expenditure in 2023 was 516.1 billion shekels (about \$139.9 billion), compared to 500.2 billion shekels (about \$149 billion) in 2022. These figures exclude debt repayment and business enterprise expenses. Additionally, there was a significant increase in the Ministry of Defense's expenditures in the last three months of 2023, which amounted to 40% of Ministry's total annual budget. This spike was primarily due to Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the war on the GS, with expenditures reaching 39.3 billion shekels (about \$10.3 billion), compared to 20.3 billion shekels (about \$5.8 billion) during the same period in 2022.⁶¹



On 13/3/2024, the Israeli Knesset approved the war-amended general budget bill for 2024. The government spending ceiling is set at 584.1 billion shekels (about \$160 billion) after accounting for war expenses, representing a total increase of 70 billion shekels (about \$19 billion), compared to the base budget approved in May 2023. This adjustment considers the heightened expenses related to the ongoing “defense operations” in GS.⁶² The budget deficit is projected to rise to 6.6% of GDP in 2024.⁶³

In an effort to strengthen the public treasury and offset the expenditures caused by the depletion of Israeli financial resources due to the war on GS, Israel plans to borrow \$60 billion in 2024, freeze government employment and increase taxes. Consequently, the government aims to boost defense spending in 2024 by 55 billion shekels (about \$15.1 billion), an 85% increase from the pre-war defense budget.⁶⁴ The authorities have also imposed additional taxes on banks amounting to 2.5 billion shekels (about \$700 million) over the next two years,⁶⁵ along with a package of measures involving higher taxes and increased costs for basic services. The prices of various goods and services, including electricity and fuel, have already seen significant increases, affecting residents across Israel.⁶⁶

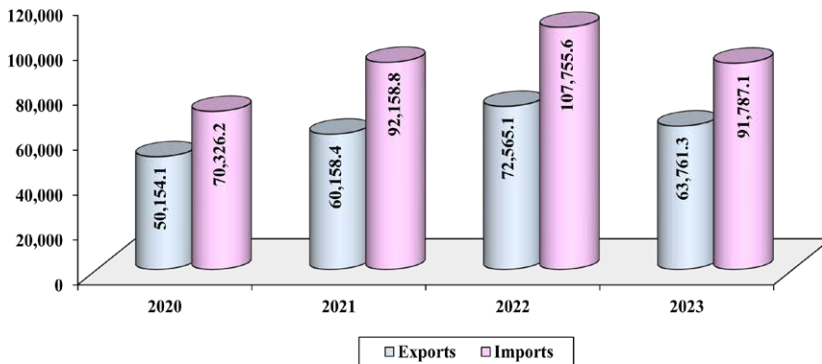
There may be some discrepancies and confusion among researchers due to the varying statistics and figures issued by Israeli official bodies. This is often because of the lack of precise definitions for terms such as the grand total budget or the regular budget; and the budget approved by the government, the budget approved by the Knesset and the actual updated budget of revenues and expenditures at the end of the fiscal year.

Exports and Imports

In 2023, Israeli exports totaled \$63.76 billion, down from \$72.57 billion in 2022 and \$60.16 billion in 2021. This represents a 12.1% decrease in 2023 following a 20.6% increase in 2022. Imports for 2023 totaled \$91.79 billion, compared to \$107.76 billion in 2022 and \$92.16 billion in 2021. This reflects a 14.8% decrease in 2023 after a 16.9% increase in 2022 (see table 8/5). Note that these statistics exclude foreign trade in services for both imports and exports, and that the percentages are calculated in dollars, not shekels.

Table 8/5: Total Israeli Exports and Imports 2020–2023 at Current Prices⁶⁷

		Exports	Imports	Deficit (%)
2020	Million shekels	172,326.2	241,463.5	-40.1
	\$ Million	50,154.1	70,326.2	
2021	Million shekels	194,080	297,445.8	-53.3
	\$ Million	60,158.4	92,158.8	
2022	Million shekels	243,749.8	361,801.4	-48.4
	\$ Million	72,565.1	107,755.6	
2023	Million shekels	234,824.9	337,774.5	-43.8
	\$ Million	63,761.3	91,787.1	

Total Israeli Exports and Imports 2020–2023 at Current Prices (\$ million)

The US still maintains its status as a primary trading partner of Israel. In 2023, Israeli exports to the US amounted to about \$17.58 billion, accounting for 27.6% of all Israeli exports, compared to about \$18.6 billion in 2022 (25.7% of all Israeli exports). Israeli imports from the US totaled around \$9 billion in 2023, representing 9.9% of all Israeli imports, compared to roughly \$9.6 billion in 2022 (8.9% of all Israeli imports). Israel offsets some of its trade deficit with most of its trading partners through its trade surplus which is close to \$8.5 billion in 2023 and \$9 billion in 2022, with the US, which is an important support for the Israeli economy (see table 9/5).



China was Israel's second largest trading partner, with Israeli exports amounting to about \$3.44 billion in 2023 and \$4.6 billion in 2022. Israeli imports from China totaled approximately \$11.2 billion in 2023 and about \$13.1 billion in 2022. Germany ranked third, with a trade volume of around \$8.7 billion in 2023, compared to \$8.96 billion in 2022.

The Netherlands advanced from sixth place in 2022 to fourth place in 2023, with a trade volume of around \$6.6 billion. Türkiye fell from fourth place in 2022 to fifth place, with a trade volume of about \$6.2 billion in 2023, down from \$8.04 billion in 2022. Switzerland and Belgium ranked sixth and seventh with trade of \$5.6 billion and \$5.45 billion respectively. Ireland moved up from 13th place in 2022 to eighth place with trade amounting to about \$5.3 billion in 2023 (see table 9/5).

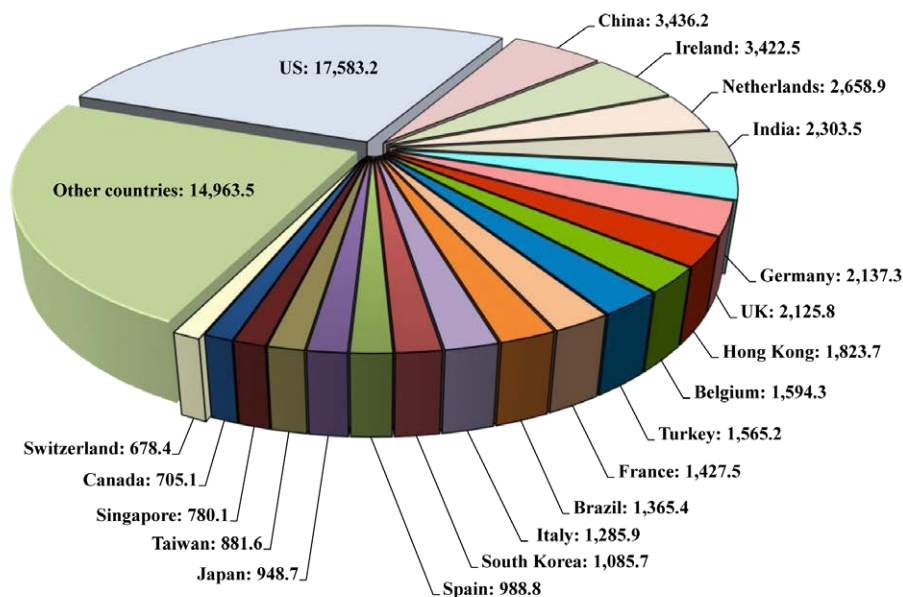
In addition to the previous countries, the main destinations for Israeli exports in 2023 were India (\$2.3 billion), UK (\$2.1 billion), Hong Kong (\$1.8 billion) and France (\$1.4 billion) along with Brazil and Italy. The main sources of Israeli imports in 2023 were Italy (\$3.3 billion), UK (\$2.9 billion), France (\$2.6 billion), South Korea (\$2.51 billion), Hong Kong (\$2.5 billion) and India (\$2 billion) (see table 9/5).

Table 9/5: Volume of Israeli Trade, Exports and Imports with Selected Countries 2022–2023 at Current Prices (\$ million)⁶⁸

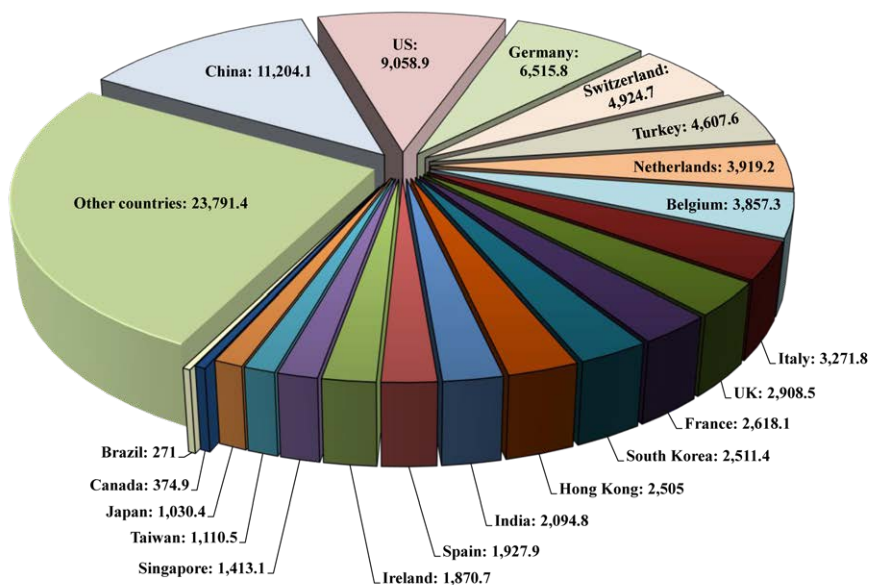
	Countries	Trade volume		Israeli exports to:		Israeli imports from:	
		2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
1	US	26,642.1	28,255.8	17,583.2	18,616.8	9,058.9	9,639
2	China	14,640.3	17,782	3,436.2	4,631.3	11,204.1	13,150.7
3	Germany	8,653.1	8,956.3	2,137.3	1,880.6	6,515.8	7,075.7
4	Netherlands	6,578.1	6,717.5	2,658.9	2,439.3	3,919.2	4,278.2
5	Türkiye	6,172.8	8,039.2	1,565.2	2,338.9	4,607.6	5,700.3
6	Switzerland	5,603.1	7,619.5	678.4	1,530.3	4,924.7	6,089.2
7	Belgium	5,451.6	6,540.3	1,594.3	1,996.9	3,857.3	4,543.4
8	Ireland	5,293.2	4,496.1	3,422.5	2,576.1	1,870.7	1,920
9	UK	5,034.3	6,308	2,125.8	3,121.2	2,908.5	3,186.8
10	Italy	4,557.7	4,994.7	1,285.9	1,524.4	3,271.8	3,470.3
11	India	4,398.3	6,057	2,303.5	3,354.4	2,094.8	2,702.6
12	Hong Kong	4,328.7	4,828.3	1,823.7	1,622.1	2,505	3,206.2
13	France	4,045.6	5,632.4	1,427.5	2,081.4	2,618.1	3,551
14	South Korea	3,597.1	4,100.8	1,085.7	1,304.2	2,511.4	2,796.6
15	Spain	2,916.7	3,309.2	988.8	1,198.4	1,927.9	2,110.8
16	Singapore	2,193.2	3,309.5	780.1	1,143	1,413.1	2,166.5
17	Taiwan	1,992.1	2,714.8	881.6	1,395.6	1,110.5	1,319.2
18	Japan	1,979.1	2,307.2	948.7	906	1,030.4	1,401.2
19	Brazil	1,636.4	2,339.7	1,365.4	1,942	271	397.7
20	Canada	1,080	1,514.1	705.1	1,042.4	374.9	471.7
21	Other countries	38,754.9	44,498.3	14,963.5	15,919.8	23,791.4	28,578.5
	Total	155,548.4	180,320.7	63,761.3	72,565.1	91,787.1	107,755.6



Israeli Exports to Selected Countries 2023 at Current Prices (\$ million)



Israeli Imports from Selected Countries 2023 at Current Prices (\$ million)



Manufacturing, mining, and quarrying topped the list of Israeli exports for 2022 and 2023, accounting for 91.1% and 93.3% respectively. Israel's net diamond exports amounted to 7.7% in 2022 and 5% in 2023. Agricultural exports and those relating to forestry and fishing totaled 1.6% and 2.3% in 2022 and 2023 respectively (see table 10/5). The breakdown of industrial exports by technological intensity, high-tech industries accounted for 39% of all such exports in 2022, while medium-tech industries accounting for 55%, and low-tech industries for 6%.⁶⁹

Table 10/5: Israeli Exports by Commodity Group 2021–2023 (\$ million)⁷⁰

Year	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Manufacturing, mining & quarrying excl. working diamonds	Working of diamonds & Wholesale of diamond	Other	Discarded exports	Total
2021	1,151.9	50,227.5	5,314.4	14.2	–340.5	56,367.6
2022	1,091.7	60,592.2	5,149.1	0.4	–348.5	66,484.8
2023	1,336.6	55,249.8	2,983.5	0.4	–383	59,187.3

As for Israeli imports, raw materials topped the list in 2022 and 2023, accounting for 43% and 43.1% respectively. Fuel imports amounted to 13.6% in 2022 and 11.9% in 2023. Consumer goods represented 23.9% and 25.1%, while investment goods accounted for 13.4% and 15.5% in the same years. Diamond imports were about 4.8% and 3.6% in 2022 and 2023 respectively (see table 11/5).

Table 11/5: Israeli Imports by Commodity Group 2021–2023 (\$ million)⁷¹

Year	Consumer goods	Raw materials	Investment materials	Fuel	Polished and rough diamonds	Other	Total
2021	23,429.2	39,265	13,792.7	9,009.5	5,128.1	350.4	90,975
2022	25,363.7	45,744.1	14,235.3	14,461.5	5,061.8	1,459.6	106,326
2023	22,747.4	38,999.8	14,034.1	10,753.1	3,274.2	658.1	90,466.7

US Support

Although Israel is considered a wealthy and developed country, it continues to receive a US annual assistance. Since 2018, this support has increased by about \$700 million annually, reaching \$3.8 billion per year, of which \$3.3 billion allocated for military grants. For the fiscal year 2022, an additional \$1 billion was allocated

specifically for the renewal of the Iron Dome system. As a result, the total amount of US support provided to Israel from 1949 to 2023 stands at about \$154.5 billion, according to the final tally of the report provided by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the Jewish Virtual Library.⁷²

In March 2023, the CRS reported that the National Defense Authorization Act of 2023, passed by Congress, allocated \$520 million for joint US-Israel defense programs for the fiscal year 2023, including \$500 million for missile defense programs. Per the terms of the MOU, Congress appropriated \$3.8 billion for Israel under the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and Missile Defense programs in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023. Additionally, \$98.58 million was provided for other cooperative defense and non-defense programs.⁷³

Following Operation al-Aqsa Flood, US aid to Israel, particularly military aid, saw a significant increase. On 20/10/2023, President Joe Biden announced from the White House the allocation of \$14.3 billion in aid to Israel.⁷⁴ The US Senate approved the funding request in February 2024 with the support of 70% of its members, but it was blocked in the House of Representatives.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, President Biden exercised his authority to disburse the funds without awaiting the House's approval.

Table 12/5: US Foreign Aid to Israel 1949–2023 (\$ million)⁷⁶

Period	1949–1958	1959–1968	1969–1978	1979–1988	1989–1998
Total	599.6	727.8	11,426.5	29,933.9	31,551.9

Period	1999–2008	2009–2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*	Grand total
Total	29,374.7	30,878.2	3,800	3,800	3,800	4,800	3,800	154,492.6

* This sum does not include the support related to Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the war on GS.

Fourth: Military Indicators

The Israeli security theory experienced a severe setback following Operation al-Aqsa Flood. This operation undermined the foundations of deterrence, early warning and operations in the enemy territory, revealing significant flaws in the military security system. It also disrupted the development and modernization

efforts that had been integrated into strategies, plans, concepts and preparations over recent years. These advancements, previously championed by the General Staff leadership, were presented as both a safety valve and a vision of the future of the Israeli army, aimed at addressing the challenges and dangers in the strategic environment surrounding Israel. There is no doubt about the superiority of Israel's material military capabilities in comparison to the resistance, and even to all Arab countries. However, the crucial question remains why Israel was unable to subdue the resistance, and why its superiority did not prevent the 7/10/2023 operation. The following outlines the key military indicators for 2022–2023.

1. Appointments and Structural Changes

The years 2022 and 2023 witnessed some appointments to important positions in the Israeli army within the framework of regular appointments, most notably the appointment of Major General Herzi Halevi as Chief of Staff, who officially assumed his duties on 16/1/2023, replacing Aviv Kochavi.⁷⁷

In May 2023, Major General Eliezer Toledano, who served as the head of the Southern Command, was appointed as the officer in charge of Iran Affairs and the Strategic Planning Division. Brigadier General Yaron Finkelman replaced Toledano as head of the Southern Command. Brigadier General Nimrod Aloni was appointed head of the Depth Corps and Military Colleges, and Brigadier General David Zini was appointed head of the Training Command and General Staff Corps. Rear Admiral Eyal Harel was appointed head of the Planning Directorate. Brigadier General Ofer Winter, former commander of the 98th Paratroopers Division, was excluded from the recent promotions despite a right-wing campaign to give him a senior position in the army.⁷⁸

2. Manpower

The Israeli army comprises approximately 635 thousand personnel, including 170 thousand active personnel and 465 thousand reservists.⁷⁹ This reserve force is highly effective, capable of being mobilized within just four days. In recent years, the influence of the religious right has been increasingly felt, even within the upper echelons of the military.

Regarding the motivation of young Israelis to enlist in combat units of the Israeli army, the Hebrew website i24NEWS revealed, on 23/4/2023, that there is significant concern among Israeli army leadership due to the continuing decline



in the desire and motivation among young Israelis to join military service. The website noted that in December 2022, only 66% of male recruits expressed a desire to join combat units, down from 73% in 2021. Motivation among female recruits also decreased, with only 48% wanting to join a combat unit in 2022, compared to 50% in 2021, 53% in 2020 and 60% in 2018.⁸⁰

After Benjamin Netanyahu assumed the premiership in 2023 and began advancing a plan for judicial reforms, the Israeli military experienced a crisis. Soldiers and officers, both in “reserve” and “permanent” service, particularly in the air force and navy, began refusing to report for duty. According to Israel’s Channel 13, many officers expressed a loss of motivation to serve.⁸¹

The Israeli war on GS following Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023, underscored the urgent need to expand the reserve army. This conflict led to the largest mobilization of reservists in Israel’s history, with 337 thousand soldiers recruited. Given the prolonged nature of the war, the possibility of its continuation, and the high number of casualties, the Israeli government⁸² decided to propose an urgent law to restructure the reserve army. The proposed changes include increasing the reserve force, extending the duration of service, and raising the salaries of reservists. Specifically, mandatory military service for men would be extended by at least four months, from 32 to 36 months. The age limits for reservists would be increased: from 40 to 45 years old, 45 to 50 years old for officers, and from 49 to 55 years old for special operations soldiers.⁸³

According to a poll conducted by the National Union of Israeli Students in early 2024, a high percentage of students are struggling with their studies due to the ongoing war on GS; 40% of students are considering withdrawing from their studies as a result of the war’s impact, with this figure rising to 42% among student reserve soldiers. Approximately 77% of students involved in the war reported that being called back into service would make it difficult to complete the current academic year. Among students who have been evacuated from their homes, 33% indicated that they were experiencing economic hardship, nearly 50% were considering dropping out of college, and 73% reported a decline in their psychological well-being.⁸⁴

3. Military Plans and Trends

The years 2022–2023 saw numerous changes and events on the global, regional and local levels, leading to increased challenges and risks for Israeli

decision-makers. The most significant of these challenges was undoubtedly the shocking operation launched by Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, on 7/10/2023, which was called Operation al-Aqsa Flood. This attack disrupted the fundamental principles of Israel's national security doctrine—particularly early warning, deterrence, decisiveness and transferring the battle to enemy territory—as these pillars suffered significant blows and failures.

The INSS's Strategic Survey for Israel 2022 concluded that in GS, Hamas could reach understandings “for a prolonged period of calm in return for the reconstruction of Gaza and lightened closure.” However, in return, the Israeli army must “improve preparedness for a military operation that aims to dismantle Hamas's military capabilities and ongoing conflict management.” In WB, the assessment called for strengthening the PA's position and “maintaining cooperation with the PA's security apparatuses.” Regarding regional threats, Iran topped the list.⁸⁵ In its 2023 report “Strategic Analysis for Israel 2023,” the INSS asserted that Israel would face several major challenges, both internally and externally. What is new in these challenges is the strengthening of “the special relations with the United States,” the fear of an armed popular *Intifadah* in WB and the internal division within Israeli society.⁸⁶

The Israeli concern was evident in the 2023 annual assessment of the Israeli Intelligence Directorate, as the warnings shifted from external threats to Israeli-Israeli warnings due to internal divisions. The most prominent statement was made by Israeli President Isaac Herzog who said that Israel's greatest existential threat “comes from within.”⁸⁷ The Herzliya Conference, held on 22–23/5/2023, did not introduce any new insights regarding the challenges and dangers surrounding Israel on all fronts. The most notable threat highlighted by the conference was Iran's significant progress toward acquiring a nuclear weapon.⁸⁸

Four years after former Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi launched his multi-year plan “Tnufa” (Momentum),⁸⁹ the concept of “decisive victory,” one of Tnufa's main recommendations, was put to the test after Operation al-Aqsa Flood.⁹⁰ The concept of “decisive victory” involves rapid offensive operations utilizing smaller units backed by massive firepower, as Kochavi outlined in his speeches.⁹¹

At the operational level, the “Tnufa” plan called for setting up a new unit called the “Ghost Unit,” also referred to as the “multi-dimensional unit.” This elite force combines military capabilities, including infantry, armor, artillery,

combat engineers, air force, UAVs and cyber operatives, into a single unit “with the human capabilities of a battalion, but with the firepower of a division.”⁹² The “Ghost Unit” played a significant role in the ground operation launched by the Israeli army during Operation al-Aqsa Flood, including involvement in storming densely populated neighborhoods, such as the Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza City.⁹³ Roi Levy, the commander of the “Ghost Unit,” was killed by Al-Qassam Brigades fighters at the onset of Operation al-Aqsa Flood.⁹⁴

A serious challenge has emerged for the “Tnufa” plan, falling under the broader issue of “joint action.” This challenge involves the coordination between the “Ghost Unit” and the ground, air and cyber forces—a coordination that has proven difficult to achieve. This difficulty has led to serious and fatal incidents of “friendly fire,” many of which the Israeli army announced during Operation al-Aqsa Flood. Channel 12 revealed on 5/2/2024, that since the ground battles began in GS on 27/10/2023, 540 Israeli soldiers were accidentally injured.⁹⁵ According to Israeli army data, from the start of the ground battle until 29/12/2023, 18 Israeli soldiers were killed by “friendly fire” out of 170 soldiers killed during that period.⁹⁶

A study published by Foreign Policy on 26/10/2023 indicated that one of the key reasons for the Israeli army’s failure to anticipate the 7/10/2023 operation was its overreliance on technology and the mistaken belief that large numbers of boots on the ground were unnecessary for guarding against intrusions. The study added that without traditional military assets such as larger-scale, rapidly deployable forces, the Israeli army “risks having no Plan B to quickly respond to a dynamic attack or other fast-evolving military situations.”⁹⁷

Before the curtain fell on the “Tnufa” plan, the new Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi began drafting the “Ma’alot” program, which means “ascent” in Hebrew. This multi-year plan is set to replace “Tnufa” and includes enhanced readiness and preparation for multi-arena threats, a focus on the human element, increased operational maneuvers and strengthened border defense.⁹⁸ In an effort to address the shortcomings of the “Ma’alot” plan, a study by military reporter and analyst Yaakov Lappin, published by the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA) on 1/11/2023, recommended that the army leadership reassess the plan in light of the military’s failure on October 7. The study advised building on the achievements of “Tnufa” and reevaluating the concepts of border defense, sensor-based early warnings and over-reliance on prior intelligence of intentions.⁹⁹

4. Military Maneuvers

In 2022–2023, the Israeli army intensified its preparations through a series of diverse military maneuvers that involved most weapons and simulated confrontations on multiple fronts. This effort aimed to boost readiness in response to what it describes as the security risks surrounding Israel, with particular emphasis on the Iranian threat and the northern front.

On 30/1/2022, the US-led International Maritime Exercise (IMX/CE 2022), the largest naval exercise in the Middle East, took place in the Red Sea. This exercise saw the participation of 60 militaries and international organizations, including the Israeli navy for the first time, along with Türkiye, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain.¹⁰⁰ In early 2022, the Israeli air force conducted a confidential drill simulating an attack on Iran.¹⁰¹ On 29/11/2022, Israel and the US began joint air maneuvers, simulating offensive strikes against Iran's nuclear program.¹⁰²

The Juniper Oak 2023 drill conducted by the Israeli army in partnership with the US army in January 2023 was one of the most notable maneuvers in recent years. It tested the extent of joint Israeli-American readiness and strengthened operational relations between the two armies.¹⁰³ On 23/2/2023, the Israeli Ground Forces conducted a joint military exercise with their Hellenic Army and US Army counterparts, simulating a wide range of scenarios in Greek territory.¹⁰⁴ In early June 2023, the Israeli army wrapped up a two-week drill, dubbed "Firm Hand," which focused on a potential multi-front war.¹⁰⁵ In June 2023, Israel confirmed the participation of its soldiers in the "African Lion" drill in Morocco, marking the first time the Israeli army takes an active role in this exercise. Eighteen countries participated in the maneuvers, the largest in Africa.¹⁰⁶

However, despite all these maneuvers and preparations, Operation al-Aqsa Flood unfolded, resulting in the destruction of an entire military division within a few hours by a force (Al-Qassam) that was significantly weaker in terms of capabilities, weapons and logistical support.

5. Armaments and Arms Trade

Israeli arms exports worldwide reached \$12.5 billion in 2022. According to the Israeli Ministry of Defense, arms exports have more than doubled since 2014, with a 50% increase in just the past three years. In 2021, total defense exports were \$11.4 billion, marking the previous record high, according to the International



Defense Cooperation Directorate (SIBAT) at Israel's Ministry of Defense. Between 2011 and 2016, this figure ranged between \$5.6 billion and \$7.5 billion.¹⁰⁷

The surge in demand for Israeli-made weapons is attributed to two strategic variables: first, “geo-strategic changes” in Europe following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and second, significant demand for Israeli weapons from Arab countries that have recently normalized ties with Israel.¹⁰⁸

According to 2022 data from the Israeli Ministry of Defense, UAE, Bahrain and Morocco, which have normalized relations with Israel, accounted for 24% of arms purchases. North America accounted for 11% while Africa and Latin America accounted for 3% each. Some 120 Israeli arms industries signed hundreds of new sales contracts worldwide, including “mega deals.”¹⁰⁹

When the Israeli army launched Operation “Swords of Iron” against GS in response to Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023, it used tens of thousands of tons of weapons and ammunition. As a result, the army had to place orders to replenish its stockpiles and allocate additional funds for armaments.

After 7/10/2023, several countries, led by the US, began accelerating the sale of combat weapons to Israel. According to *Israel Hayom* newspaper on 18/3/2024, more than 300 planes and 50 ships carrying munitions and military equipment, totaling approximately 35 thousand tons of weapons systems, munition and other arms, arrived in Israel.¹¹⁰ These included over 5,400 bombs with MK84 warheads, each weighing 900 kg, as well as around one thousand small-diameter GBU-39 bombs.¹¹¹

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the US supplied 70.2% of Israel's conventional arms procurement between 2011 and 2020. Germany accounted for 23.9% followed by Italy at 5.9%. The German Economic Affairs and Climate Protection Ministry's 2023 Federal Government Arms Export Policy reported a tenfold increase in Germany's arms and military equipment sales to Israel in 2023 compared to 2022, reaching approximately \$352 million. In the first few weeks following the onset of Israeli aggression on GS on 7/10/2023, the German government approved 185 additional applications related to arms supplies from Israel.¹¹²

Canada stated that the weapons it sends are “non-lethal.”¹¹³ In November 2023, Belgium exported 16 tons of gunpowder.¹¹⁴ The UK continued to authorize arms sales to Israel, including planes, helicopters, UAVs, bombs, missiles, armored

vehicles, tanks, ammunition and parts for the F35 aircrafts.¹¹⁵ Spain exported a total of \$1.6 million in war materiel during 2023, with two-thirds of these imports sent in November.¹¹⁶ The Netherlands sent at least one shipment,¹¹⁷ while India exported 20 Hermes 900 drones manufactured domestically.¹¹⁸

6. Military Budget

The Israeli military budget amounted to \$24.85 billion (83.45 billion shekels) in 2022 based on the actual spending. The military budget for 2023 was estimated at \$21.63 billion (82.59 billion shekels), excluding the costs incurred from the war Israel launched on GS following Operation al-Aqsa Flood in October 2023 (see table 13/5). It should be noted that there may be some discrepancies or differences in the statistics issued by official authorities, either due to variations in currency exchange rates or differences between the approved budget and actual disbursement.

On 14/12/2023, the Israeli Knesset approved an additional 25.9 billion shekels (\$7 billion) to the general budget to cover the costs of the war against GS. This includes compensation for military reservists and emergency housing for internally displaced persons.¹¹⁹ According to the proposal approved by the Knesset Finance Committee, the total war-related spending in 2023 will reach 28.9 billion shekels (\$7.8 billion), with 17 billion shekels (\$4.6 billion) allocated for defense expenditures and about 12 billion shekels (\$3.2 billion) for civilian and other expenditures.¹²⁰

The Israeli Ministry of Defense estimated the cost of the war until the end of 2023 at 65 billion shekels, or about \$18 billion.¹²¹

On 7/1/2024, as the war entered its fourth month, the *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper published a report stating that the total economic cost of the war had reached 217 billion shekels (\$59.35 billion). This figure includes both the military's combat budget and widespread economic aid. The report detailed that the cost of a combat day for the Israeli army in October 2023, which included the initial recruitment of 360 thousand reservists at the start of the war, was 1 billion shekels (\$270.35 million). Due to the recent mass release of tens of thousands of soldiers, the daily cost is currently [as of early 2024] 600 million shekels (\$164.11 million). Israel will continue to pay each recruited reservist 300 shekels (\$82) per day until the end of 2024, noting that these payments alone have already amounted to about 9 billion shekels (\$2.46 billion).¹²²



On 15/1/2024, the government approved the revised state budget for 2024, allocating an additional 55 billion shekels (\$14.86 billion) to the defense budget. The budget proposal included a supplementary fund of 9 billion shekels (\$2.43 billion) for the “Reserve Recruits Program,” aimed at supporting reservists, soldiers and their families.¹²³

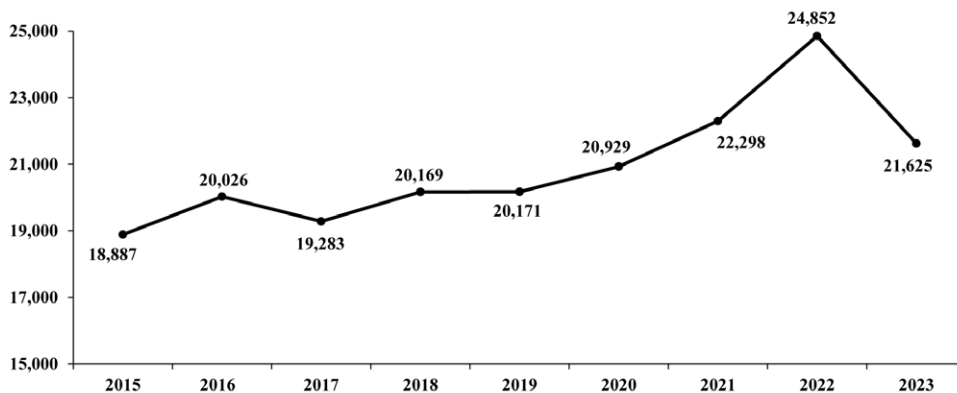
The following table shows Israel’s actual military expenditures according to the CBS for the 2015–2023:

**Table 13/5: Actual Israeli Military Expenditures 2015–2023
at Current Prices¹²⁴**

Year	Expenditures (million shekels)	Expenditures (\$ million)
2015	73,356	18,887
2016	76,912	20,026
2017	69,414	19,283
2018	72,547	20,169
2019	71,897	20,171
2020	71,928	20,929
2021	72,008	22,298
2022	83,446	24,852
2023*	82,586	21,625

* The 2023 budget was calculated excluding expenditures for the war on GS following Operation al-Aqsa Flood, estimated at \$18 billion as of the end of that year.

Actual Israeli Military Expenditures 2015–2023 at Current Prices (\$ million)



Fifth: The Israeli Position on the Internal Palestinian Situation

In 2022–2023, Israel continued its established policy—effectively a strategy—for addressing the internal Palestinian situation. This approach extended the same strategy used in previous years, against the backdrop of ongoing Palestinian political and geographical division. The stagnation of reconciliation efforts since 2007, coupled with the lack of any significant Arab and Islamic influence in Palestinian affairs, further complicated the situation.

Israel continues to treat GS as a hostile territory, enabling it to enforce a blockade on the Strip and take aggressive actions. It has implemented a policy aimed at economically isolating GS while avoiding a full-scale conflict, concurrently holding Hamas responsible for the poverty, unemployment and security incidents in the Strip. This stance is used as a leverage to impose its terms on Hamas and to sustain its strategy of containment toward GS.

Under the “carrot and stick” policy, Israel implemented several facilitations contingent on maintaining relative calm around the GS envelope settlements. These included partially opening the crossings, allowing over 500 trucks daily into the Strip, expanding the fishing zone¹²⁵ from 9 nautical miles (16.7 km) to 12 nautical miles (22.2 km), starting 29/7/2021,¹²⁶ and increasing the number of work permits for Gazans in Israel from 12 thousand to 20 thousand before Ramadan began in 2022.¹²⁷

With the outbreak of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant ordered, on 9/10/2023, a “complete siege” of GS.¹²⁸ On 12/10/2023, Israeli Energy Minister Yisrael Katz stated that the provision of humanitarian aid, electricity, water and fuel, would be contingent upon the release of Israeli captives held by Hamas.¹²⁹

In WB, the Israeli side was plagued by doubts about their ability to contain the rising and intensifying anger on the Palestinian streets. According to *Haaretz*, economic incentives are unlikely to calm the situation.¹³⁰

Israel has expressed its commitment to continue and strengthen security coordination with the PA, particularly in response to the increasing resistance operations in WB. On 8/9/2022, Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid emphasized that bolstering the Palestinian security forces in Palestinian cities is a key strategy to mitigate the escalation in WB.¹³¹ On 18/8/2022, Israeli Defense Minister Benny



Gantz stated that his meetings with ‘Abbas were “necessary because of the ongoing security coordination between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.” He added, “I hear criticism of my conversations and those of the security establishment with the Palestinian Authority leadership and on the ground. I will continue to do whatever is necessary to maintain security stability.”¹³² After hosting Palestinian President Mahmud ‘Abbas at his residence near Tel Aviv on 28/12/2021, Gantz’s office issued a statement saying, “The defense minister emphasized the shared interest in strengthening security cooperation, preserving security stability, and preventing terrorism and violence.”¹³³

The announcement by the Palestinian presidency on 4/7/2023 to “cut off contacts and meetings” with Israel, in response to a military operation launched by the Israeli army in Jenin that resulted in over 10 Palestinian deaths and the wounding of 50 others,¹³⁴ represented just another recurring episode in a series ongoing since 2015.¹³⁵ Despite these public declarations, security coordination continued, with Palestinian security forces collaborating with Israeli authorities to pursue resistance fighters. A week before the Israeli attack on Jenin on 3/7/2023, a phone call occurred between Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and the Secretary General of the PLO Executive Committee Hussein al-Sheikh. Subsequently, during the initial hours of the Israeli attack, the PA arrested two resistance fighters from the “Jaba’ Battalion” as they were en route to support their comrades in Jenin. An analyst on the Israeli Broadcasting Corporation (Kan) described this scenario as mutually beneficial: the PA declares an end to coordination to maintain its image before its public, while both sides continue their dealings discreetly.¹³⁶ On 3/7/2023, an Israeli army spokesperson stated that Israel has notified both the PA and Jordanian authorities about the attack on Jenin.¹³⁷

Israeli actions in WB have weakened the PA and undermined its foundational structures. This has been achieved through repeated incursions into PA-controlled areas; withholding part of the tax revenue owed to the PA, and conditioning the prevention of the PA’s collapse on halting its international activities against Israel and adhering to security coordination requirements. On 9/7/2023, the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that the security cabinet has decided to support measures to prevent “the collapse of the Palestinian Authority while advancing the demand that [it] cease its activities against Israel in the international legal-diplomatic arena.”¹³⁸

On 9/7/2023, Israeli media reported that the government discussed a series of measures aimed at bolstering the PA, including “the approval of a new industrial zone in Tarqumiyah” and “easing the schedule for PA debt payments to Israel.” The decision also comes weeks after Netanyahu pledged that Israel will work to develop a natural gas field for the benefit of Palestinians off the coast of the Gaza Strip. However, Netanyahu’s cabinet ministers Bezalel Smotrich abstained and Itamar Ben-Gvir voted against these measures.¹³⁹

Netanyahu argued that Israel “has an interest in seeing that the PA continues to function,” stressing that “where it’s successfully operating, it does our job for us.” However, he also reiterated that Israel “needs to crush [the Palestinian] ambition” for an independent state, and reportedly mentioned that Israel is “preparing for the day after Abu Mazen [Mahmud ‘Abbas].”¹⁴⁰

On 25/7/2023, Gallant considered the PA’s actions in Jenin and other areas as “an Israeli security interest.”¹⁴¹

With the onset of the Israeli war on GS on 7/10/2023, Netanyahu intensified his threats against the PA. On 12/12/2023, he stated that the outbreak of war against the PA’s security forces is “on the table.” He asserted, “The Palestinian Authority will not be able to control Gaza under any circumstances,” and added, “Security responsibility will remain under the State of Israel.”¹⁴² According to *Yedioth Ahronoth*, Netanyahu is attempting to replicate the model of “village associations” used in WB and apply it to GS. This plan aims to manage GS after the war by dividing it into areas controlled by clans and families who will coordinate with the Israelis to distribute aid and manage residents’ lives. Meanwhile, the army will retain security control.¹⁴³

Israel continues to pay significant attention to the succession of President Mahmud ‘Abbas. Given the absence of this issue in discussions within the official frameworks of the PA, PLO and the Fatah movement, as well as in “public” discussions at the popular or factional level, it appears that Israel is aiming to monopolize the issue and exert unilateral influence on the Palestinian situation. This includes presenting candidate names, opportunities and scenarios for the period after ‘Abbas, or the next day if ‘Abbas suddenly disappears, considering the possibility of chaos, conflict or even infighting, and how Israel might intervene.

Hussein al-Sheikh remains one of the most prominent candidates to succeed Mahmud ‘Abbas, particularly after ‘Abbas appointed him as the Secretary General



of the PLO Executive Committee on 26/5/2022.¹⁴⁴ This is further demonstrated by his international tours and meetings with decision-makers in various countries, as well as his secret and public meetings with senior Israeli officials. On 9/3/2022, he met with Yair Lapid, Israeli Foreign Minister in the Naftali Bennett's government, to discuss the peace process, according to al-Sheikh.¹⁴⁵ Al-Sheikh also led the Palestinian delegation to the 'Aqaba security summit held on 26/2/2023, which included Israeli government officials led by Shabak Chief Ronen Bar and National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi, along with representatives from the US, Egypt and Jordan.¹⁴⁶ Additionally, al-Sheikh held a secret meeting with Hanegbi, Bar and Ghassan Alian, the Israeli government coordinator in the occupied WB, in Tel Aviv on 6/2/2024, during the Israeli war on GS. The meeting aimed to prevent escalation in WB, as part of the "joint efforts" to calm the situation before Ramadan, according to Israeli Channel 12.¹⁴⁷

Conclusion

The Israeli elections resulted in the most extreme religious and nationalist government in Israel's history, dominating the political scene throughout 2022–2023. Despite this government's intention to implement radical changes in the structure of the "state" and close the Palestinian file, the outcomes were contrary to its aims. Beyond exacerbating societal conflict, Operation al-Aqsa Flood was a seismic event that put Israel's very existence, functional role and future up for debate, while also triggering a series of security, political, military, economic and social shocks.

In 2023, significant developments occurred at the Israeli level, as divisions within the country reached a point where relationships between different factions became irreparable. Although the government was unable to pass constitutional changes, these efforts highlighted the internal divisions and the essence of Israel as a "Jewish state." Israeli society was split over the definition of Israel as a "Jewish state," with religious, liberal, nationalist, conservative and secular groups all clashing over this concept. Additionally, the conflict centered around the idea of the "state" itself, its borders and its settlement project in WB.

The events of Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the subsequent failure on 7/10/2023 were a significant shock to the Israeli society. These events exposed the weaknesses of the “state” institutions and highlighted the fragility of government ministries, which struggled to adapt quickly to the new situation. Additionally, they revealed the shortcomings of the security establishment, including both its military and intelligence branches. The situation underscored the absence of genuine “state” leaders and emphasized the need for leaders with military backgrounds and inclinations to guide the “state.”

It appears that the war on GS carries numerous repercussions for Israel in political, social, economic and strategic realms. Consequently, Israel will experience what can be termed a “post-Gaza Israel” in the coming years. This event will remain a significant aspect of the Israeli landscape for many years. Just as the “Second Israel” emerged after the October 1973 war, the “Third Israel” has begun to take shape after 7/10/2023. However, its true contours are not yet clear, nor is it evident how well it can adapt to events and face upcoming challenges.

The next stage after the end of the war is expected to involve new elections that could result in the downfall of Netanyahu and his party, potentially ending his political career. The Israeli public is anticipating political leaders with a more militaristic approach, and the constitutional changes are expected to be put on hold until conditions become more stable.

It appears that the division within Israeli society will deepen over the political horizon of GS and the two-state solution. Militarism in Israeli society is expected to rise, accompanied by increasing racist tendencies. The rift between religious and secular groups will worsen, and disputes over religious privileges will intensify. The internal economic crisis is anticipated to escalate due to the GS war’s impact, leading to a decline in living standards and a rise in costs, alongside a contraction in the high-tech sector and a deepening crisis in that area. Conversely, government spending on the military and various intelligence agencies is projected to increase. Additionally, an official investigation committee into the failure of 7/10/2023 will be established, likely exacerbating the divisions within Israeli society.



Endnotes

- ¹ See site of Central Elections Committee, <https://votes25.bechirov.gov.il> (in Hebrew)
- ² For the results of the 23rd and 24th Knesset elections, Elections for the Knesset, site of The Knesset, <https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/mk/Pages/Elections.aspx>
As for the results of the 25th Knesset elections, Central Elections Committee, <https://votes25.bechirov.gov.il> (in Hebrew)
- ³ Jeremy Sharon, Justice minister unveils plan to shackle the High Court, overhaul Israel's judiciary, *The Times of Israel*, 4/1/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/justice-minister-unveils-plan-to-shackle-the-high-court-overhaul-israels-judiciary/>; and Chen Maanit, Israel's AG: Failure to Appoint Supreme Court President for So Long Is Unprecedented Oversight, *Haaretz*, 23/6/2024, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-06-23/ty-article/.premium/israels-ag-failure-to-appoint-supreme-court-president-for-so-long-is-unprecedented/00000190-4645-d91c-abba-ef55b7b60000>
- ⁴ Jeremy Sharon, In fiery speech, Hayut says judicial shakeup plan “fatal blow to Israeli democracy,” *The Times of Israel*, 12/1/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-fiery-speech-hayut-says-judicial-shakeup-plan-fatal-blow-to-israeli-democracy/>
- ⁵ Bini Ashkenazi, High Court invalidates law for repealing the reasonableness standard, *The Jerusalem Post*, 1/1/2024, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-780303>
- ⁶ Amichai Cohen, Military protest against the constitutional coup is the first indication of the collapse of the People's Army model, site of The Israel Democracy Institute, 1/8/2023, <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/50355> (in Hebrew)
- ⁷ Tamir Hayman, It will take years to repair the damage done to the army - and we need to start now, *INSS*, 1/8/2023, https://www.inss.org.il/he/social_media/idf (in Hebrew)
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ariel Heimann, The Catch-22 of the Reserve Volunteers – and the IDF, *INSS*, 30/7/2023, https://www.inss.org.il/social_media/the-catch-22-of-the-reserve-volunteers-and-the-idf/
- ¹⁰ Shlomo Teitelbaum, The economists in a second letter: “The damage to the economy may materialize with greater force and speed than we expected,” *Calcalist* newspaper, 2/3/2023, https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/hjtp7ctrj (in Hebrew)
- ¹¹ Amalya Duck, Harsh letter to budget chiefs against constitutional changes: ‘a severe blow to the economy and the market’, site of MAKO, 12/3/2023, <https://www.mako.co.il/> (in Hebrew)
- ¹² Zachy Hennessey, JP Morgan report warns: Israel's judicial reform will negatively impact economy, *The Jerusalem Post*, 3/2/2023, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-730497>
- ¹³ Yair Geva, This is how the legal revolution could create a catastrophe in the high-tech industry, *Calcalist*, 2/2/2023, https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/hjsjgm002j (in Hebrew)
- ¹⁴ Haim Handwerker, I tell colleagues to prepare for the alternative now, when one million Israelis choose to leave the country, it will be more difficult, *The Marker* newspaper, 24/2/2023. (in Hebrew)
- ¹⁵ Sophie Shulman, “Don't bring us Israeli high-tech companies until we see where the change in the regime develops,” *Calcalist*, 16/1/2023, <https://www.calcalist.co.il/calcalistech/article/rk3p8cbos> (in Hebrew)
- ¹⁶ Muhannad Mustafa, Israel's Political and Military Scene after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, site of Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, 28/10/2023, <https://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/article/5772> (in Arabic)

- ¹⁷ Uri Bar-Joseph, Between 1973 and 2023, *Haaretz*, 9/10/2023. (in Hebrew)
- ¹⁸ Muhannad Mustafa, Israel's Political and Military Scene after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, 28/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁹ Atara German, The way was paved for the establishment of a national emergency government: "Together we will win," *Makor Rishon* newspaper, 10/10/2023, <https://www.makorrishon.co.il/news/678065> (in Hebrew)
- ²⁰ Muhannad Mustafa, The effects of the Israeli political situation on the conduct of the war on the GS, Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, 27/12/2023, <https://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/article/5815> (in Arabic)
- ²¹ Moshe Cohen, In the shadow of the release of the kidnapped: the recovery of the Likud and Netanyahu Mandates survey, *Maariv* newspaper, 1/12/2023, <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/Article-1056342> (in Hebrew)
- ²² Natalie Shem Tov, News 13 poll: The majority of the public believes that Netanyahu should resign, site of Channel 13, 8/12/2023, <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/politics/politics/new-poll-903840583> (in Hebrew)
- ²³ Ehud Olmert, Cease fighting in exchange for the kidnapped, *Haaretz*, 22/12/2023. (in Hebrew)
- ²⁴ Shlomo Ben-Ami, The Uncertain Face of Victory, *Haaretz*, 22/12/2023. (in Hebrew)
- ²⁵ Lapid: Netanyahu should resign immediately and form a unity government with the Haredim and the Center, led by Likud, site of Inyan Merkazi, 15/11/2023, <https://www.news-israel.net/> (in Hebrew)
- ²⁶ Uri Misgav, Gantz: This time we won't forgive you, *Haaretz*, 30/11/2023. (in Hebrew)
- ²⁷ Benjamin Netanyahu: Our Three Prerequisites for Peace, *The Wall Street Journal* newspaper, 25/12/2023, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/benjamin-netanyahu-our-three-prerequisites-for-peace-gaza-israel-bff895bd>
- ²⁸ According to official Israeli figures, the number of Arab citizens in Jerusalem (both east and west) at the end of 2022 was about 384.7 thousand, and based on the annual population increase of 2.4% in the Arab community, their number at the end of 2023 would reach about 394 thousand. If we deduct about five thousand people living in western Jerusalem, this leaves about 389 thousand people living in eastern Jerusalem, see CBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2023*, no. 74, table 2.14, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2023/2.shnatonpopulation/st02_14.pdf
- ²⁹ See Selected Data on the Occasion of Jerusalem Day 2023, CBS, 17/5/2023, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/mediarelease/DocLib/2023/159/11_23_159b.pdf (in Hebrew)
- ³⁰ ARIJ Institute: The number of settlers in the West Bank is approaching one million, QII, 20/11/2022, <https://qii.media/news/40744>.
See also Jewish settler population in West Bank hits a landmark, and under Israel's new government, it may soar, site of CBS News, 2/2/2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/israel-settlers-jewish-settlement-population-west-bank-netanyahu/>; and West Bank settler population surges by nearly 3 percent in 2023, i24NEWS, 12/2/2024, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/middle-east/palestinian-territories/1707734589-west-bank-settler-population-surges-by-nearly-3-percent-in-2023-report>
- ³¹ See CBS, <http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications16/yarhon0116/pdf/b1.pdf>; and CBS, <https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/yarhon0124/b1.pdf>
- ³² See The Times of Israel, 29/12/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israels-population-approaches-9-7-million-as-2022-comes-to-an-end/#:~:text=73.6%25%20of%20residents%20Jewish%2C%2021.1,immigrants%20from%20Russia%20and%20Ukraine&text=Israel%20has%20close%20to%209.7,mark%20the%20end%20of%202022>.



- ³³ Israel in Figures, Selected Data from the Statistical Abstract of Israel 2022, CBS, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/DocLib/isr_in_n/sr_in_n22e.pdf; and Vital Statistics: Latest Population Statistics for Israel, site of Jewish Virtual Library, 5/2/2024, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/latest-population-statistics-for-israel>
- ³⁴ Vital Statistics: Latest Population Statistics for Israel, Jewish Virtual Library, 5/2/2024.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ CBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2023*, no. 74, table 2.14, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2023/2.shnatonpopulation/st02_14.pdf
- ³⁷ Violence and Crime in the Arab Society, The annual report for “Aman” Center-The Arab Center for Safe Society for 2023, site of Aman Center-The Arab Center for Safe Society, 31/12/2023, <https://aman-center.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/The-annual-report-for-Aman-center-The-Arab-center-for-safe-society-for-2023.pdf>
- ³⁸ Aaron Boxerman and Talya Minsberg, Private Gun Ownership in Israel Spikes After Hamas Attacks, *The New York Times*, 15/12/2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/15/world/middleeast/israel-gun-ownership-spikes.html>
- ³⁹ See Racism and Incitement Index 2022, site of 7amleh - Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media, 28/3/2023, <https://7amleh.org/2023/03/28/mushr-alansryh-walthrydh-mrkz-hmlh-yrsd-685-alf-khtab-ansry-wmhrdh-fy-allghh-alabryh-fy-alaam-2022>
- ⁴⁰ Media Release, Population of Israel on the Eve of 2023, CBS, 29/12/2022, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/mediarelease/DocLib/2022/426/11_22_426e.pdf
- ⁴¹ See Media Release, Immigration to Israel 2022, CBS, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/mediarelease/DocLib/2023/280/01_23_280b.pdf
- ⁴² Israeli exodus: 370,000 flee since October 7, seeking homes in Europe, site of Jordan News, 11/12/2023, <https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-20/Middle-East/Israeli-exodus-370-000-flee-since-October-7-seeking-homes-in-Europe-32933>
- ⁴³ For 1990–1996, CBS, http://www1.cbs.gov.il/hodaot2013n/21_13_050t1.pdf
As for 1996–2023, CBS, <https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/yarhon0124/e1.pdf>
- ⁴⁴ *The Jerusalem Post*, 16/8/2018, <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Israelis-emigrating-Lowest-number-in-nearly-three-decades-565015>
- ⁴⁵ Rosh Hashana 2023: World Jewish population reaches 15.7 million, i24NEWS, 16/9/2023, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/judaism/1694847188-rosh-hashana-2023-world-jewish-population-reaches-15-7-million>
- ⁴⁶ See Jewish Americans in 2020, site of Pew Research Center, 11/5/2021, <https://www.pewforum.org/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/>; and Debate Over the Number of American Jews (2021), Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/debate-over-how-many-american-jews>
- ⁴⁷ Vital Statistics: Jewish Population of the World (1882–Present), Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-population-of-the-world>
- ⁴⁸ Bank of Israel, “Annual Report 2020,” March 2021, <https://boi.org.il/media/jqrnd0yx/annual-full.pdf>
- ⁴⁹ Aljazeera.net, 21/5/2021. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁰ Soulieka Alaeddine, “Al-Aqsa Flood” Earthquake Shakes Israel’s Economy, *Al-Iktissad wal-Aamal* (Economy & Business), 13/12/2023, <https://www.iktissadonline.com>
- ⁵¹ Bank of Israel warns: War will cost \$68 billion, Aljazeera.net, 23/1/2024. (in Arabic)
Note: The exchange rate of the dollar against the Israeli shekel was based on the Bank of Israel data on 23/1/2024, which was 3.771.

- ⁵² Bank of Israel warns: War will cost \$68 billion, Aljazeera.net, 23/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ⁵³ Bank of Israel: Israeli construction losses double expectations, Aljazeera.net, 2/4/2024. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁴ See CBS, <https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/yarhon0324/f1.pdf>
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ A Fifth of Israelis' Income Declines Amid War; Almost Half Fear Economic Difficulty, *Haaretz*, 19/12/2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-19/ty-article/.premium/a-fifth-of-israelis-income-declined-amid-war-almost-half-fear-economic-difficulty/0000018c-839a-db89-ad8f-f3ba54850000>; Poverty rate in Israel skyrockets following military offensive in Gaza, MEMO, 19/12/2023, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20231219-poverty-rate-in-israel-skyrockets-following-military-offensive-in-gaza/>; Amid War, Half of Israelis Fear Economic Difficulty, site of The Communist Party of Israel, 20/12/2023, <https://maki.org.il/en/?p=31459>; and Alternative Poverty Report 2023, site of Latet, 2023, <https://www.latet.org.il/upload/files/170521879265a392e859470447415.pdf> (in Hebrew)
- ⁵⁷ Report on the Dimensions of Poverty and income Inequality 2022, site of The National Insurance Institute, 28/12/2023, https://www.btl.gov.il/English%20Homepage/Publications/Poverty_Report/Documents/oni2022-e.pdf
- ⁵⁸ See CBS, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2023/25.shnatongeneralgovernmentsector/st25_04.pdf
- ⁵⁹ See CBS, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2023/25.shnatongeneralgovernmentsector/st25_03.pdf
- ⁶⁰ CBS, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2023/25.shnatongeneralgovernmentsector/st25_03.pdf; and CBS, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2023/25.shnatongeneralgovernmentsector/st25_04.pdf
- ⁶¹ See Ministry of Finance of Israel, Government Revenue and Expenditures, https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/dynamiccollectorresultitem/data-for-2023-eng/en/budget-execution_budget-execution-estimate_BudgetExecutionEstimate_GovRevenue_2023.xlsx
- ⁶² See Aljazeera.net, 13/3/2024 (in Arabic). See also, The Knesset, 13/3/2024, https://main.knesset.gov.il/ar/news/pressreleases/pages/press13032024_3.aspx; and Ministry of Finance of Israel, Government Revenue and Expenditures, https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/dynamiccollectorresultitem/data-for-2024/he/budget-execution_budget-execution-estimate_BudgetExecutionEstimate_BudgetDeficit_2024.xlsx
- Note: The exchange rate of the dollar against the Israeli shekel was based on the Bank of Israel data on 13/3/2024, which was 3.66.
- ⁶³ After attempts.. Israel's government approves revised amended budget for 2024, Aljazeera.net, 15/1/2024 (in Arabic). See also Cabinet approves 2024 budget, making cuts to offset massive wartime defense boost, *The Times of Israel*, 15/1/2024, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/cabinet-approves-budget-making-cuts-to-offset-massive-wartime-defense-boost/>
- ⁶⁴ Aljazeera.net, 26/2/2024 (in Arabic). See also, Israel plans \$60bn debt raising and tax rises to fuel defence spending, *Financial Times* newspaper, 26/2/2024, <https://www.ft.com/content/b84aae92-3bbb-49db-b021-befbeb0fb0f1>
- ⁶⁵ *Al- 'Arabi al-Jadid*, 4/3/2024.
- ⁶⁶ Aljazeera.net, 8/2/2024 (in Arabic). See also, Public set to pay for NIS 33b state revenue shortfall, site of Globes, 8/2/2024, <https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-public-set-to-pay-for-nis-33b-state-revenue-shortfall-1001470759>
- ⁶⁷ See CBS, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/fr_trade12_2023/td1s.pdf; and CBS, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/fr_trade12_2023/td1.pdf
- ⁶⁸ See CBS, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/fr_trade12_2023/td1.pdf



- ⁶⁹ See Israel's Trade Balance of Manufacturing Exports and Imports by Technological Intensity, 2022, CBS, 24/7/2023, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/mediarelease/DocLib/2023/240/16_23_240e.pdf
- ⁷⁰ See CBS, <https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/yarhon0124/h5.pdf>; and CBS, <https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2023/yarhon1223/h5.pdf>
- ⁷¹ See CBS, <https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/yarhon0124/h3.pdf>; and CBS, <https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2023/yarhon1223/h3.pdf>
- ⁷² Jeremy M. Sharp, "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel," site of Congressional Research Services (CRS), 1/3/2023, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL33222/49>
Note: The Jewish Virtual Library reported US aid to Israel totaled \$160.55 billion from 1949–2023. See US Foreign Aid to Israel: Total Aid (1949–present), Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/total-u-s-foreign-aid-to-israel-1949-present> (accessed 28/2/2024)
- ⁷³ Jeremy M. Sharp, "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel," CRS, 1/3/2023.
- ⁷⁴ White House to Congress: We want \$106 billion for the wars and the border, POLITICO, 20/10/2023, <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/10/20/white-house-to-congress-we-want-106-billion-for-the-wars-and-the-border-00122704>
- ⁷⁵ Patricia Zengerle, US military support for Israel: What does it provide?, Reuters, 8/4/2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/what-military-support-does-us-provide-israel-2024-04-08>
- ⁷⁶ For the years 1949–2021, Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestine Strategic Report 2020–2021*, p. 278. As for 2022–2023, Jeremy M. Sharp, "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel," CRS, 1/3/2023.
- ⁷⁷ Herzi Halevi – Israel's new military leader with a controversial appointment, i24NEWS, 16/1/2023, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/defense/1673871848-herzi-halevi-israel-s-new-military-leader-with-a-controversial-appointment>
- ⁷⁸ The Times of Israel, 3/5/2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-announces-a-series-of-appointments-to-general-staff
- ⁷⁹ Israel Military Strength 2024, site of Globalfirepower.com, https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=israel
- ⁸⁰ i24NEWS, 23/4/2023, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/defense/1682233971-idf-survey-reveals-combat-units-attracting-fewer-recruits>
- ⁸¹ *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 19/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁸² *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 8/2/2024. (in Arabic)
- ⁸³ Ibid.
- ⁸⁴ Because of the war: 40% of Israeli students consider dropping out, Arab 48, 13/2/2024. See also 42% of Israeli student reservists in army consider leaving school: Poll, Anadolu Agency, 11/2/2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/42-of-israeli-student-reservists-in-army-consider-leaving-school-poll/3134039>
- ⁸⁵ Dror Shalom and Anat Kurz, "Strategic Survey for Israel 2022: A Time for Decisions," INSS, January 2022, https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/StrategicAssessment21-22_ENG_5.pdf
- ⁸⁶ Tamir Hayman, Ram Yavne and Anat Kurz, "Strategic Analysis for Israel 2023: Israel Among the World's Democracies," INSS, February 2023, https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/StrategicAssessment22-23_ENG.pdf
- ⁸⁷ Site of The National News, 24/4/2023, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/2023/04/24/isaac-herzog-israels-main-existential-threat-comes-from-within>
- ⁸⁸ *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 23/5/2023.

- ⁸⁹ Daniel Pipes, “What Does ‘Victory’ Really Mean to the Israel Defense Forces,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 26/11/2020, <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/idf-sees-victory-as-rapid-destruction-of-enemy-capabilities-opinion-650265>
- ⁹⁰ Jean-Loup Samaan, “The ‘Dahya Concept’ and Israeli Military Posture vis-à-vis Hezbollah since 2006,” *Comparative Strategy* journal, vol. 32, no. 2, 2013, pp. 146–159.
- ⁹¹ Arab 48, 16/12/2023.
- ⁹² Jean-Loup Samaan, “IDF ‘Decisive Victory’ and Israel’s Quest for a New Military Strategy,” *Middle East Policy* journal, site of Middle East Policy Council, no. 3, 2023, <https://mepc.org/journal/decisive-victory-and-israels-quest-new-military-strategy>
- ⁹³ IDF ‘Ghost’ unit uses new tech to fight Hamas in Gaza, *The Jerusalem Post*, 31/12/2023, <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-780104>
- ⁹⁴ The Times of Israel, 8/10/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/authorities-name-44-soldiers-30-police-officers-killed-in-hamas-attack/>
- ⁹⁵ *Alquds*, 5/2/2024. (in Arabic)
- ⁹⁶ The Times of Israel, 1/1/2024, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-deaths-of-29-of-170-soldiers-in-gaza-op-were-so-called-friendly-fire-accidents/>
- ⁹⁷ Franz-Stefan Gady, “Israel’s Military Tech Fetish Is a Failed Strategy,” *Foreign Policy* magazine, 26/10/2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/10/26/israel-hamas-gaza-military-idf-technology-surveillance-fence-strategy-ground-war/#cookie_message_anchor
- ⁹⁸ The IDF’s New Multi-Year Program: “Ascent”, site of the Israeli Army, 8/8/2023, <https://www.idf.il/en/articles/2023/the-idf-s-new-multi-year-program-ascent/>
- ⁹⁹ Yaakov Lappin, “Ma’alot (Ascent): The IDF Will Need to Drastically Update Its Multi-Year Program,” The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA), 1/11/2023, <https://besacenter.org/maalot-ascent-the-idf-will-need-to-drastically-update-its-multi-year-program/>
- ¹⁰⁰ Israeli Navy first time in US Navy-led international maritime exercise, *The Jerusalem Post*, 17/2/2023, <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-696812>
- ¹⁰¹ *The Jerusalem Post*, 1/2/2022, <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-695222>
- ¹⁰² Aljazeera.net, 29/11/2022, <https://cutt.us/xYxNo> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁰³ The Times of Israel, 26/1/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-us-wrap-up-largest-ever-joint-drill-in-message-to-iran/>
- ¹⁰⁴ Conclusion of the Joint IDF and Hellenic Armed Forces Exercise, site of the Israeli Army, 23/2/2023, <https://www.idf.il/en/articles/2023/conclusion-of-the-joint-idf-and-hellenic-armed-forces-exercise/>
- ¹⁰⁵ The Times of Israel, 8/6/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-wraps-up-major-drill-focused-on-multi-front-war-with-iran-middle-east-proxies>
- ¹⁰⁶ The Times of Israel, 5/6/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-first-idf-sends-troops-to-participate-in-major-us-led-drill-in-morocco>
- ¹⁰⁷ Ministry of Defense Spokesperson’s Statement: Israel Sets New Record in Defense Exports: Over \$12.5 Billion in 2022, Prime Minister’s Office, Israel, 14/6/2023, [https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/esibat; and Israeli arms sales doubled in a decade, hit new record of \\$12.5 billion in 2022, The Times of Israel, 14/6/2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-arms-sales-doubled-in-a-decade-hit-new-record-of-12-5-billion-in-2022](https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/esibat; and Israeli arms sales doubled in a decade, hit new record of $12.5 billion in 2022, The Times of Israel, 14/6/2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-arms-sales-doubled-in-a-decade-hit-new-record-of-12-5-billion-in-2022)
- ¹⁰⁸ Israeli arms sales doubled in a decade, hit new record of \$12.5 billion in 2022, The Times of Israel, 14/6/2023.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ministry of Defense Spokesperson’s Statement: Israel Sets New Record in Defense Exports: Over \$12.5 Billion in 2022, Prime Minister’s Office, Israel, 14/6/2023.



- ¹¹⁰ *Israel Hayom*, 18/3/2024, <https://www.israelhayom.com/2024/03/18/israel-concerned-biden-officials-trying-to-slow-arm-shipments-to-israel/>
- ¹¹¹ *The Wall Street Journal*, 1/12/2023, <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-sends-israel-2-000-pound-bunker-buster-bombs-for-gaza-war-82898638>
- ¹¹² Anadolu Agency, 18/2/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹³ Site of Radio Canada International, 31/1/2024, <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/rci/ar>
- ¹¹⁴ Site of Verify-Sy, 8/2/2024, <https://verify-sy.com>
- ¹¹⁵ Aljazeera.net, 17/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁶ Site of Eldiario, 12/2/2024, https://www.eldiario.es/internacional/espana-mando-municion-israel-pese-haber-anunciado-tenia-suspendidas-exportaciones-armamento-cat_1_10909622.html
- ¹¹⁷ Sky News Arabia, 12/2/2024.
- ¹¹⁸ Site of Middle East Eye, 12/2/2024, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-on-gaza-indian-made-israel-killer-hermes-drone-make-way>
- ¹¹⁹ *Haaretz*, 14/12/2024, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-14/ty-article/israel-approves-supplementary-wartime-budget-for-2023/0000018c-6838-de5e-a3ef-6bfd79920000>
- ¹²⁰ The Times of Israel, 12/12/2024, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/additional-budget-funds-for-financing-gaza-war-approved-for-final-knesset-votes/>
- ¹²¹ Sky News Arabia, 1/1/2024.
- ¹²² Yoav Zeyton et al., The most expensive war - and Israel's goals have not yet met: a snapshot, after 3 months, site of Ynetnews, 7/1/2024, <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r1by24voa>
- ¹²³ Zvi Zarchia, Shlomo Teitelbaum and Shahar Ilan, The government approved the budget: an addition of NIS 55 billion for security, the health tax will increase from 2025, site of Calcalist, the daily financial newspaper & online media which is part of Yedioth Ahronoth group, 15/1/2024, https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/h1t6kogy6
- ¹²⁴ See CBS, Statistical Abstract of Israel nos. 68–74, 2017–2023, http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnatonenew_site.htm
- ¹²⁵ Israel frequently modifies the fishing zone off Gaza based on the level of tension around in the area, sometimes permitting boats to fish up to 15 nautical miles offshore, at other times limiting it to 6 miles or completely prohibiting fishing. According to the Oslo Accords, fishermen are permitted to sail up to 20 nautical miles (approximately 37 kilometers) offshore, see Arab 48, 15/4/2023.
- ¹²⁶ Al-Mayadeen Channel, 1/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁷ *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 27/3/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁸ Emanuel Fabian, Defense minister announces 'complete siege' of Gaza: No power, food or fuel, The Times of Israel, 9/10/2023.
- ¹²⁹ Energy minister: No electricity or water to Gaza until abductees returned home, The Times of Israel, 12/10/2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/energy-minister-no-electricity-or-water-to-gaza-until-abductees-returned-home/
- ¹³⁰ Arab 48, 11/9/2022.
- ¹³¹ Arab 48, 8/9/2022.
- ¹³² Meetings with Abbas necessary for 'security coordination' - Israel's DM Gantz, i24NEWS, 18/8/2022, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/defense/1660797623-meetings-with-abbas-necessary-for-security-coordination-israel-s-dm-gantz>
- ¹³³ Aaron Boxerman, Gantz hosts Abbas at his home, in PA leader's first meeting in Israel in a decade, The Times of Israel, 28/12/2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/gantz-pa-president-abbas-meet-at-defense-ministers-home-in-rosh-haayin/>

¹³⁴ Aljazeera.net, 3/7/2023. (in Arabic)

¹³⁵ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 7/7/2023.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 3/7/2023. (in Arabic)

¹³⁸ TOI Staff, Security cabinet votes in favor of steps to ‘prevent PA’s collapse,’ The Times of Israel, 9/7/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/security-cabinet-votes-in-favor-of-steps-to-prevent-pas-collapse/>

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ TOI Staff, Netanyahu said to tell MKs: Israel ‘needs the PA,’ must ‘crush’ statehood aspirations, The Times of Israel, 27/6/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-said-to-tell-knesset-panel-that-israel-needs-the-palestinian-authority/>

¹⁴¹ Gallant to Austin: Israel is a ‘strong democracy, will remain so,’ i24NEWS, 25/7/2023, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/diplomacy/1690306463-israeli-dm-to-u-s-counterpart-israel-is-a-strong-democracy-will-remain-so>

¹⁴² Aljazeera.net, 12/12/2023. (in Arabic)

¹⁴³ Netanyahu considers post-war cooperation with Gaza tribes, *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 29/12/2023. (in Arabic)

¹⁴⁴ WAFA, 26/5/2022. (in Arabic)

¹⁴⁵ Hussein Al Sheikh (@HusseinSheikhpl), X (Twitter), 9/3/2022, 7:00 p.m., <https://x.com/HusseinSheikhpl/status/1501603871059324928>

¹⁴⁶ Arab 48, 26/2/2023.

¹⁴⁷ Aljazeera.net, 7/2/2024. (in Arabic)

Chapter Six

The Palestine Issue and the Arab World

The Palestine Issue and the Arab World

Introduction

The Arab world saw a significant movement towards normalization with Israel during 2022–2023. The UAE, Bahrain and Morocco made substantial progress in this regard, with efforts actively encouraging Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to do the same. However, Operation al-Aqsa Flood disrupted this normalization process, even though state regimes still wish to maintain their relations with Israel.

In the weak, fragmented and inward-looking Arab environment, a typical pattern of behavior persisted. Despite the profound shock caused by Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Arab policies towards the Palestine issue remained unchanged. Nevertheless, pro-resistance public in Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq supported Gaza in confronting Israeli aggression, while a broader regional war was avoided. Meanwhile, the Arab people's engagement with the Palestine issue was significant, although they could not genuinely express their positions and support due to the repressive behaviour of several Arab regimes or outright bans on Palestine solidarity. Countries like Qatar, Kuwait, Algeria, Syria, Mauritania and Oman maintained more positive stances towards resistance.

This chapter explores Arab positions on the Palestine issue, examines the stances of the League of Arab States (LAS), and highlights the roles of the frontline states: Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. It also analyzes the positions of other Arab countries and public opinion across the Arab world.

First: LAS Positions and the Arab Summit

1. Position on the Peace Process for the Palestine Issue and the Resistance Project

During the three summits held over the two years covered by the report, including the 31st ordinary session of the LAS council at the summit level in Algiers on 1–2/11/2022, the 32nd ordinary session of the LAS council at the summit level in Jeddah on 19/5/2023, and the Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit with

the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to discuss the aggression on GS in Riyadh on 11/11/2023, the LAS reaffirmed the centrality of the Palestine issue and its unwavering support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The summits emphasized adherence to the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 in all its elements and priorities, stressing the commitment to peace as a strategic option to end the Israeli occupation and resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with international law and relevant international resolutions, including UN Security Council resolutions. The LAS also supported the State of Palestine's efforts to gain full membership in the UN and called on countries that have not yet recognized the State of Palestine to do so.¹

This position was reiterated by LAS Secretary-General Ahmad Abu al-Ghait, who stated that the LAS could not “override the Palestinian stance and vision,” which supports the “two-state solution.” He emphasized that Israel's insistence on its positions and rejection of the two-state vision could result in a Palestinian majority between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea in the coming years.² Abu al-Ghait announced an “initiative to reactivate the peace process” through Arab-European efforts.³

In May 2023, the Arab Ministerial Committee in Support of the State of Palestine issued a statement urging LAS member states to continue engaging with countries around the world. The committee specifically called on these countries, especially the permanent members of the UN Security Council, to recognize the State of Palestine and support its bid for full membership in the UN.⁴

Regarding the issue of Palestinian refugees, the LAS General Secretariat and the Arab Parliament have expressed their firm rejection of any proposals or attempts to diminish the responsibility of UNRWA and its comprehensive political and humanitarian mandate towards the Palestinian refugee community. This stance is based on the original mandate assigned to the agency, which remains in effect until a just solution to the Palestinian refugee issue is achieved in accordance with international resolutions.⁵

Nevertheless, the LAS's role was ultimately limited to denouncing Israeli occupation practices, including violations, land confiscations, assaults on holy sites, escalating aggression, open-ended warfare policies, and ongoing massacres against the Palestinian people. However, this denunciation was not followed by any practical measures to stop these actions, aside from holding Israel responsible

for the escalation and urging the international community and all influential parties to intervene.⁶ At the end of its 157th ordinary session at the foreign ministers' level on 9/3/2022, the LAS council called on the ICC to proceed with its criminal investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Israel against the defenseless Palestinian people.⁷ Additionally, on 27/7/2023, the LAS General Secretariat submitted a written pleading to the ICJ's headquarters in The Hague. This submission was part of the case concerning the ICJ's Advisory Opinion on the "Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem."⁸

More than a month after the Israeli war on GS following Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023, Arab and Muslim countries convened an emergency summit to address the situation. An Arab-Islamic summit was held in Riyadh on 11/11/2023 after the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on 10/11/2023, that the "extraordinary Arab summit" and the "extraordinary Islamic summit" would be merged into a joint summit. According to sources cited by *al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, the merger was driven by a lack of consensus on significant decisions against Israel. Influential states within the LAS reportedly blocked serious proposals involving urgent measures to halt the aggression, opting instead for less impactful language.⁹

The summit failed to produce any practical decision, commitments or effective plans to pressure for an end to the aggression. Instead, its statement issued demands to the world, as if the combined Arab and Muslim countries lacked the means to pressure the occupation to stop its massacres against civilians in GS. Saudi Investment Minister Khalid al-Falih even emphasized at the Bloomberg New Economy Forum in Singapore on 7/11/2023 that using oil prices to pressure for an end to the war on GS was not an option, and that KSA was pursuing "peace" through negotiations.¹⁰ Meanwhile, several Arab countries seemed to implicitly support the elimination of Hamas, by participating in the GS siege, while maintaining diplomatic and trade relations with Israel and providing it with various needs.

The closing statement of the Arab-Islamic summit called for lifting the siege on GS and implementing measures to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid. It condemned the "Israeli aggression on Gaza and the brutal, savage and inhumane war crimes and massacres committed by the colonial occupation government." The statement urged all countries to halt the export of weapons and ammunition to

Israel and rejected any justification of the war as self-defense or under any other pretext.¹¹

LAS Secretary-General Ahmad Abu al-Ghait has called for an “immediate halt to military operations in Gaza.”¹² At the conclusion of their meeting in Cairo, Arab foreign ministers demanded “urgent international action to end the war on Gaza,” condemned the targeting of civilians by both sides and warned against “attempts to forcibly displace the Palestinian people.”¹³

2. The Position on Normalization

The LAS has consistently affirmed, in all its decisions and statements, its opposition to normalizing relations with Israel prior to the implementation of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. This initiative, with all its elements and priorities, represents the unified Arab consensus and serves as the basis for any efforts to revive peace in the Middle East. The LAS stressed that the prerequisite for achieving peace with Israel and normalizing relations with it, as outlined in the texts of the two ordinary summits, or “establishing normal relations with it” as stated in the Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit text to which Algeria and Iraq objected, is the end of Israel’s occupation of all Palestinian and Arab territories. This includes recognizing the independence of a fully sovereign State of Palestine along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and restoring the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. These rights encompass the right to self-determination, the right of return and compensation for Palestinian refugees, with a just resolution of their issue according to UN General Assembly Resolution 194 of 1948.¹⁴

However, Ambassador Maged ‘Abdelfatah ‘Abdelaziz, head of the LAS mission to the UN, mentioned in an interview with Al Jazeera Mubasher’s *al-Masa’iyyah* program that normalizing relations between some Arab countries and Israel could potentially benefit the Palestinians. He stated that he does not view normalization with Israel as detrimental to the Palestine issue; on the contrary, it could be leveraged to pressure Israel through direct contacts to achieve progress and reach agreements regarding the Palestine issue.¹⁵

3. Internal Conflict and Reconciliation

The LAS reaffirmed its support for Palestinian reconciliation, commended the Arab efforts to unify the Palestinian ranks, and welcomed the signing of the

“Algiers Declaration” by Palestinian factions on 13/10/2022, at the conclusion of the “Reunification Conference for Achieving Palestinian National Unity,” mediated by Algeria. The LAS Secretary-General Ahmad Abu al-Ghait described the agreement between Palestinian factions as a “significant development on the path to achieving Palestinian reconciliation, which all Arabs aspire to,” praising Algeria’s role in achieving this commendable accomplishment.¹⁶

The LAS reaffirmed this position in the resolutions issued at the conclusion of the 31st ordinary session of the LAS council at the summit level in Algiers on 1–2/11/2022, and the 32nd ordinary session of the LAS council at the summit level in Jeddah on 19/5/2023, emphasizing that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. LAS called on Palestinian factions and forces to unite under its umbrella and urged everyone to assume their responsibilities within the framework of a national partnership led by the PLO.¹⁷

4. The Position on Jerusalem

The LAS maintained its stance of rejecting the declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, but took no practical measures beyond verbal condemnation and denunciation against countries that recognize Jerusalem as the capital or move their embassies there. During a speech addressed to the British Conservative Party conference via video link on 4/10/2022, the LAS Secretary-General expressed strong disapproval of British Prime Minister Liz Truss’s statements about her intention to move the British embassy to Jerusalem, affirming the League’s rejection of any unilateral actions that violate international law and the historical and legal status of Jerusalem.¹⁸

The League persistently condemned the settlement activities, occupation plans and Israeli measures in Jerusalem, as well as the repeated incursions by settlers into *al-Aqsa* Mosque, viewing these actions as significant violations and provocations of Arab and Islamic sentiments, as well as clear breaches of international law. Through its resolutions and statements, LAS rejected all occupation practices within the holy city that aim to alter the existing legal and historical status of Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa*, emphasizing the necessity of ongoing efforts to protect Jerusalem and its holy sites. In this context, as an expression of the LAS’s support for Jordan, the League affirmed the importance of the Hashemite custodianship in Jerusalem and its role in safeguarding the holy sites.¹⁹



However, there was no change on the ground, with Arab actions limited to condemnation and denunciation. The Arab ministerial committee, which convened in Jordan on 21/4/2022, condemned the “illegal Israeli measures” in Jerusalem and called on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to “take immediate and effective action” to stop these measures and prevent the escalation of violence.²⁰ LAS Secretary-General Ahmad Abu al-Ghait, commenting on the Israeli flag march on 29/5/2022, which coincided with settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque, stated that “this move constitutes a new violation of the status quo, a significant provocation of Arab and Islamic sentiments, and could ignite the situation in Jerusalem and other areas,” warning that it could “push everyone into a religious confrontation with unforeseeable consequences.”²¹ The Arab Parliament strongly condemned the storming of large numbers of settlers and extremist Jews into the courtyards of *al-Aqsa* Mosque and the raising of the Israeli flags in its sacred courtyards.²²

In the context of enhancing the resilience of Jerusalemites, participants in the “2023 Jerusalem Conference on Resilience and Development” support conference held at the LAS on 12/2/2023, agreed on measures to strengthen this resilience. These measures include the establishment of a joint financing mechanism to support projects aimed at reinforcing the resilience of Jerusalem’s residents and countering Israeli policies that seek to undermine their existence.²³ Furthermore, during the 26th session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Communications and Information, held in Cairo on 23/1/2023, the Council designated Jerusalem as the “Digital Capital for the Year 2023.”²⁴

Second: The Positions and Roles of Some Key Countries

1. Egypt

a. The Development of Egypt’s Political Relations and Diplomatic Activities

The significance of Egypt’s role in the Palestine issue remains undeniable. However, it is also crucial to acknowledge the shifts in its role due to the growing influence of other regional players, including the UAE, KSA and Qatar, as well as the evolving relationships between the Gulf states and Israel. This evolution has led to the normalization of political, security and economic relations between

some Gulf states, such as the UAE and Bahrain, and Israel, with ongoing efforts to achieve normalization between KSA and Israel.

In recent years, Egypt has faced a series of economic crises. Just as the global economy was beginning to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian-Ukrainian crisis emerged, leading to increased energy and grain prices. Economic reports indicate that this significantly affected the Egyptian economy, which is now suffering from a decline in foreign currency reserves. As a result, the Egyptian regime needs to engage in active political diplomacy more than ever to maintain stability in a country that remains one of the most influential in the Arab world regarding the Palestine issue, both negatively or positively. Given these factors, some argue that the effectiveness of the Egypt in shaping political developments in the region is declining, especially as some of its supporting states gain more influence. Naturally, this shift affects Egypt's role in the Palestine issue in various ways.

In March 2022, Hebrew media revealed a supposedly secret summit involving Egyptian President 'Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, and Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. This rare and unusual trilateral meeting discussed key issues such as security and the potential formation of a regional defense alliance against drones, missiles and other threats, specifically targeting Iranian capabilities. Bennett proposed using Israeli laser-guided defense systems under development. The Palestine issue was also addressed, focusing on economic measures taken by Israel in WB and GS, as well as security concerns during Ramadan, with an emphasis on the need for calm during this period.²⁵

Israel's concerns about worsening security in Jerusalem during Ramadan (April–May 2022) were justified, particularly given the increasing settler attacks and repeated incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque. In response, Arab diplomacy aimed to restore calm to the region to prevent a repeat of the escalation seen in 2021, which led to the Sword of Jerusalem Battle between Palestinian resistance in GS and Israel. Another trilateral summit involving Egypt, the UAE and Jordan emphasized the need to halt all Israeli actions undermining “peace” and stressed the importance of sustained efforts to restore calm in Jerusalem.²⁶

Egypt remained closely involved with the Palestine issue. In March 2022, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry condemned an attack in Tel Aviv, with spokesperson Ahmad Hafez calling the act as “terrorism” and cautioning against further



deterioration between Palestinians and Israelis.²⁷ Simultaneously, Hafez denounced Israeli forces' incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque and the resulting violence against Palestinians, which led to numerous injuries and the arrests of worshippers.²⁸

During Ramadan 2022, in the context of the events in Jerusalem and Egypt's efforts to restore calm to the city, President 'Abdul Fattah al-Sisi told Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid in a call that Egypt had made strenuous and focused efforts to contain the situation on the ground, prevent the escalation of confrontations and military actions. He stressed the importance of building on the current calm, preventing any attempts to escalate tensions in WB or GS, accelerating the improvement of economic relations with the PA, and supporting President Mahmud 'Abbas.²⁹

It seems that Egypt's efforts to maintain regional calm were not solely driven by security concerns. An October 2022 report highlighted that Egypt had successfully persuaded Israel to begin extracting gas off the coast of Gaza after its development.³⁰ This raises numerous questions about the plans being formulated for the region before the events of 7/10/2023, especially given the increased demand for gas exports to Europe amid the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war and the halt in gas exports to Europe.

Egypt's efforts concerning Gaza's gas resources appear to be serious. Egyptian Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Tarek El Molla officially announced that a framework agreement had been reached to develop the Gaza gas field, stating that these efforts had begun two years earlier with Israel. However, the PA denied such an agreement had been finalized. An unnamed official confirmed an agreement on "basic terms," but noted that further discussions on technical aspects and final approvals from the PA would be needed.³¹

Egyptian authorities have been working on constructing an international highway along the GS border. Egyptian engineering equipment began repairing the separation wall with GS, following previous operations to demolish tunnels between Sinai and GS and to evacuate residents from Egyptian border areas near GS. This highway, which is 40 meters wide, extends from the beach at Palestinian Rafah along the border strip to the Karm Abu Salem crossing, located east of the city, at the junction of the borders of Egypt, GS and the 1948 occupied territories, where the Israeli army and settlers are present. This project coincides with the completion of a railway line connecting East and West Suez, stretching from Ismailia Governorate to Rafah at the Gaza border.³²

Egyptian diplomacy continued to monitor the Palestinian situation throughout 2023. Egypt actively sought to de-escalate tensions in WB, where settlers, emboldened by the hardline Israeli government—especially National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir—intensified their incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque. In response, head of the Egyptian General Intelligence Service (EGIS), Major General ‘Abbas Kamel delivered a proposal from President al-Sisi to halt the escalation. The proposal involved deploying Palestinian security forces in WB to regain control over certain areas and RCs, in exchange for a cessation of Israeli incursions into these RCs.³³

Despite Egypt’s efforts to prevent escalation, these attempts were ultimately unsuccessful, largely due to the extreme measures take by the Israeli government. These measures included efforts to divide *al-Aqsa* Mosque, disregard for Jordanian custodianship of Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem, and escalating security situations in WB and GS. Israeli violations in WB and GS persisted, involving assassinations and arrests of Palestinian resistance members in RCs, cities, and villages throughout WB. Between the start of 2023 until October 7 of the same year, PCBS reported that 263 Palestinian were killed.³⁴

b. Relations with Israel

Egyptian-Israeli relations have remained stable, characterized by bilateral cooperation in various fields, particularly in the economic sector, where collaboration increased during 2022–2023. This period also saw enhanced diplomatic engagement, with Israel acknowledging Egypt’s significant regional role. Notably, in January 2022, Egypt hosted its first Israeli event commemorating the Holocaust, titled “International Holocaust Remembrance Day.”³⁵

Given Egypt’s ongoing need for energy sources, particularly Israeli gas—which is more accurately Palestinian gas stolen by Israel—Egypt has significantly deepened its cooperation with Israel since the Camp David Accords. In February 2022, Israel agreed to establish a new gas supply line to Egypt from the Leviathan field via Jordan.³⁶ This agreement was accompanied by bilateral negotiations aimed at expanding economic and tourism relations. During an Egyptian visit to Israel, a delegation led by the deputy head of EGIS and senior Egyptian businessmen met with Israeli officials, including Yair Pence, head of the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office, as well as senior military officials and business leaders. They agreed to a comprehensive development of the Nitzana border crossing to facilitate



large-scale goods transportation, including imports of cement, ammonia and Egyptian agricultural products. According to Israeli media, Egypt is also keen on attracting Israeli tourists to Sharm el-Sheikh, although previous security threats have been a hindrance. The two sides agreed to form a joint economic committee in partnership with the private sector to address these challenges.³⁷

Indeed, Egypt aimed to address these challenges by reaching an agreement between the Egyptian president and his Israeli counterpart to establish a direct flight route between Ben Gurion Airport in Lod and the Sharm el-Sheikh resort. Bennett viewed this as “another step in the warming of the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt,” adding that “Cooperation between the two countries is expanding in many areas, and it contributes to both peoples and the stability of the region.”³⁸

In March 2022, Egypt signed an agreement with Israel to facilitate the trade of goods under the joint protocol of the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZ). This agreement aims to enhance export capacities, especially in response to global challenges.³⁹

Later, the Israeli government approved a plan to strengthen economic ties with Egypt. According to a statement from the Israeli Ministry of Economy and Industry, the plan “will expose more Israeli industries to the Egyptian market and make development and infrastructure projects accessible to Israeli tech companies.”⁴⁰

The strategic relationship between the two countries is underscored by agreements that extend beyond regional borders. Egypt signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Israel and the European Union for the export of gas from Israel to EU countries. The plan involves exporting the gas to liquefaction facilities in Egypt before shipping it to Europe. Israeli Energy Minister Karine Elharrar said, “This is a tremendous moment in which little Israel is becoming a significant player in the global energy market.” European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen described the agreement as “historic,” viewing it as the start of a long and successful energy story in the region. Additionally, Von der Leyen announced that the EU would provide €100 million (about \$104 million) to Egypt to help address the food crisis and allocate €3 billion (about \$3.1 billion) to invest in local agricultural production.⁴¹

Economic cooperation continued to rise in 2023 as well. The Japanese company Ocean Network Express, headquartered in Singapore, announced “a new weekly shuttle service connecting Israel to the hub of Damietta, Egypt.” This service,

which operates through the ports of Haifa and Ashdod, is named Israel Express (ILX). According to the company, it “was created in response to the growing demand for both import and export cargo from Israel.”⁴²

Despite official cooperation, incidents continued to reflect the underlying sentiments of the Egyptian public. In one instance, an Egyptian border guard stationed along the Egypt-Israel frontier carried out an attack that resulted in the deaths of three Israeli soldiers and the injury of two others before being killed. While Egyptian authorities claimed the incident occurred during a pursuit of drug smugglers, Israeli authorities reported that investigations revealed the Egyptian soldier had walked about 5 km to reach a hidden gate in the separation wall between Egypt and Israel. This gate was restricted to a select few, unknown to most Israeli soldiers and officers, and likely unknown to the Egyptians.⁴³

During a phone call with Netanyahu, al-Sisi offered his condolences. Netanyahu’s office reported that “the two leaders expressed their commitment to continue strengthening the peace and security cooperation that is vital to both countries.” President al-Sisi also “stressed the importance of coordination in the investigation, as well as the need to continue bilateral relations.”⁴⁴

c. Egypt and Operation Al-Aqsa Flood

The Hamas operation on 7/10/2023, which targeted Israeli military sites and settlements around GS, had significant strategic implications. These cannot be viewed in isolation from regional developments, such as plans to divide *al-Aqsa* Mosque temporally and spatially, the normalization of relations between Arab states and Israel, and the mistreatment of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Operation al-Aqsa Flood exposed Israel’s vulnerability and underscored the weakness of official Arab positions, which remain submissive to Israeli-US dominance. This battle ignited a spirit of resistance against Israeli occupation across the region, sparking a strong reaction among the Arab public, especially in light of Israel’s retaliatory attack on civilians in GS. In Alexandria, an Egyptian policeman opened fire on a tourist group, killing two Israeli tourists.⁴⁵

The Egyptian stance on Operation al-Aqsa Flood was shaped by various determinants and influencing factors, foremost among them:⁴⁶

- The desire to uphold Egypt’s pivotal role in the Palestine issue was driven by its significance in bolstering Egypt’s regional standing and fostering ties with the US.



- The Camp David Accords have yielded significant benefits, fostering advanced political, economic and security relations with Israel. These ties have notably strengthened during the tenure of Egyptian President ‘Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.
- The security concern revolves around the potential escalation of sympathetic popular movements for Palestinian resistance, in Egypt and the wider Arab region. There’s apprehension about reigniting the Arab Spring and revitalizing the Arab street, fueled by the profound inspiration from Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the growing discontent with Arab regimes, due the neglect of their duty towards Palestine.
- Concerns about the significant political and security impact of a potential large-scale displacement of Palestinians from GS to Egyptian territory, which could drag Egypt into conflict with Israel, jeopardize the Camp David Accords, and disrupt the stability of Egyptian-Israeli relations.
- Ideological reservations within the Egyptian government regarding the Islamic orientation of the Palestinian resistance, particularly amid strained relations with the Egyptian Muslim Brothers (MB) movement and broader scepticism towards Islamic movements in the region. There’s a perception that Egyptian and many Arab officials are hesitant about the victory of the Palestinian resistance in Operation al-Aqsa Flood, fearing potential destabilizing effects on Egypt’s internal dynamics and the broader Islamic movement presence in the region.
- The Egyptian official stance in the Palestinian landscape is characterized by strong alignment with the PA and its political objectives. Egypt maintains cautious and unfavorable relations with Hamas, showing reservations towards its resistance efforts and its inclination to maintain an independent stance and political autonomy in managing relations with Egypt and other Arab and regional entities.
- The Egyptian economy has been grappling with a deteriorating economic crisis, marked by the sharp depreciation of the Egyptian pound against the US dollar.
- The geopolitical determinant lies in Egypt’s control over the Rafah crossing, the sole land access point for GS to the outside world. This control has served as a potent pressure tool on both Gaza’s resistance factions and its populace, contributing to the tightening of the GS siege since 2007. During Operation al-Aqsa Flood, this control fueled accusations against Egypt, alleging complicity

in the siege, exacerbating suffering and scarcity, while Israeli aggression targets the GS population and resistance.

Amid ongoing Israeli calls to displace Gaza residents to Sinai, Egyptian President ‘Abdul Fattah al-Sisi cautioned against the escalating situation in GS. He stressed that Egypt “will not allow the liquidation of the Palestine issue at the expense of other parties” and declared that there would be “no leniency or compromise on Egypt’s national security under any circumstances.”⁴⁷

Egypt’s concerns were well-founded, as all indications pointed to plans for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza and the displacement of its residents to Sinai. The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, mentioned that the EU stressed the need “to open humanitarian corridors; to facilitate people who have to escape the bombing from Gaza. They could leave the country through Egypt—because the Israeli border is closed.”⁴⁸ Former Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon stated, “There is a huge expanse, almost endless space in the Sinai Desert just on the other side of Gaza,” adding, “The idea is for them [Palestinians] to leave over to the open areas where we [Israelis] and the international community will prepare infrastructure... tent cities, with food and with water.”⁴⁹

In a statement regarding the events of 7/10/2023, President ‘Abdul Fattah al-Sisi stated, “What happened was significant and difficult, and we condemn it, but we must understand that it resulted from accumulated anger and hatred spanning over more than 40 years, with no solution to the Palestine issue offering hope to the Palestinians.”⁵⁰ Meanwhile, Israeli National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi “categorically rejected reports that Egypt had given Israel prior warning that Hamas was planning a major attack,”⁵¹ suggesting that they should have been alerted by Egypt.

Egyptian leadership has consistently reiterated the country’s rejection of any attempt to resolve the Palestine issue at the expense of other countries. President ‘Abdul Fattah al-Sisi affirmed Egypt’s refusal to allow the “liquidation” of the Palestine issue and the “displacement” of Palestinians from GS to Sinai. He warned that such displacement could set a precedent for moving Palestinians from WB to Jordan. During a meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Cairo, al-Sisi clarified that the ongoing events in Gaza are not solely an attack on Hamas, but an attempt to force civilians to seek refuge in Egypt. He further



questioned why, if displacement is the goal, Palestinians should not be relocated to the Negev instead, reaffirming Egypt's firm stance against turning Sinai into a staging ground for "terrorist operations against Israel."⁵²

Shaina Low, Communication Adviser with the Norwegian Refugee Council, echoed Egypt's concerns, stating that Israel's actions in GS indicate a deliberate effort to displace the population towards Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. She emphasized that this issue has largely been overlooked by the international community. Low highlighted the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in GS, where 80% of the population has relocated to the south following Israeli orders to evacuate northern GS. She added that they are being urged to move towards Rafah, leaving them with no option but to enter Sinai to escape the escalating military pressure.⁵³

Despite being the official passage between Egypt and Gaza, the Rafah crossing remains outside full Egyptian control. Although it is meant to be governed jointly by Egypt and the Palestinians, Egypt has largely yielded to Israeli pressure, allowing Israel to exert significant influence over what passes through the crossing. Aid entering Gaza via Rafah is subjected to Israeli inspection, with Israel ultimately determining what can and cannot enter. Meanwhile, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry dismissed global calls and protests demanding the opening of the Rafah border, arguing that such demands are politically motivated and not genuinely focused on the humanitarian crisis in GS.⁵⁴ In a related development, Egyptian authorities deported four foreign activists from the Committee for Justice after they protested in front of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry in Cairo, calling for the opening of the Rafah crossing and official clearance for an international aid convoy to GS.⁵⁵

In November 2023, Egypt, in collaboration with Qatar, mediated a prisoner exchange agreement between the Palestinian resistance in GS and Israel. The mediation successfully resulted in a humanitarian pause, during which the Palestinian resistance released about fifty Israeli civilian prisoners. In return, Israel freed Palestinian women and child prisoners from its jails, and humanitarian aid was allowed to enter GS through the Rafah crossing. Additionally, Egypt admitted dozens of injured Palestinians into its hospitals and facilitated the exit of 400 foreign passport holders from GS via the Rafah crossing.⁵⁶

In a development that sparked widespread questions, Israeli media reported that Tel Aviv and Cairo have held talks on the post-war scenario, including the

potential construction of a barrier along the Egyptian-Gaza border to prevent tunnel activity. The discussions also addressed arrangements concerning the Philadelphi Corridor.⁵⁷ In this context, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant confirmed holding talks with Cairo to discuss the possibility of establishing an “advanced border obstacle that includes technological means” separating GS from Egyptian territory, in an attempt to thwart alleged arms smuggling operations.⁵⁸

Clearly, the situation in Egypt prior to 7/10/2023, was entirely different from what it has become since that date. The war has directly impacted the movement of ships through the Suez Canal, particularly following the Houthis’ (Ansar Allah) attempt in Yemen to break the GS blockade by closing the Bab al-Mandab Strait and preventing the passage of Israeli ships or those bound for Israel.

It is evident that the Egyptian authorities have shown little effort in stopping the war or applying pressure to ease the suffering of Gaza’s residents. In fact, Israel, during its testimony before the ICC, claimed that Egypt was responsible for closing the Rafah crossing—an assertion echoed by the US president. Reports also surfaced about the imposition of substantial fees, amounting to thousands of dollars, for those seeking medical treatment outside Gaza through the Rafah crossing. Moreover, there were accusations that certain Egyptian entities had misappropriated a significant portion of the aid intended for GS.

Operation al-Aqsa Flood’s political and field developments have cast a negative impact on Egypt’s role in the Palestine issue and its regional standing. Accusations have surfaced regarding Egypt’s cooperation with Israel in tightening the GS siege. There’s little indication of a significant shift in Egypt’s stance or political strategies regarding the ongoing war.

Politically, Egypt is likely to maintain its adherence to the established official stance of Arab and Muslim countries, a position over which it holds significant influence. It’s anticipated that Egypt will persist with its current policies regarding the closure of the Rafah crossing and tying aid entry to Israeli approval. Regarding its engagement with Palestinian resistance groups, particularly with Hamas and PIJ, Egyptian authorities are expected to maintain a cautious and conservative stance. There’s little anticipation for a positive shift in Egypt’s position regarding permitting pro-resistance public events or condemning Israeli war on GS.⁵⁹



2. Jordan

a. Development of Political Relations and Diplomatic Activities

In the period 2022–2023, Jordan maintained its political and diplomatic path that primarily focuses on Jordanian internal and external interests, which require maintaining calm in the region. This was expressed by King Abdullah II, who noted that “the region stands to gain much from cooperation and economic integration, stressing that for the process to be inclusive it ‘should and must include the Palestinians’ and that requires maintaining calm and ceasing all unilateral measures that undermine the prospects of peace.”⁶⁰ He also emphasized, “No matter what relations Arab countries have with Israel, if we don’t solve the Palestinian issue, it’s really two steps forward and two steps back.” Later, King Abdullah said he would “support the formation of a Middle East military alliance similar to NATO, and that it can be done with countries that are like-minded.” The king viewed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as having “the potential to derail plans and cooperation in the Middle East.”⁶¹

Regarding Jordanian-Palestinian relations, Jordan maintained its ties with the PA and expanded economic cooperation between the two sides. Despite former Hamas political bureau chief Khalid Mish‘al’s visit to Jordan and significant speculation about the potential reopening of the Hamas office in the Jordanian capital, this did not materialize during the period 2022–2023, despite internal pressure in Jordan advocating for it. Former Jordanian Minister of Culture and Youth Muhammad Abu Rumman commented at the time that it is important for Jordan to have strategic relations with Hamas and ongoing coordination. He added that Hamas is a strong and active party, and it should not be excluded from the framework of strategic dialogue and continuous coordination for Jordan.⁶²

Moreover, prominent Jordanian tribal leader Sheikh Trad al-Fayez has urged his government to reopen Hamas offices in Jordan, stating that Arab rulers should have honored Hamas after the Sword of Jerusalem Battle, as it is the primary defender of the dignity of the Arab and Muslim nation (*Ummah*).⁶³

In 2023, Jordanian authorities arrested four individuals linked to Hamas, according to leaked reports, accusing them of smuggling weapons to WB.⁶⁴ However, the Jordanian authorities released them in December 2023.⁶⁵

Regarding Jordan’s custodianship of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the country faced significant pressure to relinquish this custodianship during 2022–2023, a period

marked by increased settler incursions led by Israeli Minister of Internal Security Itamar Ben-Gvir. In this context, Jordan reaffirmed its custodianship of the holy sites in Jerusalem. The Jordanian government allocated about 14 million Jordanian dinars (approximately \$20 million) in 2023 for the Jerusalem Waqf Program, which is part of the Ministry of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Places' budget for the year. Additionally, in 2023, Jordan decided to appoint 100 employees to oversee the care of *al-Aqsa* Mosque and other holy sites in Jerusalem, bringing the total number of employees in this role to 900.⁶⁶

b. Relations with Israel

Despite Jordan signing a peace agreement with Israel in 1994, the normalization of relations was not as extensive as that achieved by some Gulf states, which quickly signed cooperation agreements across various political, security, economic and other fields. However, the period 2022–2023, up to 7/10/2023, saw notable developments in Jordanian-Israeli relations. Economically, Jordanian Member of Parliament Ahmad Qatawneh revealed an agreement between the Jordanian Ministry of Agriculture and its Israeli counterpart, under which hundreds of tons of vegetables are supplied to Israeli settlements.⁶⁷

In the same context, Qatawneh said that Jordan supplies Israel with 4.8 million cubic meters of water annually from Al-Ghamr area in southern Jordan. He mentioned during a parliamentary session that the government disclosed these figures in response to a parliamentary inquiry on the matter.⁶⁸

Jordan supplying water to Israel is unusual, considering that the kingdom had signed a trilateral MoU with the UAE and Israel. This agreement stipulates that Israel will desalinate seawater and provide Jordan with about 200 million cubic meters of desalinated water annually. In return, the UAE will construct a solar power plant in Jordan with a production capacity of 600 megawatts along with a system for storing electricity to produce clean energy and export it to Israel.⁶⁹

Additionally, the Israeli government approved the proposal of Prime Minister Yair Lapid and Regional Cooperation Minister Esawi Frej to accelerate the implementation of the Jordan Gateway project, a joint industrial zone between Israel and Jordan. Lapid stated, “Twenty-eight years since the peace agreement with Jordan, we are taking the good neighborly relations between our two countries another step forward. This is a breakthrough that will contribute greatly to developing and strengthening the region.” He added, “The final details regarding



this initiative were addressed last week during my visit with King Abdullah II in Amman.” He also noted, “This is an initiative that will increase employment in both countries, advance our economic and diplomatic relations, and enhance the peace and friendship between our two countries.” He further remarked, “This is a joint industrial zone on the border. It will allow Israeli and Jordanian entrepreneurs and businesspeople to communicate directly. It will produce joint initiatives in trade, technology and local industry.”⁷⁰

Jordanian-Israeli cooperation extended beyond economic fields. In recent years, tensions have arisen in Jerusalem during Ramadan due to settler incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque. In this context, Yair Lapid met with the Jordanian king before Ramadan 2022 to help ease tensions. According to a statement from Lapid’s office, which said, “We agreed that we must work together to calm tensions and promote understanding, particularly in the lead-up to the month of Ramadan and Passover.”⁷¹ According to Israel Hayom website, Israeli-Jordanian relations have a strategic dimension for both parties. Eyal Zisser, a lecturer in the Middle East History Department at Tel Aviv University, stated that “Israel doesn’t have a more reliable security partner than Jordan. To be more precise, it doesn’t have a more reliable partner than Jordan’s security agencies and army.” He added, “Relations with Jordan are based on security and even economic interests. The advantages from Israel’s perspective are considerable, chief among them the ability to lean on Jordan to safeguard our eastern flank against the threat of radical Islam, and of course, against Iran as well. At the same time, this cooperation is also a security interest of the highest order for the Jordanians.”⁷²

c. Jordan and Operation al-Aqsa Flood

The official Jordanian stance on Operation Al-Aqsa Flood was shaped by a range of factors that defined its boundaries and directions, including:⁷³

- National security concerns intensified due to the hostile attitudes of extreme right-wing Zionist groups towards Jordan, along with fears of forced displacement in WB amidst the arming of tens of thousands of settlers and their persistent efforts to compel Palestinians to relocate to Jordan. Furthermore, concerns emerged regarding security threats to the kingdom’s northern and eastern borders amidst increased attempts to breach them due to escalation in GS. On 28/1/2024, a drone attack targeted US forces stationed near the Syrian border in Jordan, killing three soldiers and wounding about 35 others.

- Geographic and demographic factors, coupled with strong public engagement with Operation al-Aqsa Flood, persistently fuelled Jordanian protests against Israeli aggression and in support of resistance since October 7th. The protests have spanned the entire geographical and societal spectrum in Jordan.
- The provisions of the Wadi Araba Treaty between Jordan and Israel, including political, economic restrictions, and normalization commitments between the parties.
- The strategic relationship between Jordan and the US, which fully sided with Israel and provided it with political, military and financial cover to continue its war on GS.
- Jordan's tepid ties with Hamas suffered a setback after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which coincided with a noticeable decline in relations, prompted by the arrest of several Hamas members for attempting to smuggle weapons into WB.
- Jordan's political stance within the Arab and international sphere, which opposes Hamas and "political Islam" movements.
- Jordan's political choices in the Palestinian arena, which support the political settlement, negotiations and the two-state solution, the efforts to de-escalate and impose calm in WB, enhancing the PA status within the Palestinian society, and preventing its collapse or decline in favor of other parties.
- The official side voiced concerns about the impact of Operation al-Aqsa Flood on Jordanian public sentiment and electoral trends, fearing its exploitation by the Islamic movement during the critical upcoming parliamentary elections later this year (2024).

Despite Jordan's vocal condemnation of Israel's war on GS and King Abdullah's firm rejection of any attempts to displace Palestinians, especially toward Jordan and neighbouring countries, Jordanian security forces prevented demonstrators from reaching the Jordanian border, using tear gas against protesters on 13/10/2023.⁷⁴

Jordan's efforts have focused on advocating for opening humanitarian corridors for medical and relief aid. King Abdullah underscored this during his meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who was in Jordan to prepare for a planned quadripartite summit in Amman on 18/10/2023, with Presidents 'Abbas, al-Sisi and Biden. However, the summit was cancelled following the Israeli bombing of Al-Ahli Baptist hospital, which killed around 500 civilians.⁷⁵



In November 2023, Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi decided to recall the Jordanian ambassador from Israel in protest against Israel's war on GS. Safadi stated that the ambassador's return would depend on Israel halting its war on GS and ending actions that contribute to a humanitarian crisis, depriving Palestinians of essential needs such as food, water, medicine and the right to live securely on their land.⁷⁶

One of the clear contradictions during the Israeli war on GS was revealed by the Israeli media, which reported about an agreement between the UAE and Israel to establish a land bridge between the ports of Haifa and Dubai. In fact, the concept of this land bridge was proposed approximately three months before Operation al-Aqsa flood. However, it was implemented during the battle, primarily to bypass the threats posed by Yemeni military forces to ships passing through the Red Sea towards Israel. Naturally, this bridge would pass through Jordanian and Saudi territories to reach Israel.⁷⁷

3. Syria

a. Syrian-Palestinian Relations and the Israeli Aggression

During the period from 2022 to 2023, Israel continued its military operations against Syrian territories, targeting sites associated with Hizbullah or Iranian leadership. This pattern of strikes, aimed at curbing the spread of Iranian influence, has been going on for years. Israel asserts that these actions are intended to disrupt the smuggling of offensive weapons to Hizbullah. In March 2022, the Israeli newspaper *The Jerusalem Post* revealed that over the past five years the Israeli Air Force has struck 1,200 targets in Syria with over 5,500 munitions during 408 missions, to prevent Iran from expanding its influence and supplying advanced weapons to Hizbullah.⁷⁸

Reports indicate that in 2023, Israel conducted 40 raids on 95 targets in Syrian territories, significantly increasing the frequency of these operations following the outbreak of war in GS. The number of raids rose from 6 to 11 when compared to the same period between 2022 and 2023.⁷⁹ In October 2022, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that Israel conducted 28 strikes on Syrian territories during the first ten months of 2022, resulting in the destruction of 81 targets and the deaths of 62 military personnel, including Iranian Quds Force officers and Hizbullah commanders.⁸⁰ In September 2022, the Syrian Air Force and Military Intelligence initiated a widespread arrest campaign targeting officers in Damascus

and Aleppo, accusing them of collaborating with hostile entities, specifically referring to Israel.⁸¹

In 2022, the Syrian regime maintained its steady relations with the PA and most Palestinian factions. A significant development occurred in the previously strained relationship between the Syrian regime and Hamas. In September 2022, Hamas announced the restoration of its ties with the Syrian regime. This was a bold move by Hamas, despite the discomfort it caused among some of its popular base and many supporters across the Arab and Muslim world who oppose any association with the Syrian regime.⁸² Hamas's leadership made a significant move by sending a delegation to Damascus, led by Khalil al-Hayya, head of the Arab and Islamic Relations Office. During this visit, al-Hayya met with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Al-Hayya described this meeting as historic, marking a new beginning for Palestinian-Syrian collaboration.⁸³

Despite initial efforts, the relationship between Damascus and Hamas remained tepid, with neither side showing much urgency to strengthen ties. The Syrian regime sought to distinguish between Hamas's military wing, Al-Qassam, operating within Palestine, and its political leadership, particularly those based abroad, towards whom the regime maintained a negative stance. This was underscored by a statement from the Syrian president in an August 2023 interview, about two months before Operation al-Aqsa Flood, in which he accused Hamas of "betrayal and hypocrisy." Hamas's leadership chose to remain silent, opting not to respond to the accusation.⁸⁴

b. Syria and Operation al-Aqsa Flood

Syria was one of the few Arab countries to commend the events of 7/10/2023, carried out by the Palestinian resistance in GS. The Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates issued a statement expressing its support for the Palestinian people and their struggle against "Zionist terrorism." The statement lauded the "honorable achievement" of the Palestinian resistance in Operation al-Aqsa Flood against the Israeli occupation, asserting that resistance in all its forms is the only means for the Palestinian people to secure their legitimate rights. Additionally, Syria condemned the brutal practices of Israel against the Palestinian people. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that Syria stands proudly "with the martyrs of the Palestinian revolution and the heroes who planned and executed Operation al-Aqsa Flood."⁸⁵



It is noteworthy that there was a significant increase in the frequency of attacks on US forces in the region. An official from the Pentagon reported that, in October 2023, US and coalition forces in Iraq and Syria experienced 23 drone and missile attacks—14 in Iraq and 9 in Syria.⁸⁶

4. Lebanon

a. Relations with the Palestinians

The Lebanese landscape has long been marked by division among its parties regarding the Palestinian presence and how it should be managed. In this context, on 3/2/2022, the Lebanese State Council issued Decision No. 93, which suspended the implementation of a decision by Lebanese Labor Minister Mustafa Bayram, dated on 25/11/2021. This decision had permitted Palestinians born in Lebanon to engage in professions restricted to Lebanese citizens.⁸⁷

Conversely, the National Federation of Workers' and Employees' Unions in Lebanon (FENASOL), comprising around 40 unions, opposed the State Council's ruling, affirming their "solidarity with the Minister of Labor and the Palestinian brothers in the [refugee] camps."⁸⁸ Minister Bayram reiterated his commitment to his decision, stressing that this issue requires legislative follow-up with parliamentary blocs, driven by humanitarian, legal and ethical considerations.⁸⁹

In response to the ongoing Israeli attacks in WB and Jerusalem, which intensified in early 2022 under the extremist Israeli government, Lebanon's stance was articulated by President Michel Aoun. He asserted that the systematic assaults by Israeli forces on *al-Aqsa* Mosque and worshippers, as well as the violations of holy sites in Jerusalem, would not alter the identity of the holy city. He emphasized the need for pressure to halt these actions. Aoun tweeted, "We express our full solidarity with the steadfast Palestinians in resistance against attempts to Judaize *al-Aqsa*."⁹⁰

During 2022–2023, there was a significant revival in the relationship between Hizbullah and Hamas. Although their ties had never been entirely severed, they had cooled considerably since the onset of the Syrian crisis. However, recent years have witnessed increased efforts to restore these relations within the broader resistance axis, with Hizbullah playing a key role in mediating between Hamas and the Syrian regime. All parties shared a vested interest in strengthening their cooperation, particularly in light of the resistance's performance in the

Sword of Jerusalem Battle. This sentiment was echoed by Hizbullah's Deputy Secretary-General Naim Qassem, who remarked that after the Sword of Jerusalem Battle, there was no turning back for the Palestinian people. He further emphasized, "We reached an understanding with Hamas that the priority is Palestine, and the Palestinians are not obligated to support anyone, but rather the opposite."⁹¹

In 2022 and 2023, the head of Hamas's political bureau visited Lebanon twice. During his first visit in June 2022, he met with Lebanese President Michel Aoun, who stated during the meeting, "Standing with you is our duty... We cannot imagine Jerusalem without the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or *al-Aqsa*." He also held meetings with the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Parliament, and Hizbullah's Secretary-General.⁹²

Conversely, some Lebanese factions still view the Palestinian presence as a burden on Lebanon. Remarkably, they have even proposed relocating them to other countries. Maronite Patriarch Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros al-Ra'i expressed this sentiment, stating, "We call on the international community to alleviate Lebanon's economic and social burden by finding a permanent solution to the presence of Palestinian refugees and Syrian displaced persons on Lebanese soil," adding, "We cannot accept that many parties, particularly on the international level, consider refugees and displaced persons a *fait accompli* that must be adapted to the point of integration, naturalization and granting of citizenship." He emphasized that the Lebanese state must make exceptional efforts through negotiations with the PA, LAS, UN and major countries to pursue the project of redistributing refugees to countries capable of absorbing them demographically and providing them with a humane and dignified life.⁹³

b. Relations with Israel

The most prominent issue during 2022–2023 was the maritime border demarcation, a point of contention among all Lebanese parties. With Israel initiating gas exploration and the ongoing dispute over maritime borders, Israel asserted in June 2022 that the Karish gas field is in "Israeli territory" and called "on the Republic of Lebanon to accelerate negotiations on the maritime border."⁹⁴

Although Hizbullah was not directly involved in the US-mediated negotiations, it wielded significant influence over the talks. The Hizbullah's Secretary-General

warned that if the maritime border negotiations between Lebanon and Israel resulted in unfavorable outcomes, the party would not confine its response to the Karish field, but would implement what he termed the “post-Karish equation.”⁹⁵

After several rounds of negotiations, US mediation efforts culminated in an agreement between the parties, which was signed in October 2022. Lebanese chief negotiator Elias Bou Saab described the signing as marking “a new era.” Amos Hochstein, the US energy envoy who mediated the indirect negotiations said, “This agreement was written with the idea in mind that it was between two countries that don’t have diplomatic relations,” adding, “I think the good will and good faith efforts by all parties is what’s going to make this move forward.”⁹⁶

The Israeli side viewed this agreement as a Lebanese recognition of Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid said, “It is not every day that an enemy state recognizes the State of Israel in a written agreement, in view of the entire international community.” He added, “It is not every day that the United States and France stand behind us and provide security and economic guarantees for the agreement.” He also said, “This agreement strengthens and fortifies Israel’s security and our freedom of action against Hizbullah and threats from the north.”⁹⁷

Israel took advantage of Lebanon’s dire economic situation to recruit agents. In 2022, Lebanese security forces dismantled 15 Israeli spy networks operating across various regions of the country. Investigations revealed that these networks were not only gathering information on the Lebanese resistance and its centers but were also conducting extensive surveys of Palestinian resistance forces in Lebanon, particularly Hamas.⁹⁸

On the other hand, the Lebanese resistance continued to bolster its capabilities in anticipation of a potential Israeli war on Lebanon. Hizbullah’s Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah announced in February 2022 that the resistance had successfully converted thousands of its rockets into precision missiles. He also revealed that the Lebanese resistance began manufacturing drones years ago and highlighted that Israel has resorted to recruiting agents after the failure of its drone operations due to the activation of the resistance’s air defense weapons. He asserted that Israel is on the path to disappearance; it’s only a matter of time. The future of the region will differ from the expectations of others.⁹⁹

Although both the Israel and Hizbullah were careful throughout 2022 and until October 2023 to maintain rules of engagement that avoided war, neither side ruled

out the possibility of breaching these rules if necessary. In May 2023, Hizbullah conducted military exercises on the southern border. The head of Hizbullah's Executive Council, Hashem Safieddine, stated, "Our readiness is always complete to confront any aggression and to reinforce the deterrence equations that have protected Lebanon." He warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government, "If you think of expanding your aggression to undermine the equations we have established with our blood and capabilities, we will be ready to shower you with our precision missiles and all our weapons. You will witness dark days like never before... The Israelis should know well that we mean what we say."¹⁰⁰

In response, Israeli forces conducted military exercises near the border shortly after, sending a clear message to Hizbullah. Israeli threats to devastate Lebanon in the event of a war with Hizbullah were repeatedly emphasized.

c. Lebanon and Operation al-Aqsa Flood

The events following the operation on 7/10/2023 highlighted the strong interconnectedness of the resistance against the Israeli occupation, both in Palestine and Lebanon. The resistance in Lebanon did not hesitate to respond to the Israeli massacres. As Safieddine stated, "The resistance in Lebanon is not neutral in the ongoing battle between the Palestinian resistance and the occupation forces."¹⁰¹

Regarding Hizbullah's stance on this war, the party's Deputy Secretary-General, Naim Qassem, stated during a speech at a rally in Beirut's southern suburbs, "We, as Hizbullah, contribute to the confrontation and will do so according to our vision and plan. We are monitoring the enemy's actions and are fully prepared. When the time comes for any action, we will carry it out."¹⁰² Hizbullah reported 126 members killed from 7/10/2023, until the end of 2023. Additionally, 221 members, including 12 medics from the party, were killed from 1/1/2024, to 12/6/2024.¹⁰³ There were also 18 members of the Amal Movement, one Lebanese Army soldier, one member of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, and 61 civilians killed during the period from 7/10/2023, to 22/5/2024.¹⁰⁴

From the outset of the war, Hizbullah declared its role as establishing and maintaining a support front, participating in the conflict under limited engagement rules, typically advancing no more than 3–5 km into Israeli territory, while remaining ready to go further if necessary. In his first speech after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Hizbullah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah warned that Israel

should be concerned about the potential expansion and escalation of the war. He highlighted that Hizbullah had successfully eased the pressure on the GS front by forcing the Israeli army to divert a significant portion of its land, air and naval forces to the northern front.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, Israel also adhered to specific engagement rules, avoiding the opening of a full-scale front from Lebanon to prevent overextending its forces and diverting attention from GS.

As expected, perspectives and positions among Lebanese parties varied on the issue. The Lebanese Forces Party leader, Samir Geagea, stated, “We must work to prevent the eruption of the southern front, and I note the significant absence of the Lebanese government.”¹⁰⁶ In another statement, he argued that the operations in the south did not benefit Gaza in any way, while Lebanon suffered economic losses amounting to billions of dollars.¹⁰⁷

The Kataeb Party issued a statement warning that the events in the south risk dragging Lebanon into an unnecessary war, one that would serve to entrench power dynamics in the region and prioritize external interests over Lebanese sovereignty. The party firmly stated that “the use of Lebanese territory and its linkage to the Palestinian arena is categorically rejected. Neither Hizbullah nor any Palestinian factions have the right to speak on behalf of Lebanon, whether in matters of war or peace; this authority belongs exclusively to the Lebanese state and its institutions.”¹⁰⁸

The Maronite Bishops’ Council in Lebanon, under the leadership of Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros al-Ra’i condemned the opening of new fronts in southern Lebanon by Palestinian factions, stating that such actions infringe upon Lebanon’s sovereignty as an independent state. The Council emphasized that the decision regarding war and peace “must rest solely with the Lebanese state, given their profound impact on the entire Lebanese population.”¹⁰⁹

In a television interview on 19/2/2024, former Lebanese President Michel Aoun criticized Hizbullah for opening the southern front against Israel in solidarity with GS. He stated, “We are not bound by a defense treaty with Gaza.”¹¹⁰

Furthermore, Operation al-Aqsa Flood has brought the military wing of *al-Jama’ah al-Islamiyyah*, known as the Fajr Forces, back into the forefront of resistance activities against Israel in Lebanon. In a statement on 18/10/2023, the group announced that it had targeted the Israeli army with rocket strikes, achieving direct hits.¹¹¹ The group’s Secretary-General Muhammad Takkoush, explained that the rocket attacks were partly a response to the Israeli attacks on southern villages,

residents, towns and mosques, and partly to show solidarity with the people of Gaza, affirming that they are not alone in this battle.¹¹² He emphasized that “*al-Jama‘ah al-Islamiyyah* is not aligned with any specific axis, though this does not preclude cooperation with those who share our views on any issue.”¹¹³ He stressed that al-Aqsa Flood battle represents a crucial struggle for the future of the world, with Palestine at its core. He called for “a parallel flood to al-Aqsa Flood and not merely symbolic gestures, as these do not determine the outcome of the battle.” He asserted that the group is not neutral in this war.¹¹⁴ In a speech delivered a year prior to Operation al-Aqsa Flood, on 25/12/2022, Takkoush stated that as long as the occupying entity controls part of our land, we in *al-Jama‘ah al-Islamiyyah* will continue our growing resistance activities, with the Fajr Forces ready to act.¹¹⁵

Al-Jama‘ah al-Islamiyyah lost five members across Lebanon during Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which took place from 7/10/2023, to April 2024, as a result of attacks by Israeli drones.¹¹⁶

On 6/4/2023, thirty rockets were fired from southern Lebanon towards northern Israel. No group initially claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. However, Reuters, citing three security sources, reported that Palestinian factions were behind the attacks from Lebanon on Israel.¹¹⁷ It was later revealed that Hamas’s Al-Qassam Brigades were responsible for launching the rockets. Following the incident, Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati met with Foreign Minister Abdullah Bou Habib. After local and international political consultations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants issued a statement affirming Lebanon’s full respect for and adherence to UN Security Council Resolution 1701. The statement emphasized Lebanon’s commitment to maintaining calm and stability in the south. Lebanon called on the international community to pressure Israel to cease its escalation and expressed its readiness to cooperate with the UN Peacekeeping Forces in the south to restore peace. It warned of Israel’s escalatory actions, which threaten regional and international peace and security.¹¹⁸ On 12/4/2023, Free Patriotic Movement leader Gebran Bassil stated, “As Lebanese, we reject anyone using our land to send messages, and we only accept Lebanese weapons on our land. We also reject the launching of rockets from our land if their source is not Lebanese.”¹¹⁹

From 7/10/2023, to the end of 2023, Hamas’s Al-Qassam Brigades in Lebanon claimed responsibility for ten rocket launches towards Israeli settlements in the

north, the first of which occurred on 10/10/2023, targeting settlements in western Galilee.¹²⁰ On 3/5/2024, Al-Qassam Brigades in Lebanon released footage for the first time showing rockets targeting command centers and Israeli soldiers' barracks in northern Israel.¹²¹ Additionally, Al-Quds Brigades, the PIJ military wing, conducted several operations from southern Lebanon, including rocket attacks, clashes with Israeli forces, and infiltration operations into Israel.¹²²

On 2/1/2024, Israel assassinated Saleh al-'Aruri, the deputy head of Hamas's political bureau, along with six of his comrades, in the southern suburbs of Beirut. This act was widely condemned by several Lebanese officials and party leaders. Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati denounced the attack, stating, "This explosion is a new Israeli crime aimed at dragging Lebanon into a new phase of confrontations." The Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it had submitted two "strongly worded" protests to the UN regarding the Israeli airstrike on Beirut's southern suburbs that targeted Hamas leaders, including al-'Aruri.¹²³ In retaliation, Hamas's Al-Qassam Brigades in Lebanon shelled Israeli military sites in northern Palestine.¹²⁴ *Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah*, which lost two members, Mahmud Shahin and Muhammad Bashasha, in this assassination, condemned the attack, describing it as "a failed Israeli attempt to compensate for the defeat of the occupation forces before the heroic Palestinian resistance in Gaza." The group affirmed that this "heinous crime will not go unpunished."¹²⁵ Hamas in Lebanon lost 18 members (including Saleh al-'Aruri, deputy head of Hamas's political bureau), with 7 killed from the start of Operation al-Aqsa Flood until the end of 2023 and 11 killed from 1/1/2024, to 12/6/2024. The PIJ in Lebanon also lost 18 members, with 9 killed from the start of the operation until the end of 2023 and 9 killed from January 1/1/2024, to 12/6/2024.¹²⁶

5. KSA and the Gulf States

a. The Development of Their Political Relations, Diplomatic Activities and Position on Peace Process

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states have reiterated their unwavering positions on the centrality of the Palestine issue and their support for the sovereignty of the Palestinian people over all territories occupied since 1967, advocating for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. They also reaffirmed the rights of refugees in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant international resolutions. The GCC

underscored the importance of intensifying international efforts to resolve the conflict in a manner that upholds the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people based on these principles. Furthermore, the GCC states commended efforts to revive the Arab Peace Initiative, and expressed their firm rejection of any attempts to annex settlements in WB to Israel.¹²⁷

The GCC member states condemned the ongoing Israeli construction of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. They called on the international community to intervene to stop the targeting of Palestinians in Jerusalem, the eviction of Palestinian residents from their homes in East Jerusalem, and efforts to alter the city's legal status and demographic composition, including arrangements concerning Islamic holy sites. The council underscored that these actions violate international law, international resolutions and existing agreements, stressing the need to avoid unilateral measures.¹²⁸ GCC Secretary-General Nayef al-Hajraf emphasized the importance of the Israeli authorities respecting the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem and its holy sites, and called for an end to all illegal actions.¹²⁹

Conversely, the "Abraham Accords," signed by the UAE and Bahrain with Israel, largely sidelined the Palestine issue. These agreements primarily focused on security, military and economic interests, making it clear that the path to normalization did not contribute to resolving the Palestine issue but rather exacerbated its marginalization. Israel, meanwhile, intensified its aggression against the Palestinian people, increased its assaults on *al-Aqsa* Mosque, and continued Judaizing Jerusalem and expanding settlements. In contrast, KSA differed from its neighbors, the UAE and Bahrain, by refraining from signing any normalization agreement with Israel, despite US and Israeli efforts. However, KSA did facilitate certain forms of normalization, such as opening its airspace to Israeli flights and holding unofficial meetings. Kuwait, on the other hand, stood alone in rejecting all forms of normalization and continued to support the Palestine issue.

While Israel's relations with the UAE and Bahrain have developed in an unprecedented manner, including the signing of agreements for political, military, economic and security cooperation, a comprehensive study of public opinion across 14 Arab and Muslim countries, as reported by the British Jewish News site, revealed that the vast majority oppose recognizing Israel. Regarding normalization with Israel, in countries like the UAE, Morocco, Bahrain and Sudan, 84% of respondents opposed their home countries' recognition of Israel.¹³⁰ *Haaretz* quoted



Ebtesam al-Ketbi, head of the Emirates Policy Center, saying that the Israeli government “embarrassed” Arab leaders who signed agreements with Tel Aviv, and that no additional states are likely to sign normalization agreements with Israel in the near term.¹³¹

Saudi King Salman bin ‘Abdul ‘Aziz underscored that the security and stability of the Middle East hinge on “accelerating a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestine issue in line with international legitimacy resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian state along the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.” He also condemned all unilateral actions that undermine the two-state solution and called for their immediate cessation.¹³² Riyadh strongly denounced the escalating Israeli measures in Jerusalem, including repeated incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque. The Saudi government emphasized that this systematic escalation represents a blatant assault on holy sites, the sanctity of *al-Aqsa* and its significance to the Muslim *Ummah* (Muslim nation), as well as a serious violation of international law and the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem and its holy sites.¹³³

Amid heightened discussions about a potential normalization agreement between KSA and Israel, on 12/8/2023, Saudi Ambassador to Jordan Nayef bin Bandar al-Sudairi presented his credentials as Non-Resident Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the State of Palestine to the PA and Consul General in Jerusalem city to Majdi al-Khaldi, Advisor to the Palestinian President on Diplomatic Affairs. Al-Sudairi stressed “the Kingdom’s unwavering stance with regard to supporting the Palestinian cause and the rights of the brotherly people of Palestine.”¹³⁴ The Palestinian government and the PLO hailed al-Sudairi’s visit to WB to present his credentials to Palestinian President Mahmud ‘Abbas as a “historic moment” in the development of fraternal relations between the two countries.¹³⁵

Kuwait, Qatar and Oman reaffirmed their unwavering stance on the Palestine issue and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, particularly their right to establish an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, within the framework of a two-state solution. These countries condemned the escalating Israeli actions in Jerusalem and the repeated incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque under the protection of Israeli forces, deeming these acts a blatant violation of international law and a provocation to the sentiments of Muslims worldwide. They warned that such ongoing violations clearly demonstrate the Israeli intent to transform the conflict into a religious war.¹³⁶

Kuwait and Oman have declared their rejection of normalization with Israel, while Qatar emphasized that it's difficult to envision joining the Abraham Accords "in the absence of a real commitment to a two-state solution." Qatar clarified that its engagements with Israel are focused on supporting the Palestinian people. Foreign Minister Mohammed bin 'Abdulrahman Al Thani mentioned that Qatar had previously maintained ties with Israel when "there was prospects for peace" with the Palestinians, but noted that his country "lost hope" after the 2008–2009 Gaza War.¹³⁷

Qatar continued to host Hamas leadership and provided official support by mediating between Israel and Palestinian resistance, which resulted in a temporary truce during the GS war following Operation al-Aqsa Flood. This truce lasted seven days, with Qatar managing these efforts in collaboration with Egypt, and supporting the active media role of Al Jazeera, which aligns with the resistance and reflects the sentiments of the Arab street. Simultaneously, Qatar maintained strong relations with the US, positioning itself as a reliable mediator and investing in an active role in regional politics.

Qatar submitted a written memorandum to the ICJ requesting an advisory opinion on the Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The memorandum urged the court to determine that Israel's obligations under international law necessitate the immediate cessation of its illegal occupation and the provision of full compensation for the damage and suffering caused by the occupation.¹³⁸

During the period covered by this report, the Qatar's Gaza Re-Construction Committee sustained an annual grant of \$360 million to support the GS residents. This grant was allocated for supplying fuel to operate Gaza's power plant, in cooperation with the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and for providing a monthly aid of \$100 to 100 thousand needy families, alongside other projects implemented by Qatar in GS.¹³⁹

While the UAE protested and condemned Israeli actions in Jerusalem and within *al-Aqsa* Mosque, emphasizing the importance of respecting Jordan's role in overseeing the holy sites and endowments in accordance with international law and the historical status quo, and not infringing on the authority of the Jerusalem Endowments and Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs,¹⁴⁰ Emirati Foreign Minister

Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, during a phone call with his Israeli counterpart Yair Lapid, on 21/4/2022, “welcomed the Israeli government’s decision to halt the ‘Israeli Flags March’ from reaching the Bab al-Amud [Damascus Gate] area, as well as to prevent non-Muslim visitors from entering the Al-Aqsa courtyards from Friday until the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan.”¹⁴¹

b. Position on the Reconciliation Process and Palestinian Unity

The GCC Supreme Council emphasized the importance of reconciliation and Palestinian unity, urging all Palestinian factions to resolve their differences through dialogue and to engage in negotiations to strengthen national unity. The Council commended the efforts of Arab countries in promoting national reconciliation, restoring Palestinian unity, and unifying Palestinian ranks to serve the interests of the Palestinian people.¹⁴²

Relations between KSA and Hamas have shown signs of improvement. Musa Abu Marzuq, Hamas’s head of International Relations, indicated that the movement’s relations with KSA were gradually warming, particularly following Hamas’s visits to KSA under the pretext of *Hajj* and *Umrah*.¹⁴³ On 17/4/2023, a Hamas delegation led by the movement’s political bureau head, Isma‘il Haniyyah, performed *Umrah* during a visit to KSA for the first time in years. The delegation included Khalid Mish‘al, the head of Hamas abroad, along with several political bureau members, including Musa Abu Marzuq and Khalil al-Hayya.¹⁴⁴

Haniyyah sent a congratulatory message to King Salman bin ‘Abdul ‘Aziz and Crown Prince Muhammed bin Salman on the occasion of Saudi Arabia’s 92nd National Day. In the message, he urged them to commemorate the day by issuing a royal pardon for all detained Palestinians in the kingdom.¹⁴⁵ Mish‘al also called on KSA to release Hamas members, rejecting any significant reason for the change in the Saudi stance towards Hamas. He emphasized that the movement has neither harmed any party nor interfered in other countries’ affairs, and thus “it is not right for a state to hold Hamas accountable for practicing resistance.”¹⁴⁶

The recent escalation of Israeli war on GS following Operation al-Aqsa Flood has brought renewed attention to the issue of Palestinian and Jordanian detainees in KSA. These detainees are reported to have links with an unspecified “terrorist entity,” leading to increasing demands for transparency regarding their situation and calls for their release.

In August 2021, a Saudi criminal court sentenced Muhammad al-Khudari, a prominent detainee and former representative of Hamas in KSA, to 15 years in prison on charges of supporting resistance. This sentence was part of a broader series of verdicts targeting 69 Jordanians and Palestinians, with sentences ranging from acquittal to 22 years in prison. However, in December 2021, a Saudi appellate court reduced al-Khudari's sentence to 3 years. By 4/1/2022, the court had reviewed the sentences, with Khadir Al-Mshayikh, head of the Jordanian detainees committee in KSA, noting that "the Riyadh Court of Appeal reconsidered many of the sentences, reducing some by half and others by a third."¹⁴⁷ Muhammad al-Khudari was released on 19/10/2022,¹⁴⁸ and his son Hani was released on 26/4/2023.¹⁴⁹

c. Position on Operation al-Aqsa Flood

Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the subsequent Israeli war on GS have placed the Gulf states into a complex position. While some of these countries maintain diplomatic relations with Israel, KSA had been preparing for normalization talks with Israel. However, Riyadh announced the suspension of these talks in response to the war.¹⁵⁰ The Gulf countries' responses have varied: some have expressed concern over the escalation and spread of conflict, calling for a cease-fire, while others believed that "Hamas must be destroyed in Gaza."¹⁵¹

Operation al-Aqsa Flood took place approximately three years after the signing of the Abraham Accords. During this period, some Arab states began to perceive resistance not as a burden but as an opponent,¹⁵² an adversary to be fought and eliminated. This view arose from concerns that resistance was obstructing the normalization process, despite its expansion, and preventing it from becoming an accepted stance within the Arab and Muslim worlds.¹⁵³

The GCC Supreme Council condemned the Israeli war on GS and reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian people. The council called for "an immediate cessation of hostilities and Israeli military operations, ensuring the provision of all humanitarian and relief aid." It demanded "an end to the illegal Israeli blockade" on GS, "called for providing international protection to the Palestinian people and held Israel legally responsible for its ongoing attacks that have targeted innocent civilians." Additionally, the council urged "all parties to the conflict to protect civilians, refrain from targeting them, and adhere to international law and international humanitarian law." It also called for the "release of civilian hostages and detainees, especially women, children, the sick, and the elderly."¹⁵⁴



Riyadh's reaction to Operation al-Aqsa Flood was muted, as the entertainment season events in Riyadh commenced on 28/10/2023, amidst the ongoing war and genocide in GS. Turki Al al-Sheikh, the Chairman of the Saudi General Entertainment Authority (GEA), confirmed that these events would continue as planned.¹⁵⁵

The Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the Kingdom was “closely following the developments of the unprecedented situation between a number of Palestinian factions and the Israeli occupation forces, which has resulted in a high level of violence on several fronts there.” It called for an “immediate halt to the escalation between the two sides, the protection of civilians, and restraint,” renewing “the call of the international community to assume its responsibilities and activate a credible peace process that leads to the two-state solution.”¹⁵⁶ Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud condemned any attacks on civilians, regardless of their location.¹⁵⁷ King Salman bin ‘Abdul ‘Aziz and Crown Prince Muhammed bin Salman initiated a popular donation campaign via the “Sahim” platform, associated with the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, to support the Palestinian people in GS. They launched the campaign with a donation of 50 million riyals (about \$13.3 million).¹⁵⁸

Qatar has attributed the current escalation solely to Israel, citing its ongoing violations of Palestinian rights, including repeated incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque under Israeli police protection. Qatar has expressed deep concern about the developments in GS and has urged all parties to de-escalate and exercise maximum restraint.¹⁵⁹ Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani called “for an end to this war that has transcended all limits, to stem the bloodshed, spare the civilians the consequences of military confrontations.” He added “It is untenable for Israel to be given an unconditional green light and free license to kill,” emphasizing, “It should not be allowed in our time to use cutting off water and preventing medicine and food as weapons against an entire population.”¹⁶⁰ Sheikh Tamim wondered, “how long will the international community continue to treat Israel as if it is above international law” and demanded that the UN “send international teams to immediately investigate the Israeli allegations and claims used to justify the bombing of hospitals, although there is no justification for such a crime.”¹⁶¹

Kuwait has also expressed “concern on the escalation in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, which resulted from the continuous violations

and attacks by the Israeli occupation forces on the Palestinian people.”¹⁶² The Kuwaiti government ordered “halting all celebrations and concerts in solidarity with the brotherly Palestinian people and the blessed martyrs.”¹⁶³ Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah denounced “the attacks of the brutal Israeli aggression” on GS, and called for “a ceasefire and allowing the entry of humanitarian and relief aid.”¹⁶⁴

Kuwaiti Interior Minister Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said, “We are proud of the Amir Decree of 1967 proclaiming that Kuwait is in a state of war against the Zionist gangs in the occupied Palestine,” noting that “the proclamation is still in effect, which signals Kuwait’s steadfast support to right and justice.”¹⁶⁵ In a joint statement signed by 45 members, Kuwaiti MPs expressed their full support for the Palestinian people’s right to resist occupation and respond to attacks and violations. They emphasized that the recent events are a natural reaction to the escalating crimes against holy sites in Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* Mosque, and in WB.¹⁶⁶

The Omani Foreign Ministry stated that the escalation is “a result of the continued illegal Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and constant Israeli aggressions in Palestinian cities and villages.” The ministry called “on both parties to exercise the utmost levels of restraint, stressing the importance of protecting civilians.” The statement adds that these events portend serious repercussions and an escalation in the intensity of violence.¹⁶⁷

In contrast, the UAE and Bahrain sought to maintain their relations with Israel while criticizing Hamas’s actions on 7/10/2023. UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation Reem Al Hashimy, speaking at a UN Security Council Open Debate on the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question, stated that “the attacks launched by Hamas on October 7 are barbaric and heinous” and demanded “that Hamas release hostages immediately and unconditionally to stop the bloodshed and spare all civilians from further suffering.” However, she emphasized that “Hamas’ crimes against civilians can never justify Israel’s policy of collective punishment towards the Gaza Strip.”¹⁶⁸

The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed that it was “appalled by reports that Israeli civilians have been abducted as hostages from their homes.” It emphasized that civilians on both sides must always have full protection under international humanitarian law and must never be a target of conflict.” It added, “the Ministry deeply mourns the loss of Israeli and Palestinian lives as a result

of the outbreak of violence, and calls on both parties to de-escalate and avoid an expansion of the heinous violence with tragic consequences affecting civilian lives and facilities.” The UAE extended “condolences to the families of the victims” and called for “all diplomatic efforts to prevent a wider regional confrontation.”¹⁶⁹ Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid mentioned that UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed expressed solidarity with Israel during a phone call.¹⁷⁰

Amid the escalation of war in GS and Israel’s intensified targeting of civilians and infrastructure, Anwar Gargash, the diplomatic adviser to the UAE president, described the Israeli response to the Hamas attack as “disproportionate,” while noting that “the two decade policy of containment of the Palestinian issue by Israel had failed.”¹⁷¹ UAE’s permanent representative to the UN, Lana Nusseibeh, stated that the UAE “will condition financial and political support for the reconstruction of Gaza’s infrastructure on a viable US-backed path toward a two-state solution.”¹⁷²

Bahrain criticized Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, with its Ministry of Foreign Affairs calling “for an immediate stop to the ongoing fighting between the Palestinian Hamas troops and the Israeli forces.” It “called on the international community to fulfil its responsibilities by intervening to stop the armed conflict” and “affirmed that the Kingdom of Bahrain supports the peace process and advocates for reaching a diplomatic solution through negotiations to bring forth a two-state solution in alignment with other international legitimacy resolutions.” The ministry “affirmed the Kingdom of Bahrain’s denunciation of the reported kidnappings of civilians from their homes to be taken as hostages,” expressing “its regret for the loss of life and destruction of property, offering its condolences to the families of the victims and wishing the injured a swift recovery.” Bahrain called for “the de-escalation of the violence that threatens regional security and stability,” noting the dire consequences this conflict will have on the region.¹⁷³

At the “IISS Manama Dialogue 2023,” organized by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Bahrain’s Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa adopted the Israeli narrative, describing the attacks on 7/10/2023 as “barbaric” and “horrific.” He stated, “they were indiscriminate, they killed women, children, elderly; did not matter. They hit civilian institutions, and they hit military targets. And on top of that, it seems it’s okay now to grab hostages and take them away and speak about it as if it’s an act of war.” Prince Salman concluded, “There must be no terrorism directed from Gaza against the Israeli public.”¹⁷⁴

On the other hand, these countries that have normalized relations and exchanged ambassadors with Israel did not move to sever ties even after a month of aggression.¹⁷⁵ On 2/11/2023, Bahrain's Council of Representatives stated that "the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain [Khalid al-Jalahma] to Tel Aviv returned to the Kingdom some time ago, and that the Ambassador of Israel to the Kingdom of Bahrain Eitan [Na'eh] had also departed the Kingdom previously, also confirming that direct flights between Bahrain International Airport and Tel Aviv Airport had stopped as of several weeks ago."¹⁷⁶ However, "Six sources familiar with the matter told Reuters Bahrain would not abandon its ties with Israel," and "is trying to preserve the relationship with Israel while also managing public opinion."¹⁷⁷

Conversely, Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi, Chairman of the Defense, Interior, and Foreign Affairs Committee in the UAE's Federal National Council, stressed at a special online briefing organized by the European Jewish Association in collaboration together with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) that normalization agreements with Israel would not be cancelled despite the war on GS. He stated, "The Abraham Accords are there to stay," adding that "Israel is there to exist and that the roots of Jews, Christian are not in New York or Paris but here in our region."¹⁷⁸

The UAE played a key role in facilitating the launch of two overland routes for commercial shipments to Israel. The first was established through an agreement between Israel's Trucknet and the UAE's PureTrans logistics companies to transport goods from Dubai port through Saudi and Jordanian territories to Haifa port,¹⁷⁹ despite denial from the Jordanian Ministries of Transport and Industry and Trade.¹⁸⁰ However, evidence confirmed the route's existence. The second route involved Egypt's WWCS company joining the land bridge project, creating a new path from Jebel Ali port through Saudi territory and Jordan to the Haifa and Eilat ports, and then to the Egypt's Port Said and Ain Sokhna ports.¹⁸¹

d. Relations with Israel and Developments in Normalization

Political and Diplomatic Aspects

All signs indicate that the US is working to extend the normalization process it initiated with the UAE and Bahrain by facilitating similar ties between KSA and Israel. While the benefits for KSA appear limited compared to the substantial gains for Israel, KSA has stressed that normalizing relations with Israel would

benefit the region but hinges on resolving the Palestine issue. In an interview with *The Atlantic* magazine, Saudi Crown Prince Muhammed bin Salman, when asked about the growing Gulf relations with Israel, said, “we hope that the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians is solved. We don’t look at Israel as an enemy, we look to them as a potential ally, with many interests that we can pursue together. But we have to solve some issues before we get to that.”¹⁸²

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud stated that KSA believes that full normalization with Israel in the region is not only important or beneficial for Israel but also for all of us, as it can benefit all our countries economically, socially, and in terms of security.¹⁸³ During a session at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Saudi minister emphasized that “a full normalisation between us and Israel, between the region and Israel, will bring immense benefits—we won’t be able to reap those benefits unless we address the issue of Palestine.”¹⁸⁴ Prince Faisal told Bloomberg that “an agreement to create a Palestinian state would be a precondition for the biggest Arab economy to establish formal diplomatic ties with Israel.”¹⁸⁵

In this context, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu aimed to secure a diplomatic success for his government by achieving a normalization agreement with Saudi Arabia. He repeatedly praised Saudi Crown Prince Muhammed bin Salman for his role in negotiating normalization agreements between Israel and Arab states,¹⁸⁶ as well as for his communication with the US to facilitate this success.¹⁸⁷ Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid stated, “We will not wake up one morning to a surprise, rather it will be a long and cautious process on both sides. There are security interests for both countries.”¹⁸⁸

In a related development, the Israeli news site Walla! reported on 30/8/2023, that the PA had presented KSA with a list of demands they hope Riyadh will raise during talks aimed at reaching a normalization agreement between KSA and Israel.¹⁸⁹ *The Wall Street Journal* reported that senior Saudi officials said, “If Abbas can get security under control, the crown prince offered assurances that the kingdom would eventually resume its funding for the Palestinian Authority and that Saudi Arabia wouldn’t accept any deal with Israel that undermines efforts to create an independent Palestinian state.”¹⁹⁰

The *Israel Hayom* newspaper reported that Israeli security officials have intensified their visits to KSA in recent years.¹⁹¹ On 22/5/2023, Israel’s Channel 12

reported that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Eli Cohen had phone conversations with Saudi Crown Prince Muhammed bin Salman regarding the normalization of relations between Tel Aviv and Riyadh. These discussions were mediated by Bahrain and occurred under US pressure.¹⁹² On 10/9/2023, an official Israeli delegation arrived in Riyadh to participate in the 45th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. According to Israeli reports, the delegation included representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, although Foreign Minister Eli Cohen and Education Minister Yoav Kisch were absent due to Saudi delays in issuing their entry visas.¹⁹³ This occurred despite Saudi Arabia's agreement with UNESCO, which included a commitment to allow Israeli representatives to participate in the meeting.¹⁹⁴

On 26/9/2023, in a first-of-its-kind public visit, Israeli Minister of Tourism Haim Katz and his delegation arrived in Riyadh, to attend a UN World Tourism Organization conference, thus "becoming the first Israeli minister to lead a delegation to the kingdom, according to his office."¹⁹⁵ Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi, who visited Riyadh during the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) holiday, on 3/10/2023, was filmed attending the morning prayers and taking part in the festive *Hoshanot* prayer.¹⁹⁶ Karhi praised the "blossoming ties" between Israel and KSA.¹⁹⁷

Additionally, in July 2023, Israeli media figures and athletes visited KSA to participate in sports tournaments. Videos circulated on social media showing the general rehearsal for the opening ceremony of the FIFAe World Cup finals, where three gamers from Israel were filmed singing the national anthem and holding the Israeli flag.¹⁹⁸

In a move to permit flights to and from Israel, the Saudi General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) announced on 15/7/2022, that it had opened "the kingdom's airspace for all air carriers the meet the requirements of the Authority for overflying." The authority stated that the decision was "to complement the efforts aimed at consolidating the kingdom's position as a global hub connecting three continents and to enhance international air connectivity."¹⁹⁹ This decision was welcomed by Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid.²⁰⁰ Many airlines operated flights through KSA for the first time after the ban on flights to and from Israel was lifted.²⁰¹

In a related context, leaders of UK Abraham Accords Group in Britain and Sharaka in Dubai signed a cooperation agreement on 11/1/2022, “to identify influencers from the Abraham Accords countries in the media, society, academia, business, and other fields and bring them on mutual visits—Israelis to the Arab world, people from the Arab world to Israel, and joint delegations to the UK. They will follow up by seeking areas for regional cooperation in a variety of fields.”²⁰²

Many analysts believe that the UAE’s commitment to a strong and long-term strategic relationship with Israel will remain resilient despite potential disruptions. Indeed, even as the UAE condemns the right-wing policies of Benjamin Netanyahu’s government, including settlement expansion and land confiscation, economic and trade cooperation between the two countries has continued to strengthen. Demonstrating this closeness, three members of the UAE Federal National Council visited the Yad Vashem Memorial Museum and the Israeli Knesset, marking the first visit of an Emirati delegation to the Knesset since the normalization of relations between the two countries.²⁰³ This visit coincided with the expanding normalization in various fields.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog visited Abu Dhabi on 30/1/2022, marking the first official visit by an Israeli president to the UAE. The visit was made at the invitation of Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, to open “Israel Day” at Expo 2020 Dubai.²⁰⁴ Israeli media sources published a video documenting Herzog’s delight as his plane passed through Saudi airspace en route to the UAE.²⁰⁵ Herzog said, “I hope and I believe that more and more nations will soon follow the UAE lead and join the Abraham Accords,” and added, “Already our trade has exceeded over \$1 billion, more than 120 agreements were signed and a \$100 million (research and development) fund was established recently.”²⁰⁶

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett made his second visit to the UAE on 9/6/2022, following his first visit on 12/12/2021, during which he discussed bilateral cooperation and development opportunities with UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.²⁰⁷

On 16/9/2022, during his visit to Israel, UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited the Yad Vashem Memorial Museum, paying tribute to the “Holocaust victims.” The UAE minister noted that about half a million Israelis had visited the UAE in the past two years, with 7 to 8 daily flights between the two countries.²⁰⁸ The UAE and Israel also exchanged congratulations on political

and religious occasions. However, these flights were reduced to one per day after Operation al-Aqsa Flood in October 2023 and were then temporarily suspended the following month.²⁰⁹

In a controversial move, a normalization delegation from the UAE, consisting of 41 individuals, stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque on 11/1/2022, accompanied by 70 settlers from Jewish institutions and were heavily protected by Israeli police.²¹⁰ Similarly, on 9/12/2022, Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan, in collaboration with UAE Ambassador to the UN Lana Nusseibeh, organized visits for UN ambassadors to both UAE and Israel. These visits included the Western Wall, where the ambassadors met with Western Wall Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitch. Erdan acknowledged that the tour was part of Israel's campaign to change the history of Jerusalem and the Western Wall, stating "The visit of the ambassadors that I am leading to Israel is part of my war in the UN to expose the lies of the Palestinians and their attempt to erase our thousand-year-old connection to Jerusalem."²¹¹

On 16/2/2023, UAE opened the Abrahamic Family House, which includes the first public synagogue alongside a mosque and a church. Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, President of the Abrahamic Family House, said, "The Abrahamic Family House is symbolic of the UAE's long-standing values of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence—values embodied by our Founding Father, the late Sheikh Zayed. The centre will be a platform for learning and dialogue."²¹² Elie Abadie, the senior rabbi of the Jewish Council of the Emirates in the UAE, said "there are some 2,000 Jewish residents in the UAE, with about 500 'active Jewish' people practicing their religion."²¹³

In his first official visit to Bahrain since the signing of the normalization agreement in September 2020, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett arrived in Bahrain in mid-February 2022, marking a new chapter in relations between Manama and Tel Aviv.²¹⁴ Bennett met with several Bahraini officials, including King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa. "The leaders agreed to expedite the negotiations on agreements for the protection of investments and the joint work on a tax treaty, which will provide the infrastructure for promoting secure commercial cooperation. The strengthening and encouragement of joint trade and investments and mutual visits of ministers and government officials was also agreed upon by the leaders." They also "welcomed the building of a bilateral 10-year plan called 'The Joint Warm Peace Strategy'



that will serve as a roadmap for the development of relations.” Bennett said, “We want a very warm peace with Bahrain,” and added, “Our goal in this visit is to turn our peace from peace between governments to peace between peoples... We want to bring content, energy and vigor to our relations.” He emphasized, “Israel and Bahrain are dealing with major security challenges that stem from the same source, which is the Islamic Republic of Iran.”²¹⁵

On 28/3/2022, Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani and his Israeli counterpart Yair Lapid signed what was termed the “Joint Warm Peace Strategy” between the two countries, on the sidelines of the Negev Summit.²¹⁶

Security and Military Relations

Security and military relations between the UAE, Bahrain and Israel have been bolstered, with agreements being actively implemented, including arms deals and joint military exercises. Israel has expressed its readiness to offer intelligence, security and military assistance to protect the UAE, Bahrain and their citizens from any attacks.

According to *The Wall Street Journal* newspaper, “US convened a secret meeting of top military officials from Israel and Arab countries in March to explore how they could coordinate against Iran’s growing missile and drone capabilities.” The meeting, was held in Egypt, “brought together the top military officers from Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and Jordan,” as well as Bahrain and the UAE. The attendees included Israeli Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi, Saudi Chief of Staff Fayyadh bin Hamed al-Ruwaili, and Qatari Chief of Staff Salem bin Hamad al-Nabit.²¹⁷ Israeli i24 News reported on 14/12/2022, that Israel, UAE, Bahrain and Morocco held “meetings to discuss setting up a common cyber defense platform” due to “heightened threats from Iranian hackers.”²¹⁸ Israel’s Channel 12 revealed on 9/6/2022, that the Israeli military had deployed radar systems in several Middle Eastern countries, including the UAE and Bahrain. This move was part of a broader vision for joint cooperation aimed at countering “Iranian missile threats and establishing an early warning system.”²¹⁹

Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid affirmed Israel’s support for the UAE following the Houthi group’s drone attack on Abu Dhabi on 17/1/2022, which resulted in three fatalities.²²⁰ In a letter to Mohammed bin Zayed, Prime Minister Bennett offered “security and intelligence support in order to help you protect your citizens from similar attacks,” and “ordered the Israeli security establishment

to provide their counterparts in the UAE with any assistance.”²²¹ Following the UAE’s request, Israeli defense officials visited Abu Dhabi “to discuss possible defense and intelligence assistance.” The Axios website reported that “Israel and the UAE had a back-channel defense and intelligence relationship for more than two decades.”²²² The UAE and Israel agreed to deploy Israeli radars in the UAE to “to detect Iranian missiles and drones.”²²³ Israel National Cyber Directorate Head Gabi Portnoy, announced plans to establish a “cyber iron dome” in partnership with UAE and other countries, “We must meet the challenges with our partners, using the knowledge we have acquired and new technologies for better and faster protection,” Portnoy stated.²²⁴

On 3/1/2022, Israeli defense firm Elbit Systems was awarded an approximately \$53 million contract to supply Direct Infrared Countermeasures (DIRCM) and airborne Electronic Warfare (EW) systems for the UAE Air Force. The contract is set to be fulfilled over a five-year period.²²⁵ However, Israel has reportedly been reluctant to sell the UAE the Iron Dome and David’s Sling missile defense systems, according to Israeli sources.²²⁶ Reuters reported on 23/9/2022, that Israel had agreed to sell Rafael-made SPYDER mobile interceptors to the UAE. The Israeli Defense Ministry and Rafael declined to comment, and the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs also did not comment.²²⁷

On 20/2/2023, the UAE and Israel unveiled the first unmanned military vessel, a product of collaboration between Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and the Emirati defense consortium EDGE. The vessel, equipped with advanced sensors and imaging systems, is designed for surveillance, reconnaissance and mine detection. It was displayed off the coast of Abu Dhabi during the Naval Defence and Maritime Security Exhibition (NAVDEX).²²⁸

The Israeli Navy participated in a large maritime exercise in the Arabian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea and North Indian Ocean on 31/1–17/2/2022. The exercise, dubbed International Maritime Exercise (IMX) 2022, was organized by US Naval Forces Central Command and involved 60 countries and international organizations, including Arab and Muslim countries such as Egypt, Jordan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kenya, Oman, Pakistan and Yemen, etc.²²⁹ On 26/10/2022, the Israeli military reported that Israeli paratroopers participated in a multinational parachute drop in Bahrain with Bahraini, Emirati and US forces.²³⁰ Additionally, a UAE Air Force colonel began studying at Israel’s National Defense College

(INDC), marking the first time an Arab officer has attended this institution, according to KAN Public Broadcaster.²³¹

The relationship between Bahrain and Israel has gone beyond regular normalization, reaching overt security and military partnership. Bahrain's undersecretary for political affairs Abdullah bin Ahmad Al Khalifa revealed that Israel's Mossad has an official presence in Bahrain. Speaking alongside Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz at the Munich Security Conference, Al Khalifa stated that "There is intelligence cooperation between Bahrain and Israel. The Mossad is in Bahrain and they're present in the region." He added, "If this security cooperation between Bahrain and Israel would mean providing more stability and security, so be it, if it would mean saving the lives of innocent civilians, so be it."²³² In an unprecedented and unannounced visit, Gantz arrived in Bahrain on 2/2/2022, aboard an Israeli Air Force plane, marking the first time an Israeli military aircraft landed there.²³³ Gantz and his Bahraini counterpart Abdullah Al Nuaimi signed a security MoU between Israel and Bahrain. Gantz said, "We have reached new heights today in Israel-Bahrain relations with the important meetings that took place and with the signing of the historic MOU. We are building on the groundbreaking Abraham Accords and deepening ties between our nations." He added, "Only one year following the signing of the Accords, we have achieved an important defense agreement, which will contribute to the security of both countries and the stability of the region."²³⁴

The Israeli website Israel Defense revealed that the Bahrain Defence Forces purchased an Integrated Coastal Surveillance System under the BATS' GR12 brand to protect the shores of a military base located 200 kilometers from Iran. The system includes multiple installations of state-of-the-art radars and electro-optics, integrated in a Command and Control center. The contract was signed in the second half of 2021, with delivery expected in 2022.²³⁵

Trade and Economic Relations

In the three years since the normalization of relations, Israel and the UAE have developed close economic ties. According to Israeli government data, trade volume with the UAE has exceeded \$6 billion since 2020.²³⁶ Israel views these relations as a gateway to new business opportunities in the Gulf countries. The UAE is focused on enhancing cooperation with Israel in sectors such as finance, energy, security, technology and water security.²³⁷ On 10–11/7/2023, the N7

Initiative hosted the N7 Conference on Trade, in Manama, Bahrain, to “broaden and deepen integration between Israel and Arab and Muslim countries,” with high-level trade representatives from Bahrain, UAE, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, US, and Israel participating.²³⁸

UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan stated that the UAE and Israel “continue to advance their partnership and bilateral cooperation in various fields.” He noted, “Through bilateral agreements the UAE and Israel are working to create new growth opportunities for the youth of the region, contributing to global efforts in supporting peace and prosperity.”²³⁹ Bilateral non-oil trade between the two countries reached over \$2.5 billion in 2022 and approximately \$3 billion in 2023.²⁴⁰ The UAE hopes to increase this figure to \$10 billion by 2030. Dubai International Chamber, which opened a Tel Aviv office in December 2022, reported that there are already about one thousand Israeli businesses operating in the UAE.²⁴¹

On 6/6/2022, Dubai International Chamber announced plans to open a representative office in Tel Aviv. Hamad Buamim, President and CEO of Dubai Chambers, stated, “By expanding our presence into Israel, we will be well positioned to achieve the objectives of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement signed by the UAE and Israel, build new bridges between the two business communities and boost non-oil trade to reach US\$10 billion annually within the next five years.”²⁴²

The UAE-Israel Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, signed on 31/5/2022, took effect on 1/4/2023. The agreement aims to strengthen trade and investment relations and boost non-oil bilateral trade. It provides economic benefits by eliminating tariffs on 96% of product lines, covering 99% of traded goods between the UAE and Israel, improving market access for services suppliers, and opening opportunities in government procurement. Buamim stressed the important role of promoting Dubai as a global gateway for Israeli companies and attracting foreign investment in key sectors of mutual interest such as digital economy, information technology, artificial intelligence, smart services, agricultural and food technologies and space sciences.²⁴³

On 23/1/2022, the Israeli government approved the establishment of a joint investment fund with the UAE, focusing on collaborative projects involving high-tech companies from both sides.²⁴⁴

At the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP27) in 2022, the UAE, Jordan and Israel signed an MoU to advance clean energy production and sustainable water desalination projects, initially announced in 2021.²⁴⁵ Jordanian Water and Irrigation Minister Mohammad Najjar stated that the water-for-energy agreement with Israel is still under feasibility studies, with an implementation expected by 2030. He added that the agreement could last up to 35 years, depending on satisfactory negotiations among all parties, including Jordan, UAE and Israel regarding the price of water per cubic meter.²⁴⁶

On 3/4/2022, UAE and Israel signed an MoU on transport cooperation. It aims “to set a future road map based on mutual benefit, in addition to exchanging experience and knowledge to serve the future directives for the next fifty years.”²⁴⁷

The diamond trade is one of the key areas of commercial exchange between the UAE and Israel. According to a statement from the Israeli Ministry of Economy and Industry’s Diamonds, Special Stones and Jewelry Administration, the UAE was a key trading partner for Israel, especially in uncut diamonds, with a significant increase in trade during 2022 compared to 2021. Israel’s rough diamond exports to the UAE amounted to approximately \$234 million in 2022, representing about 15.5% of Israel’s total rough diamond exports.²⁴⁸

In line with Bahrain’s efforts to strengthen cooperation with Israel across various fields, the Israeli Ministry of Economy announced the initiation of free trade agreement talks between the two countries. On 19/9/2022, Israeli Minister of Economy and Industry Orna Barbivai met with her Bahraini counterpart in Manama to officially launch these negotiations.²⁴⁹ Israel announced on 19/10/2022 the signing of a “historic” agreement aimed at enhancing and expanding agricultural cooperation with Bahrain.²⁵⁰

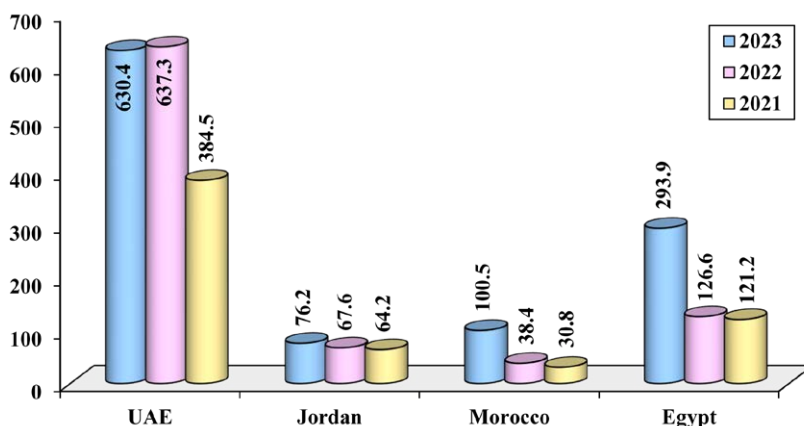
According to CBS, Israeli trade with the UAE saw a substantial increase, with exports to the UAE reaching \$630 million in 2023, up from \$74 million in 2020. Imports from the UAE rose to \$2.316 billion in 2023, compared to \$116 million in 2020.

The following table illustrates Israeli trade relations with some Arab countries:

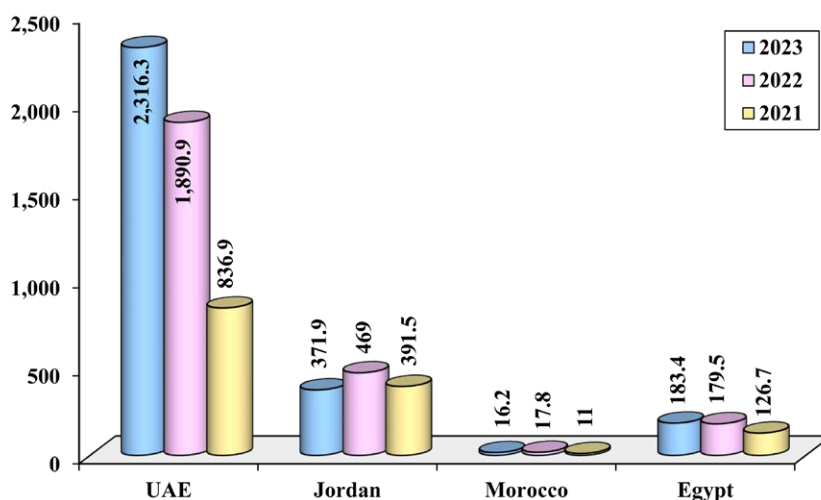
**Table 1/6: Israeli Exports and Imports with Some Arab Countries
2021–2023 (\$ million)²⁵¹**

Country	Israeli exports			Israeli imports		
	2023	2022	2021	2023	2022	2021
Egypt	293.9	126.6	121.2	183.4	179.5	126.7
Jordan	76.2	67.6	64.2	371.9	469	391.5
Morocco	100.5	38.4	30.8	16.2	17.8	11
UAE	630.4	637.3	384.5	2,316.3	1,890.9	836.9

Israeli Exports to Some Arab Countries 2021–2023 (\$ million)



Israeli Imports From Some Arab Countries 2021–2023 (\$ million)



6. Iraq and Yemen

In late 2021, the issue of normalizing relations between Iraq and Israel gained prominence when around 300 local Iraqi leaders convened in Erbil, in the Kurdistan region, to advocate for normalization with Israel. These calls were met with strong condemnations and denouncements from political parties and religious groups. The Iraqi government issued a statement expressing its firm rejection of the meeting and its outcomes.

In line with this, the Iraqi Parliament approved a bill criminalizing normalization with Israel on 26/5/2022, with unanimous support from those present.²⁵² Then-Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, prior to attending the Jeddah Security and Development Summit, stated that the conference would not discuss the issue of normalizing relations with Israel, describing such talk as an attempt to distract from Iraq's role in the region. Al-Kadhimi emphasized that Iraq's position on the Palestine issue is firm and non-negotiable, reiterating that Iraq has not and will not be part of any military alliance or bloc, with national interest being the primary focus of such meetings.²⁵³ This law is the first of its kind among Arab and Muslim countries, including those opposed to Israel.²⁵⁴ The law imposes severe penalties, such as the death penalty or life imprisonment, on individuals who engage with Israel.²⁵⁵ On 29/3/2022, Iraq announced that it had begun exploring mechanisms to seek compensation for the Israeli bombing of the Osirak plutonium nuclear reactor, located southeast of Baghdad, in 1981.²⁵⁶

Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) President Nechirvan Barzani affirmed on 4/5/2023 that the region remains committed to the decision not to establish relations between Iraq and Israel. He emphasized that Kurdistan does not support any state, including Israel, against Iran, noting that the security of Iran and Türkiye is important to the region. Barzani reiterated that his government is aligned with the Iraqi government's decisions in this regard.²⁵⁷ Regarding Iraq's relationship with Palestinian factions, Musa Abu Marzuq, head of Hamas's International Relations Office, revealed that his movement is in contact with Iraqi officials to arrange a delegation visit to Baghdad.²⁵⁸

Following Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Iraq condemned the war on GS. Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani described the scenes of killings and massacres in GS as acts of ethnic cleansing.²⁵⁹ The Iraqi resistance supported the Palestinian resistance in its operation by targeting US sites in the region and some Israeli sites.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein stated that Iraq, both the government and the people, rejects the principle of displacing Gaza's residents to Sinai. Regarding the potential for Iraq to become a battleground if the conflict expands, Hussein noted that all countries in the region are concerned, as the continuation of aggression and the invasion of Gaza could potentially widen the war.²⁶⁰ On 21/12/2023, the Prime Minister's Advisor for Human Rights, Zaidan Khalaf, announced that an Iraqi tanker loaded with 10 million liters of fuel had sailed to the Suez Canal as aid for Palestinians in GS. The Iraqi government intends to send more aid shipments in the future.²⁶¹

Yemen is among the foremost countries opposed to normalization with Israel, with a near-unanimous position among both the public and political parties against establishing relations with Israel. The Yemeni Islah Party and other Yemeni political parties have denounced efforts towards normalization, reaffirming their steadfast support for the Palestine issue and the Palestinian people.²⁶²

However, the position of 'Aidarous al-Zubaidi, head of the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC), marked a significant breach in the anti-normalization consensus. On 2/2/2021, al-Zubaidi endorsed the UAE's normalization with Israel and expressed a willingness to pursue normalization if South Yemen gains independence and is recognized as an independent sovereign state.²⁶³ His statement was met with widespread rejection by influential southern factions, including those aligned with him on secession, such as the Southern Revolutionary Movement Council led by Hasan Ba'um, as well as non-secessionist groups like the Southern National Salvation Council. Protests against these statements and their rejection occurred across most southern governorates.²⁶⁴

The Israelis indirectly contributed to the formation and organization of the security forces of the STC when it was established in 2016. This involvement was facilitated through the UAE, which hired retired Israeli officers from foreign security companies to train leaders of the STC's security forces in Abu Dhabi. Additionally, numerous assassinations targeting opponents of the UAE and the STC in Aden province were reportedly carried out by Israeli operatives working for foreign companies, including the American security company Spear Operations Group. Among these operatives was Abraham Golan, who "ran the assassination program in Yemen."²⁶⁵



With the launch of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, ‘Abdul Malik al-Houthi, Secretary-General of the Yemeni Ansar Allah (Houthi) movement praised the operation as a legitimate right for the Palestinian people, asserting that they have no choice but to engage in *jihad* to resist oppression and expel the occupier. He emphasized that there are red lines regarding the situation in GS, and stated that the movement is in coordination with our brothers in the “*jihad* axis,” ready to intervene with all available means.²⁶⁶

On 19/11/2023, Ansar Allah, who control the capital Sanaa and other parts of Yemen, launched their first military operations against ships linked to Israel passing through the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea. They reported the capture of a cargo ship owned by an Israeli businessman that was sailing in the Red Sea, and brought it to the Yemeni shore. Ansar Allah’s military spokesperson, Yahya Sare’e, urged all countries whose citizens working in the Red Sea to avoid any interaction or activities involving Israeli ships or those owned by Israelis. He emphasized that this action was motivated by religious, humanitarian and moral obligations to the oppressed Palestinian people, who are under blockade and suffering ongoing horrific massacres by the Israeli enemy.²⁶⁷

The Houthis have tied the cessation of their attacks on ships bound for Israel to the lifting of the GS blockade, the entry of food and medicine, and the cessation of aggression against it. Mohammed Abdul Salam, the official spokesperson for Ansar Allah, emphasized that Yemen’s support for GS is non-negotiable.²⁶⁸

The attacks by Ansar Allah on ships linked to Israel disrupted trade dynamics in the Red Sea, a critical passageway for approximately 12% of global maritime trade.²⁶⁹ As a result, shipping companies began favoring routes via the Cape of Good Hope over the Bab al-Mandab Strait, primarily due to the heightened risk of Houthi attacks and the rising insurance costs, particularly for containers destined for Israeli ports.

This development led to increased shipping costs and doubled the time it took for ships to reach their destinations, impacting Israel significantly. Khitam Salama from the Strategic Planning Department at Haifa Bay Port noted, “A ship that normally takes a week now takes three weeks.” The Israeli Tax Authority “is providing full compensation to ships damaged in the conflict.”²⁷⁰

According to MarineTraffic, a company specializing in tracking ship movements, between 19/11/2023 and 30/4/2024, “Vessel traffic in the Bab al-Mandab Strait

also declined by 60.7%.” Additionally, the number of “vessels passing through the Suez Canal has fallen by 85%,” while the “Maritime trade in the Cape of Good Hope increased by 125%.”²⁷¹ As a result, revenues from the Suez Canal decreased by 50%, as stated by the Egyptian Minister of Planning and Economic Development Hala el-Said on 28/4/2024.²⁷²

In March 2024, ‘Abdul Malik al-Houthi detailed the attacks carried out by Ansar Allah on ships bound for Israeli ports, announcing that “at least 96 operations have been conducted in the region since November, using 403 ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones, hitting around 61 ships. Furthermore, the militias also reportedly launched at least 32 missile and drone operations against Israeli targets in the Palestinian Territories,” and 64 in the Red Sea and Arabian Sea.²⁷³ As of 29/5/2024, Ansar Allah had downed six advanced US MQ-9 drones.²⁷⁴

Following the onset of Ansar Allah’s attacks, the US and its allies swiftly established an international coalition to alleviate pressure on Israel and deter the Houthis. In this context, the US initiated Operation Prosperity Guardian on 18/12/2023, with a coalition comprising the UK, Bahrain, Canada, France, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Seychelles and Spain. The operation focused on the southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.²⁷⁵ Under Prosperity Guardian the US deployed several naval military assets to the region. On 16/4/2024, US Navy Secretary Carlos del Toro said, “The US Navy has spent nearly \$1 billion on munitions to thwart ‘over 130 direct attacks’ on US military and merchant ships in the Middle East over the past six months.”²⁷⁶ During Operation Prosperity Guardian, the US conducted numerous strikes on Houthi military bases and sites in Yemen. On 17/1/2024, to increase pressure, the US designated Ansar Allah as a “Specially Designated Global Terrorist group,” citing its “attacks against international maritime vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.”²⁷⁷ On 10/1/2024, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2722, condemning Houthi attacks in the Red Sea and calling for an immediate cessation of all such attacks.²⁷⁸

According to Ansar Allah, as of 4/4/2024, some 424 US and British airstrikes on targets in Yemen have killed 37 people and wounded 30.²⁷⁹

Despite numerous strikes by the US and its allies on Houthi targets, these attacks failed to halt Houthi operations, which instead intensified. This resilience is attributed to the nature of the military targets, many of which had already been bombed by the Saudi-Emirati coalition during Operation Decisive Storm, launched

on 26/3/2015.²⁸⁰ The Houthis gained substantial experience in countering such assaults through effective camouflage tactics and strategic positioning, allowing them to maintain their operations.

In December 2023, Israel's public broadcaster (Kan) reported that the STC and its leader 'Aidarous al-Zubaidi showed a surprising willingness to "play a central role in securing the Red Sea navigation route with regional and international partners," adding "if Israel recognizes our right to self-determination in southern Yemen, you will find an ally in the field against the Houthi threat."²⁸¹

On 17/10/2023, the National Alliance of Political Parties and Forces in Yemen condemned the ongoing egregious crimes of state terrorism and genocide committed by the brutal Zionist occupation against the Palestinian people in Gaza, as witnessed by the world. The Alliance also denounced the brutal airstrike on Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital in Gaza City.²⁸² On 11/11/2023, the House of Representatives in Houthi-controlled Sanaa passed a law declaring "normalization with the Israeli enemy constitutes treason against the Arab-Islamic *Ummah* [nation], Islam and the peoples."²⁸³

7. Sudan, Algeria, Morocco and Other Arab Countries

a. Sudan

Sudan-Israel relations did not progress as anticipated during 2022 and 2023, despite an increase in meetings. Several factors contributed to this stagnation: First, the internal political strife following the military's dismissal of the transitional government on 25/10/2021, led to a halt in efforts to formalize a peace agreement between Sudan and Israel.²⁸⁴ Second, the Sudanese public and the majority of political parties opposed deepening ties with Israel. Third, the outbreak of military clashes on 15/4/2023, between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces shifted national priorities to internal issues. Fourth, the impact of Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the subsequent Israeli war on GS further hindered the normalization process with Israel.

Since Sudan-Israel relations became public in February 2020, the Sudanese military has sought to strengthen its ties with Israel. Its goal is to leverage normalization efforts to bolster the military's position, reinforce their rule, and retain control over the political transition process. Additionally, they aim to reduce political friction with the US. Sudanese military leaders also hope to use their relationship with Israel to influence the policies of Western countries.

On 15/12/2022, a framework agreement was signed to prepare for a civilian-led government in Sudan, with elections planned. This agreement granted the military an official role in overseeing the formation of a transitional government and parliament, as well as ratifying treaties with foreign countries.²⁸⁵ Consequently, the military gained the legal authority to influence the agreement, and to form alliances with local actors either supporting or opposing normalization with Israel.

On 11/2/2022, Sudanese Transitional Sovereign Council Head ‘Abdel Fattah al-Burhan stated that intelligence and security cooperation between Sudan and Israel had continued uninterrupted since his meeting with former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Entebbe, Uganda.²⁸⁶ However, these meetings and visits were kept confidential,²⁸⁷ suggesting the presence of obstacles and other unknown factors impeding progress on this issue.

Al-Burhan expressed dissatisfaction with the current normalization process and a desire to enhance relations. In September 2022, he expressed openness to visiting Israel if invited, acknowledging that relationship remained unofficial and low-level.²⁸⁸ Additionally, he sent a congratulatory message to Netanyahu following his victory in the Israeli Knesset elections in November 2022.²⁸⁹

The visit of Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, accompanied by Einat Schlein, head of MASHAV (Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Khartoum on 2/2/2023, marked a significant milestone in establishing full official relations between Sudan and Israel. This was the first public visit, during which Cohen met with ‘Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali al-Sadiq. The Sudanese Foreign Ministry stated that the visit lasted a few hours and resulted in an agreement to move forward with normalizing relations. The Sudanese Transitional Sovereign Council highlighted discussions aimed at fostering productive relations with Israel and enhancing cooperation in areas such as agriculture, energy, health, water, education, and particularly in security and military fields.²⁹⁰

Despite Israel’s aim to enhance relations with Khartoum, Cohen adhered to US conditions regarding Sudan’s transition to civilian rule before proceeding with normalization. Upon returning to Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, Cohen said that “the plan was for a full agreement to be signed by the end of the year—though only once Sudan’s current military leadership has transferred power to a civilian government.” He also noted that his visit to Khartoum was conducted with US approval.²⁹¹



The visit of the Israeli Foreign Minister ignited considerable debate and divergent opinions in Sudan. Islamic and nationalist factions were opposed to the visit. The National Congress Party, led by ousted President Omar al-Bashir, condemned it as a “humiliation, disgrace and shame” and rejected any notion of normalization. Analysts and activists on social media viewed the visit as an attempt by al-Burhan to rally support against civilian forces. The Sudanese Journalists Syndicate viewed it as an attempt to exploit Sudan’s crises for international leverage and to exert pressure on the political actors to reach a political agreement, thus allowing the coup leaders more time to remain in power. Meanwhile, Deputy Chief of the Transitional Sovereign Council Lieutenant-General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti) denied any prior knowledge of or involvement in the visit and its consequences.²⁹²

The National Umma Party reiterated the anti-normalization stance of its late leader, Sadiq al-Mahdi. The Nasserist Social Justice Movement opposed normalization and criticized Israel for trying to exploit the “historical plight of al-Burhan’s regime,” accusing it being a “sellout” in exchange for the safety and personal interests of the coup leaders. The movement urged national forces to unite in expressing Sudan’s rejection of Israel. The Popular Congress Party (Hasan al-Turabi’s party) asserted that the current transitional government had no right to make decisions on behalf of Sudan and its people.²⁹³

Following the outbreak of clashes in Sudan on 15/4/2023, and the escalating rift between Army Commander ‘Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Rapid Support Forces Commander Lieutenant-General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), Israel observed the situation in Sudan with caution. There was concern that the expanding conflicts and chaos could jeopardize the normalization process. According to the Israeli Walla! News website, Israel concluded that a comprehensive peace agreement between Israel and Sudan could not be finalized until the Sudanese conflict was resolved.²⁹⁴ The Israeli Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lior Haiat wrote on Twitter, “We are following with concern the events in Sudan. Israel wants stability and security for Sudan. Israel calls on all parties to refrain from violence and to return to the path of internal reconciliation, in order to conclude the process of governmental transition with a large consensus.”²⁹⁵

Israel sought to mediate a ceasefire and narrow differences, utilizing its strong relationships with both sides and guided by US encouragement. Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen and Ronen Levy, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry,

have been sending messages and directly speaking to al-Burhan and Hemedti since the fighting started, as reported by the Axios website.²⁹⁶

Israeli concerns went beyond the effects of ongoing fighting on normalization, encompassing fears of renewed arms transfers to Hamas and other resistance factions in GS, as well as growing Iranian and Hamas activities in Sudan.²⁹⁷

In an effort to bridge the gap between the warring parties and end the conflict, Israel proposed hosting a “reconciliation” meeting between al-Burhan and Hemedti on 22/4/2023, to discuss a cease fire. Eli Cohen stated that Israel had been working through various channels since the onset of the fighting in Sudan to achieve a ceasefire.²⁹⁸

Israeli mediation efforts were unsuccessful, further complicating Israel’s position. Despite its close partnerships and relations with both sides, Israel recognized the limits of its influence on Sudanese affairs, as international and regional powers involved in the conflict held greater sway. Moreover, some regional actors backing the warring parties showed little enthusiasm for ending the conflict.

Although both al-Burhan and Hemedti were involved in the normalization process, Israel favored Hemedti due to his eagerness to finalize agreements. Hemedti notably opened Khartoum’s doors to Mossad representatives without informing the Sudanese Sovereignty Council, sparking criticism from both military and civilian factions. He assigned his brother, Major General ‘Abdul Rahim Dagalo, to oversee relations with Israel, who openly visited Tel Aviv and met with Israeli military and security leaders.²⁹⁹

Hemedti notably made significant efforts to court Israel and persuade it to support him, aligning himself in a provocative manner with the Israeli narrative on the Palestinian conflict. His political advisor, Yusuf Ezzat, gave interviews to several Israeli TV channels, presenting Hemedti as a partner in Israel’s fight against “Islamic terrorism.” In one interview with the Israel Broadcasting Corporation (Kan), Ezzat likened al-Burhan’s forces to Palestinian “terrorist groups” fighting Israel. He went so far as to state, “What we are being exposed to, Israel has been exposed to it thousands of times from terrorist groups such as Hamas and other organizations that the Israeli people know very well.”³⁰⁰ By late 2023 and early 2024, Sudan distanced itself from the path of normalization with Israel, largely due to internal challenges, the regional impact of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, rising

public opposition to normalization, and increasing official discomfort with any such moves.

b. Morocco and other Arab Countries

Since signing the normalization agreement in late 2020, relations between Morocco and Israel have developed rapidly, extending into areas such as defense, economy, modern technology, tourism, trade and agriculture. Among the countries that signed the Abraham Accords, Morocco has become Israel's most cooperative partner after the UAE.

This relationship saw further growth during 2022–2023, culminating in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's official recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over the disputed Western Sahara in a letter to King Mohammed VI on 17/7/2023.³⁰¹

Despite the rapid progress of the normalization process, the Israeli diplomatic corps in Morocco did not achieve the results the Israeli leadership had anticipated, largely due to popular opposition to re-establishing relations with Israel. The Israeli Foreign Ministry encountered difficulties in securing a suitable location for its embassy, with political sources in Tel Aviv stating that Moroccans were unwilling to rent buildings to Israel.³⁰² On 2/8/2022, Ambassador David Govrin signed a contract for the construction of a permanent Israeli embassy in the Moroccan capital, Rabat.³⁰³

To strengthen cooperation across various sectors, officials from both countries exchanged visits during 2022–2023. In July 2022, Aviv Kochavi, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army, paid an official three-day visit to Morocco, where he met with senior leaders of the Royal Armed Forces, as well as security and intelligence officials. Kochavi also visited members of the Moroccan Jewish community in Marrakech, led by Jacky Kadouch. During this visit, he stated, "I am proud and delighted to meet you, the Moroccan Jewish community... your part in your fight for the State of Israel, and today you are working here for the Jewish community and to deepen ties with Israel."³⁰⁴ On 1/8/2022, Israeli Police Commissioner Yaakov Shabtai visited Rabat, heading a prominent security delegation to exchange knowledge and expertise in various security domains, with a particular focus on counter-terrorism.³⁰⁵

On 13/9/2022, Rabat initiated on a new phase in strengthening military cooperation with Israel through a historic first visit by Belkhir el-Farouk, Inspector

General of Morocco's Royal Armed Forces, to Israel. During his visit, he attended an international military conference and was received by Kochavi.³⁰⁶ Other notable visits to Morocco included Israeli Transportation Minister Miri Regev (of Moroccan descent) in May 2023,³⁰⁷ Israeli Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana (of Moroccan descent) on 7/6/2023,³⁰⁸ Israeli National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi on 8/6/2023,³⁰⁹ and Israeli Interior and Health Minister Moshe Arbel on 15/6/2023.³¹⁰ In June 2023, Israeli Environment Minister Idit Silman (of Moroccan descent) visited Morocco to discuss ways to enhance normalization in sustainable development, natural resources and environmental protection with Moroccan Energy Transition and Sustainable Development Minister Leila Benali. During her visit, Silman also toured a Jewish synagogue in Rabat.³¹¹

Military cooperation was the most dynamic aspect of relations between Morocco and Israel during 2022–2023. It was a key area of focus, as evidenced by the high-level of visits, the scope and nature of military agreements, and the hosting of the inaugural meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the Moroccan-Israeli Defense Cooperation in Rabat, on 16–17/1/2023. This meeting addressed “various areas of bilateral military cooperation, including logistics and training as well as the acquisition and modernization of equipment.”³¹²

Military cooperation with Israel supports its objective of strengthening its military capabilities and modernize its armed forces, as reflected by the substantial unprecedented rise in defense budgets from around \$10 billion in 2019 to \$11.5 billion in 2022 and \$12 billion in 2023.³¹³ This development coincided with Morocco's opening to the Israeli arms market and the signing of multiple arms deals with Israel.

The agreements represented a major advancement in security and military cooperation between Tel Aviv and Rabat, establishing a foundation for future collaboration. In February 2022, Morocco signed a \$500 million deal with Israel Aerospace Industries to procure the BARAK MX Integrated Air and Missile Defense System.³¹⁴ In May 2022, Morocco was in talks with Israel to purchase the Delilah short-range cruise missile for its fleet of F–5, a supersonic light fighter jet.³¹⁵ In September 2022, Morocco purchased 150 military drones of the WanderB and ThunderB types, manufactured by Israel's BlueBird Aero Systems, a company specialized in designing and developing Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) equipment.³¹⁶ Morocco also acquired Elbit System's Precise and Universal

Launching Systems (PULS) artillery rocket systems, capable of launching multiple ammunition types to distances up to 300 km.³¹⁷

Moroccan news outlet Hespess reported that “the Moroccan government has contracted with Israeli company Elbit Systems to provide ‘Alinet’ Electronic Warfare (EW) and Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) systems for about \$70 million over the course of 2.5 years.”³¹⁸ In March 2023, it was revealed that Rabat will acquire the Rafael Spyder air defence system, which is “a low-level, quick-reaction surface-to-air missile system capable of engaging aircraft, helicopters, unmanned air vehicles, drones, and precision-guided munitions.”³¹⁹ In June 2023, Morocco received a shipment of SpyX, which is an expendable electric mini-UAV, designed for loitering and strike missions.³²⁰

Military relations continued to strengthen through joint military exercises. In June 2023, during the 19th African Lion exercises, held partly in Morocco, a 12-member team from the Israeli Golani Brigade participated alongside troops from 18 other countries, including the US. Ophir Gendelman, former spokesperson for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, told Asharq News that Morocco’s substantial military capabilities are vital for Israel in advancing regional stability. He emphasized that both countries share common security threats, primarily from Iran, its affiliates and global jihadist organizations.³²¹

Beyond military cooperation, Morocco and Israel signed agreements covering civil aviation, water resource research, finance, and a waiver of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and official passports.³²² They also launched agricultural technology projects in the field of aquaponics,³²³ and agreed to bring Moroccan workers to the construction and nursing sectors in Israel.³²⁴

The normalization agreements and travel facilitation pacts have had a significant positive effect on tourism and trade. As reported in the Abraham Accords Peace Institute’s 2022 Annual Report, 200 thousand Israeli tourists visited Morocco in 2022. The same report noted that 5,200 tourists from Morocco, UAE, Bahrain, Kosovo and Sudan visited Israel in 2022, compared to 3,500 in 2019. The report assessed Israel-Morocco relations as “adequate,” noting a notable rise in total trade between the two countries, from \$13.7 million in 2019 to \$55.7 million in 2022. In 2022, Israel’s imports from Morocco amounted to \$17.8 million, while its exports to Morocco totalled \$37.9 million in goods and services.³²⁵

North Africa felt the impact of the Israeli war on GS, with Morocco likely being the most affected due to its relatively strong ties with Israel and the US. Meanwhile, anti-normalization sentiments intensified in other countries across the region.

On the official level, Moroccan diplomacy intensified from October 7th, expressing “deep concern” and condemning the targeting of civilians by any side³²⁶ on 7/10/2023. On 11/11/2023, during the Extraordinary Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh, Moroccan Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch read the Royal Speech that condemned Israel’s “blatant and continuing aggression against helpless civilians” without condemning Hamas’s attack.³²⁷ Morocco was among 120 countries that voted for a Jordanian-led Arab resolution in October 2023, calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the lifting of the blockade, which Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen criticized as a “despicable call for a ceasefire.”³²⁸ Morocco also condemned the Israeli bombing of Al-Ahli Baptist hospital, which claimed the lives of hundreds of Palestinians.³²⁹

However, Morocco did not sever its relations or withdraw its ambassador from Tel Aviv, nor did Israel directly criticize Morocco’s stance. This suggests a mutual interest in preserving their relationship within “reasonable” limits for both parties, while also addressing “public opinion pressure.”³³⁰ Experts on Moroccan-Israeli relations believe that the military, security and economic ties developed since 2020 are too robust to be broken, even if public support wanes.³³¹ A 2022 survey by the Arab Barometer revealed that 31% of Moroccans and 39% of Sudanese are in favor of normalization with Israel.³³²

Regarding the stance of the Justice and Development Party (JDP), which is affiliated with the Islamic movement, its Secretary-General, ‘Abdelilah Benkirane, admitted that the party erred in normalizing relations with Israel. This referred to the normalization agreement signed by the Moroccan government, led by Saad dine El Otmani, in 2020, who was the JDP’s secretary-general at the time.³³³

Benkirane’s opposition to normalization went beyond merely rejecting its implications. In his annual political report to his party’s general conference on 14/1/2023, he reiterated his rejection of normalization and his support for Palestinian national resistance, cautioning against Israeli infiltration. Prior to the visit, Benkirane also opposed his country “hosting any meeting involving the Israeli enemy.” This stance followed Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen’s announcement

on 2/1/2023, that Morocco would host the Negev Summit 2 in March 2023, with participants including Israel, UAE, Bahrain, Egypt, the host country and the US. However, on 20/6/2023, and after being delayed several times amid escalating tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, Morocco decided to cancel the summit.³³⁴

On 25/7/2023, Morocco's Unity and Reform Movement, JDP's preaching wing, reaffirmed its opposition to normalization with Israel in a statement following its annual meeting. The movement characterized normalization as a path leading to Morocco becoming "a battleground for regional and international conflicts and Zionist infiltration, jeopardizing the region's security and stability."³³⁵

Commenting on the Israeli war against GS, 'Abdelilah Benkirane stated on 28/10/2023, that the Arab and Muslim *Ummah* (nation) risk "losing Gaza" forever. He criticized countries allied with Israel, whose leaders visit Netanyahu, claiming they are giving Tel Aviv a green light to escalate the war on GS.³³⁶ The Moroccan opposition party, the Progress and Socialism Party, called for an end to normalization with Israel and for taking legal action against it in the ICC.³³⁷

As for Algeria, its anti-normalization stance with Israel intensified. Along with other African countries like South Africa and Arab countries such as Egypt and Tunisia, Algeria succeeded in pushing the issue of "expelling Israel" from its observer membership in the African Union to the top of the agenda at the African heads of state summit held on 5/2/2022, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.³³⁸

On 14/2/2022, Algerian President 'Abdelmadjid Tebboune confirmed that relations with Morocco had worsened, accusing the kingdom of receiving increased Israeli support.³³⁹ Algerian Islamic groups' MPs submitted a draft law to parliament seeking to criminalize normalization with Israel, including articles prohibiting travel or any direct or indirect contact with Tel Aviv. Youcef Adjissa, an MP from the Movement of Society for Peace, stated on 16/5/2022, that he "lodged on behalf of his party's group of deputies (65 out of 462) the bill to the parliament," but it did not gain support from other MPs.³⁴⁰

The Algerian National People's Assembly (the lower house of parliament) announced on 30/4/2023, the resignation of its Deputy Speaker, Monder Bouden, from his position as President of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism at the Inter-Parliamentary Union due to the inclusion of Israel in its membership.³⁴¹

Algeria played a significant role in the Palestinian reconciliation effort. Through direct mediation by President ‘Abdelmadjid Tebboune in 2022, Algeria succeeded in securing a new agreement known as the Algiers Declaration, signed by Palestinian factions, including Hamas and Fatah, on 13/10/2022 during their meeting in Algeria.³⁴² Tebboune’s initiative for Palestinian dialogue gained momentum due to several factors, including Algeria’s considerable political and economic influence; its firm stance on the Palestine issue and rejection of normalization with Israel; its openness to various Palestinian factions; and its framing of reconciliation as a political, rather than a security, issue. In addition, Algeria sought to garner Arab support for the Algiers Declaration during the Arab summit held in Algeria in November 2022. Other contributing factors included Egypt’s previous unsuccessful mediation efforts,³⁴³ and the pressing need for reconciliation after the Sword of Jerusalem Battle in May 2021, with its associated challenges and human and material losses. The formation of the Bennett government in June 2021; the absence of prospects for a political settlement; and the global focus on other issues in 2022, particularly the war in Ukraine and its regional and international impacts, also played a role. However, the outcomes of the Algiers Declaration did not materialize due to various obstacles, primarily the lack of commitment from the PLO and PA leadership to reach binding agreements, largely because of the obligations these agreements entailed.

Following Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Algeria’s leadership and people swiftly condemned the Israeli war on GS and expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people. President Tebboune emphasized that Palestinians are not terrorists but defenders of their land and legitimate rights, drawing a parallel to Algeria’s own struggle against colonialism, when Algerians were similarly labelled as “terrorists.”³⁴⁴ Tebboune called on free peoples around the world to bring Israel to the ICC.³⁴⁵ The Algerian Council of the Nation voiced deep concern over “the renewed brutal aggression of the Zionist occupation against Palestinians” in GS, condemning “the ongoing international hypocrisy and double standards regarding their just cause.”³⁴⁶ Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmad ‘Attaf informed Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh during their meeting that his country rejects the PA entering GS aboard an Israeli tank.³⁴⁷

In addition to the support from official institutions for the people of GS, Algerian political parties have taken significant stances in favor of the Palestine issue and



GS. They urged the authorities to open public spaces for Algerians to express their solidarity with Palestinian resistance. Various Algerian parties, including the Movement of Society for Peace, El Fadjr El Djadid, Ennahda, People's Voice, Front for Justice and Development, Jil Jadid and Talaie el-Hourriyet, have called for the establishment of a coordinating body to consult and support Palestine. A statement issued after a meeting at the headquarters of the Movement of Society for Peace emphasized that the meeting was in response to the Palestinian resistance's Operation al-Aqsa Flood and aimed to discuss the roles and responsibilities of Algeria's political class in supporting the Palestinian people.³⁴⁸

The Speaker of the Algerian Parliament opposed a proposed law to criminalize normalization, asserting that Algeria "does not need it."³⁴⁹ Additionally, the Algerian parliamentary delegation, along with other delegations, withdrew from an Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting during the opening speech of its president, Duarte Pacheco, who supported Israel in its war on GS.³⁵⁰

In direct support of residents in GS, the Algerian authorities facilitated the treatment of 300 injured children from GS in Algerian hospitals.³⁵¹ As part of the air bridge initiative launched to assist GS, the Algerian Red Crescent dispatched two aid shipments, totalling 310 tons, on 24 and 29/3/2024.³⁵² Additionally, Algeria made an exceptional contribution of \$15 million to support UNRWA.³⁵³

The August 2023 meeting in Rome between Libyan Foreign Minister Najla Mangoush and Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, mediated by Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, marked a notable step toward the normalization of relations between Libya and Israel. On 27/8/2023, *Yedioth Ahronoth* reported that over the past decade, Israel and Libya have engaged in covert contacts facilitated by Israel's Foreign Ministry and Mossad. Cohen stated, "I spoke with the minister about the immense potential for both countries, which also includes renovating synagogues and Jewish cemeteries in the country." He added, "Libya's size and location give the relationship enormous significance and huge potential for the State of Israel."³⁵⁴ However, two senior Libyan government officials told The Associated Press that Prime Minister 'Abdul Hamid Dbeibah "knew about the talks between his foreign minister and the Israeli chief diplomat...Dbeibah gave the green light for the meeting... and his office arranged the encounter in coordination with Mangoush."³⁵⁵ Raphael Luzon, president of the Union of Libyan Jews, said meetings between Israeli and Libyan officials had occurred before and after the

Libyan revolution.³⁵⁶ A Libyan official stated that “normalization of relations between Libya and Israel was first discussed in a meeting between Dbeibah and [Central Intelligence Agency] CIA Director William Burns, who visited the Libyan capital in January” 2023.³⁵⁷

The announcement sparked outrage across Libya, leading to protests denouncing the meeting. Demonstrators in Tripoli set fires outside the Government of National Unity headquarters, chanting slogans in support of Palestine and opposing any Libyan engagement with the Israeli government. Protesters also stormed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tripoli, demanding the dismissal and accountability of the Foreign Minister.³⁵⁸

Libyan Presidential Council spokesperson Najwa Wheba urged the Libyan government to take deterrent measures in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations. Libya’s High State Council (HSC) expressed surprise at the meeting and called for accountability from those responsible. The HSC’s National Consensus Bloc demanded Mangoush’s dismissal and a collective resignation from the government and the Presidential Council, should there have been prior coordination regarding the meeting. The Justice and Construction Party (JCP) also condemned the meeting, calling on the Prime Minister to remove the Foreign Minister from her position.³⁵⁹

In an effort to quell public outrage in Libya over normalization with Israel, Dbeibah, during a visit to the Palestinian embassy in Libya, announced the dismissal of Mangoush, claiming that her actions were taken independently.³⁶⁰ The Libyan Internal Security Agency in Tripoli also declared that Mangoush had been placed on a no-fly list until she complies with ongoing investigations.³⁶¹

Following Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Dbeibah’s government swiftly condemned the “aggression” on GS, particularly after the attack on Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital in the Strip, with Dbeibah describing the incident as a brutal crime committed by Israeli occupation forces.³⁶²

As for Tunisia, although it has not joined the normalization process with Israel and there is widespread opposition to normalization among Tunisians, the proposed law to criminalize normalization with Israel, recognition of it and dealing with it, submitted by the Sovereign National Line bloc, which consists of 15 deputies in parliament, has not reached the discussion or voting stage. The vote was postponed twice, first on 2/11/2023 and again on 23/2/2024,³⁶³ due to sharp divisions over the

law. Parliament Speaker Ibrahim Bouderbala informed the deputies pressing for further discussion of the bill, stating that “the president [Kais Saied] had warned the bill could harm Tunisia’s foreign affairs and security.”³⁶⁴

The majority of parliamentarians insisted on continuing the discussion of the law, rejecting a motion to postpone the session with 68 votes. Deputies from the Sovereign National Line, Independent National, al-Ahrar, and Let the People Triumph blocs, along with several unaffiliated deputies, held a press conference, asserting that a plot to obstruct the passage of the criminalization law and delay its approval is being orchestrated behind the scenes. They warned of a conspiracy against the will of the people.³⁶⁵ In the capital, Tunis, a popular sit-in took place in front of parliament, calling for a vote in favor of the proposed law.³⁶⁶ Several other Tunisian cities also witnessed demonstrations condemning the Israeli war on GS since 7/10/2023.³⁶⁷ Despite these demands, the law’s discussion was postponed.

Following the launch of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, Tunisia’s official and political circles expressed their steadfast support for the people of Gaza and its resistance factions. They affirmed the Palestinian people’s right to resist the occupation by any means necessary. In response, the Tunisian authorities undertook practical measures to bolster Gaza’s resilience, including admitting dozens of injured individuals to their hospitals and supporting Palestinian students in Tunisian universities through scholarships and accommodation.

In this context, President Kais Saied pledged to dispatch medical teams to the occupied Palestinian territories and to admit several injured Palestinians into Tunisian hospitals. During a working session on 9/10/2023, focused on supporting the Palestinians, Saied stressed “the need for real support for the Palestinian people, not just through statements and positions.” In a statement issued by the Presidency on 7/10/2023, “Tunisia expressed its full and unconditional support for the Palestinian people, stressing that it is the right of the Palestinian people to regain their land and establish their independent state.” Additionally, Saied criticized the infiltration of the Zionist movement into the media, including at the terminology level.³⁶⁸

Saied also called for the inclusion of the “crime of betraying the Palestinian people” in Tunisian law, categorizing it as “high treason.” He emphasized that while Tunisia “does not possess intercontinental missiles, it holds intercontinental positions.” Tunisian Foreign Minister Nabil Ammar sent letters to some of his

counterparts in member countries of International organizations, including the International Organization of the Francophonie, in which he “pointed out the need for concerted action to put an end to the aggression on the occupied Palestinian territories and to ensure that humanitarian aid continues to be delivered.”³⁶⁹ The Tunisian Parliament, on 9/10/2023, expressed its unequivocal support for the Palestinian people, affirming their full right to defend their legitimate rights, determine their own future, reclaim their lands and establish an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.³⁷⁰

The Tunisian Foreign Ministry’s announcement on 10/1/2024 that “Tunis does not endorse any legal action taken against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), considering it as implicit recognition of the occupying entity” sparked controversy within the country. Ghassan Ben Khelifa, a member of the Coordination of Joint Action for Palestine and coordinator of the Tunisian Campaign for Boycott and Anti-Normalization, described the position as illogical, strange and unacceptable. He argued if the Tunisian state had passed a law criminalizing all forms of normalization with Israel, its stance might be understandable. However, he pointed out that ministers from the current government are attending official meetings with ministers from Israel at NATO and Euro-Mediterranean meetings. Additionally, former Prime Minister Najla Bouden participated in the Sharm El-Sheikh summit, meeting with the Israeli president. Tunisia is also a signatory to international agreements that bear “the signature of the occupying state.” All of this, he emphasized, constitutes implicit recognition of Israel. Furthermore, he highlighted that some individuals enter Tunisia, including the city of Djerba (a Jewish pilgrimage site), using Israeli passports, and there are instances of economic and commercial normalization.³⁷¹

Soumaya Ghannoushi, daughter of Tunisian Ennahda Movement leader Rached Ghannoushi, posted on her X page a letter she said her father wrote in prison and was leaked on 22/10/2023. In his letter, Ghannoushi stated, “Palestine is the central issue for the *Ummah*, along with the Holy Mosque, as they represent the core of Islamic sovereignty and the measure and symbol of the *Ummah*’s pride and sovereignty. This light, [represented by] the Holy Mosque and *al-Aqsa* Mosque, is the heart of the *Ummah*, and the presence of any foreign entity in this heart is an alarm, calling for mobilization to address this existential threat.” Ghannoushi also described Operation al-Aqsa Flood as “a gift from the people of



Gaza to the *Ummah*. A force of renewal, motivation, mobilization and awakening, symbolizing heroism. The struggle for the liberation of Palestine uplifts the youth, politicizing them, and shifting their focus from trivial matters to broader national and humanitarian issues.”³⁷²

The Tunisian authorities have implemented a series of measures and initiatives to support the resilience of the people of Gaza. On 24/10/2023, the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research announced several decisions aimed at assisting Palestinian students enrolled in Tunisian universities. These include allowing all registered students in public universities for the 2023/2024 academic year to stay in university residences. The ministry also expanded the eligibility for university scholarships to include master’s students, in addition to undergraduate and medical students.³⁷³ In December 2024, Tunisia received dozens of wounded Palestinians from GS in two separate groups and sent a plane carrying medical and food aid to GS.³⁷⁴

Throughout 2023, Israel intensified efforts to restore diplomatic relations with Mauritania, which had been severed in 2008. Despite official Mauritanian denials of direct contact with Israel and a firm rejection of normalization, Israel pursued the matter through financial and economic incentives, as well as political pressure on the Mauritanian government. In March 2023, the Israel Hayom website reported that sources indicated “Foreign Minister Eli Cohen was working to normalize ties with Mauritania, Somalia, Niger and Indonesia,” adding, “negotiations with Mauritania are in an advanced state.”³⁷⁵

In the context of failed Israeli attempts, the Mauritanian Ministry of Environment denied in March 2023 the report by the Israeli website i24 News about the participation of a representative from the Mauritanian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in the “Desertec” training program organized in Israel. The ministry added that it categorically denies the accuracy of what it called “this alleged article.”³⁷⁶ This news sparked a protest from the Mauritanian Student Initiative Against Zionist Infiltration and for Defending Just Causes, which stated that this step is “a clear betrayal of the Ummah’s principles and sanctities and a blatant violation of the consensus among the Mauritanian people, who reject all forms of normalization with the Zionist entity.”³⁷⁷

Like many countries in the region, Israel has sought to establish a presence in Somalia due to its strategic geographic location. Following the re-election

of former President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (who previously served from September 2012 to February 2017) on 15/5/2022, attention turned to the potential for Somali-Israeli relations. President Mohamud, who has strong ties with the UAE, one of the countries that normalized relations with Israel, made the UAE his first official visit on 19/6/2022.³⁷⁸ The Israeli Broadcasting Corporation (KAN) reported that during this visit, Mohamud met with senior Israeli officials, though the Somali presidency denied these claims.³⁷⁹

After being elected President of Somalia, the Times of Israel published a report stating that Mohamud had made a secret visit to Israel with senior officials in 2016, during his first term, and met with Netanyahu and Israeli officials in Nairobi, Kenya.³⁸⁰

Third: Arab Public Opinion and Its Directions

The Moroccan public continued to oppose normalization agreements with Israel, as demonstrated by dozens of protests in 30 Moroccan cities. These demonstrations condemned repeated Israeli incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque and called for an end to normalization, while expressing support for the Palestine issue and its people.³⁸¹ On 16/2/2023, a coalition of youth and student organizations launched the “Arab Maghreb Front Against Normalization and in Support of the Palestine Issue.” This front includes youth and student unions from Morocco, Kuwait, Tunisia, Mauritania, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, Sudan and Jordan. In its founding statement, the front announced its support for all “forms of struggle by the Palestinian people” and its opposition to all forms of normalization—be it academic, political, ideological or media-related.³⁸²

In Morocco, the ongoing war in GS has impacted cooperation with Israel, leading to the suspension of direct flights between the two countries due to public pressure. Observers report that Israeli tourists and investors have largely disappeared.³⁸³ Recent boycott campaigns have notably decreased Moroccan exports to Israel. Bilateral trade between Morocco and Israel during the first ten months of 2023 amounted to \$94 million according to the Abraham Accords Peace Institute, reflecting a 112% increase compared to the same period in 2022. However, trade saw a decline in October 2023 “witnessing a 61% decrease, compared to the same period of 2022.”³⁸⁴

In response to the Israeli war on GS, dozens of pro-Palestinian demonstrations were held across various Moroccan cities, demanding a severance of ties with Israel. The most prominent of these was a massive protest in Rabat on 15/10/2023, which drew over a million participants. The march, organized under the banner “The Moroccan people support Operation al-Aqsa Flood and oppose normalization,” featured demonstrators waving Palestinian flags and holding signs condemning the Israeli crimes in GS. During the event, the Israeli flag was burned, and the US flag was trampled.³⁸⁵

The JDP regional branch in Fez shared the results of a public opinion survey conducted within the framework of the “Young Politicians Forum” from 7/11/2023 to 7/12/2023. The poll aimed to measure the extent of Moroccans’ engagement with ongoing events in the Palestinian territories and the impact of Operation al-Aqsa Flood on their opinions and stances. According to the poll results, “93% of respondents believe that the actions of the Palestinian resistance on October 7 were a well-thought-out move that allowed them to reap gains and revive the cause,” while “only 7% view it as a hasty action with little regard for consequences.” A study also showed that “Morocco was among the top five countries globally organizing protests related to the aggressions on Gaza. By mid-November, more than 270 protests were recorded, following the United States, Yemen, Türkiye, and Iran, according to data from [Armed Conflict Location and Event Data] ACLED.”³⁸⁶

Algerians swiftly supported Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the people of GS. Dozens of demonstrations erupted across various provinces, particularly in the capital, where chants of “Palestine” and “martyrs” echoed, reflecting Algerians’ commitment to what they consider their foremost cause.³⁸⁷ The vigorous rejection and boycott campaign in Algeria successfully compelled the newly opened KFC restaurant to cover the giant logo atop its building.³⁸⁸

In Mauritania, dozens of demonstrations occurred, including one organized by the Student Initiative Against Normalization on 22/9/2023. This significant sit-in in front of the Saudi Mosque in Nouakchott opposed the normalization of relations in certain Arab and Muslim countries and expressed support for Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* Mosque. The protest was part of the “Jerusalem is a Trust and Normalization is Treason” campaign, launched by the Coordination Against Zionism and Normalization group in collaboration with several national and international organizations opposed to normalization.³⁸⁹

On 20/10/2023, mass demonstrations took place across Libya, including in Tripoli, Benghazi, Misrata, Msallata and Khums. The protests expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people and condemned the ongoing Israeli war on GS.³⁹⁰

In Tunisia, dozens of demonstrations were held in support of Gaza amidst the Israeli war. On 12/10/2023, the National Committee in Support of the Resistance in Palestine, a coalition of parties and associations led notably by the Tunisian General Labor Union, organized a march. The procession began at the union headquarters and made its way to Habib Bourguiba Street via al-Hurriya Street. Protesters carried Palestinian and Tunisian flags and chanted slogans such as “With soul and blood, we sacrifice for you, Palestine” and “Palestine is Arab, no to surrender solutions.” On the sidelines of the march, Sami Tahri, a member of the Tunisian General Labor Union’s executive office, told Anadolu Agency, “These marches will continue to mobilize all Tunisians to contribute, especially through donations and volunteering for Palestine.” Zied Dabbar, president of the National Union of Tunisian Journalists, told Anadolu Agency, “We do not stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people; rather, we adopt the Palestine issue.”³⁹¹

In Somalia, many demonstrations took place. The Somali Scholars Association organized a solidarity sit-in in Mogadishu to express support for the Palestinian people facing brutal Israeli aggression.³⁹² Similarly, the people of the Comoros held a solidarity sit-in in support of the besieged GS, calling for immediate intervention to halt the war and deliver aid to Palestinians without delay.³⁹³

Across Yemen, millions of people participated in dozens of demonstrations in various cities, protesting against the Israeli war on GS. In the capital, Sanaa, hundreds of thousands gathered in large-scale marches repeatedly held in support of GS and its resistance factions. Similar massive demonstrations took place in the provincial capitals of Hodeidah, Mahwit, Bayda, Hajjah, Raymah, Saada, Taiz, Aden, Marib and other Yemeni cities, expressing solidarity with Palestinian rights and condemning Israeli crimes and massacres.³⁹⁴

In Iraq, sheikhs representing 20 Iraqi tribes signed a covenant document in support of the Palestine issue, reaffirming their commitment to Palestine, defending its rights, and striving for its liberation from occupation.³⁹⁵ On 10/8/2023, the Iraqi Coalition to Support al-Aqsa Mosque (a coalition of civil society institutions) held its inaugural conference to support *al-Aqsa* Mosque. The event was attended by a delegation from the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad and the Chief

of Staff of the Iraqi Presidency, Kamel al-Dulaimi.³⁹⁶ Following the outbreak of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, large-scale demonstrations involving hundreds of thousands of Iraqis were held across several Iraqi cities in solidarity with Gaza and in protest of the aggression.³⁹⁷

Conclusion

The period from 2022 to 2023 largely followed the familiar pattern of Arab regimes' responses to the Palestine issue, marked by the same characteristics of impotence, weakness and fragmentation that have long defined the Arab political landscape.

Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the ensuing Israeli war on GS marked a pivotal moment in modern Palestinian history and a significant milestone in Arab history. However, the Arab world, exhausted by its issues, burdened by suffering, and dominated by inward-focused political regimes, has long been plagued by oppression, corruption and external dependence. These factors, combined with the suppression or bypassing of the people's free will, rendered it incapable of appropriately responding to the "Flood" or seizing the opportunities it presented. Some even wagered on the defeat of the resistance, preventing their peoples from expressing solidarity with Palestine in the face of aggression.

There were, however, variations in how Arab countries addressed the Palestine issue. On the one hand, the wave of "normalization" spread through the Arab world, with the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco making notable progress, while KSA quietly and gradually followed a similar course. Libya experienced a brief breakthrough in normalization, which was swiftly reversed due to strong popular opposition and political discord. In Sudan, internal conflict stalled the normalization process. Meanwhile, Egypt and Jordan continued to advance and sustain their normalization efforts. On the other hand, this trajectory faced a significant disruption following Operation al-Aqsa Flood, sparking anger and discontent among "moderate" Arab countries. Some, like the UAE and Bahrain, condemned Hamas's actions with sharp statements, while others upheld the traditional stance of advocating for a settlement, a two-state solution, and an end to Israeli aggression. Privately, however, they hoped for Hamas's defeat and for the PA in Ramallah to take over GS.

The Arab response was notably hesitant and slow, despite the severe massacres in Palestine, and this was reflected in the LAS performance. Although some countries that had normalized relations with Israel withdrew their ambassadors from Tel Aviv, none cut or froze their diplomatic ties, in contrast to the more decisive actions taken by South Africa and several Latin American countries. The Arab response also fell short in terms of media engagement and financial support, while hindering the public's ability to express their opinion and show solidarity. The UAE even facilitated an alternative trade route to supply Israel via KSA and Jordan after Ansar Allah (the Houthis) severed the trade corridor to Israel through the Red Sea. Meanwhile, the Egyptian government imposed significant restrictions on supplies to GS through the Rafah crossing during a severe Israeli siege and starvation campaign.

Nevertheless, some Arab countries maintained supportive or accommodating stances towards the resistance, including Syria, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Algeria, Yemen, Libya, Oman and Lebanon. Qatar was instrumental in providing relief, media support through Al Jazeera, and mediation in negotiations. Hizbullah in Lebanon and Ansar Allah in Yemen played significant roles in military resistance, with contributions from the Islamic resistance in Iraq.

According to opinion polls, there was widespread popular sympathy with Palestine and its resistance across the Arab world. However, not all peoples were able to freely express their views due to repressive regimes. Nonetheless, in countries where it was permitted, such as Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Yemen and Iraq, strong support for Palestine was clearly expressed.

The Arab situation remains ill-equipped to effectively engage with the Palestine issue or address the Israeli war, due to a narrow focus on local concerns, persistent reliance on US influence in the region, and the assumption that Israel will eventually manage Hamas and stabilize GS without Hamas's involvement. The Arab world continues to rely on the peace process and the PA in Ramallah, and has yet to fully grasp the substantial disruption caused by Operation al-Aqsa Flood. The region remains burdened by hostility towards Islamic movements, fear of revival and reform, and the impact of resistance projects on the local environment. Overall, there is a lack of a civilizational, revivalist and unifying vision to challenge Western US dominance and present an alternative project.

Endnotes

- ¹ For more, see Resolutions of the Council of the League of Arab States (LAS) at summit level, 31st Ordinary Session, Algiers, site of LAS, 1–2/11/2022, <http://www.leagueofarabstates.net/en/Pages/default.aspx>; Jeddah Declaration, Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States, 32nd Ordinary Session, Jeddah, LAS, 19/5/2023; and Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit Addressing the Israeli Aggression Against the Palestinian People, LAS, 11/11/2023, <http://www.leagueofarabstates.net/en/summits/PublishingImages/Lists/Summits/AllItems/joint.pdf>
- ² Quds Press, 3/2/2022, <https://qudspress.com/v1/index.php?page=show&id=75711>
- ³ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 6/9/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁴ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 17/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵ The Arab Parliament rejects compromising UNRWA and its mandate towards Palestinian refugees, WAFA, 26/4/2022, <https://www.wafa.ps/pages/details/45783> (in Arabic); and The Arab League warns against attempts and plans to liquidate UNRWA, WAFA, 26/4/2022, <https://www.wafa.ps/pages/details/45820> (in Arabic)
- ⁶ For more, see Ahmad Abu al-Ghait's statements during the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip in: site of Saudi Press Agency (SPA), 6/8/2022, <https://www.spa.gov.sa/2374955> in (Arabic); *Al-Khaleej* newspaper, Sharjah, 3/7/2023; and resolutions of the emergency meeting of the LAS Council on 4/7/2023 to discuss the events in Jenin, *Asharq al-Awsat*, 4/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁷ WAFA, 9/3/2022, <https://www.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/42881> (in Arabic)
- ⁸ WAFA, 27/7/2022, <https://www.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/75629> (in Arabic)
- ⁹ *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 11/11/2023.
- ¹⁰ Arabi21, 8/11/2023, <https://arabi21.com/story/1550465>; Aljazeera.net, 11/11/2023, <https://aja.ws/uug48u> (in Arabic); and Baraah Darazi, "The Official Arab Position on Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the Aggression on Gaza: Implications and Repercussions," Al Quds International Institution (QII), January 2024, <https://qii.media/userfiles/1/0-%20papers/arab%20official%20stance%20on%20gaza.pdf>
- ¹¹ Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit Addressing the Israeli Aggression Against the Palestinian People, LAS, 11/11/2023.
- ¹² *Asharq al-Awsat*, 7/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹³ *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 11/10/2023.
- ¹⁴ For more, see Resolutions of the Council of the League of Arab States (LAS) at summit level, 31st Ordinary Session, Algiers, LAS, 1–2/11/2022; Jeddah Declaration, Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States, 32nd Ordinary Session, Jeddah, LAS, 19/5/2023; and Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit Addressing the Israeli Aggression Against the Palestinian People, LAS, 11/11/2023.
- ¹⁵ Arab League official: Normalization with Israel may be in the interest of the Palestinian cause (video), Mubasher Aljazeera.net, 19/1/2023, <https://www.aljazeeramubasher.net/>
- ¹⁶ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 16/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁷ For more, see Resolutions of the Council of the League of Arab States (LAS) at summit level, 31st Ordinary Session, Algiers, LAS, 1–2/11/2022; and Jeddah Declaration, Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States, 32nd Ordinary Session, Jeddah, LAS, 19/5/2023.
- ¹⁸ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 5/10/2022.

- ¹⁹ For more, see Resolutions of the Council of the League of Arab States (LAS) at summit level, 31st Ordinary Session, Algiers, LAS, 1–2/11/2022; Jeddah Declaration, Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States, 32nd Ordinary Session, Jeddah, LAS, 19/5/2023; and Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit Addressing the Israeli Aggression Against the Palestinian People, LAS, 11/11/2023.
- ²⁰ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 21/4/2022.
- ²¹ Quds Press, 29/5/2022.
- ²² WAFA, 29/5/2022, <https://www.wafa.ps/pages/details/48913> (in Arabic)
- ²³ *Al-Youm al-Sabi*’, 12/2/2023.
- ²⁴ Quds Press, 23/1/2023, <https://qudspress.com/20414/>
- ²⁵ *Alquds*, 22/3/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁶ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 25/4/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁷ *Al-Ahram Gate* newspaper, Cairo, 30/3/2022, <https://gate.ahram.org.eg/>
- ²⁸ *Shorouk News* newspaper, Cairo, 15/4/2022.
- ²⁹ WAFA, 8/8/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³⁰ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 18/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³¹ *Alquds*, 26/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³² *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 3/11/2022.
- ³³ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 31/1/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁴ Aljazeera.net, 1/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ³⁵ Quds Press, 25/1/2022.
- ³⁶ Arab 48, 16/2/2022.
- ³⁷ *Alquds*, 10/3/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³⁸ Tal Schneider, Israel, Egypt expand direct flights with new Tel Aviv-Sharm al-Sheikh route, *The Times of Israel*, 16/3/2022, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/israel-egypt-expand-direct-flights-with-new-tel-aviv-sharm-al-sheikh-route/
- ³⁹ Site of Sada El-Balad, 31/3/2022.
- ⁴⁰ Arab 48, 29/5/2022; and Ricky ben-David, Israel, Egypt to boost economic ties, step up bilateral trade to \$700m, *The Times of Israel*, 29/5/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-egypt-to-boost-economic-ties-step-up-bilateral-trade-to-700m/>
- ⁴¹ Aljazeera.net, 15/6/2022 (in Arabic); and In landmark deal signed in Cairo, Israel to export natural gas, via Egypt, to Europe, *The Times of Israel*, 15/6/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-eu-egypt-agree-deal-to-export-natural-gas-to-europe/>
- ⁴² Aljazeera.net, 21/2/2023 (in Arabic). See also ONE Unveils New Israel Shuttle Service (ILX), site of Ocean Network Express (ONE), 17/2/2023, https://www.one-line.com/sites/g/files/lnzjqr776/files/2023-02/EN_Press%20Release_ONE%20Unveils%20New%20Israel%20Shuttle%20Service%20%28ILX%29.pdf
- ⁴³ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 3/6/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁴⁴ Lahav Harkov, Egypt’s Sisi offers condolences for IDF soldiers killed by Egyptian cop, *The Jerusalem Post*, 6/6/2023, <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-745404>
- ⁴⁵ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 8/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁴⁶ ‘Atef al-Joulani, Determinants of the Egyptian Stance on Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the Israeli Aggression on Gaza Strip, *Political Insights* (6), al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 28/3/2024, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2024/03/28/political-insights-6-determinants-of-the-egyptian-stance-on-operation-al-aqsa-flood-and-the-israeli-aggression-on-gaza-strip/>

- ⁴⁷ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 10/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁴⁸ Israel/Gaza: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell after informal meeting of EU Foreign Affairs Ministers, European Union External Action, 10/10/2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelgaza-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-after-informal-meeting-eu-foreign-affairs_en
- ⁴⁹ Palestinians in Gaza can go to ‘tent cities’: Former Israeli minister, Al Jazeera, 15/10/2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/15/palestinians-in-gaza-can-go-to-tent-cities-former-israeli-minister>
- ⁵⁰ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 15/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵¹ Jonathan Lis, ‘Utterly Fake’: Israel’s National Security Adviser Denies Receiving Egyptian Warning of Hamas Attack, *Haaretz*, 13/10/2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-10-13/ty-article/.premium/israels-national-security-adviser-denies-receiving-egyptian-warning-of-hamas-attack/0000018b-28c9-d1bc-a58b-69ef2ed70000>
- ⁵² Aljazeera.net, 18/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵³ Aljazeera.net, 2/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁴ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 15/11/2023.
- ⁵⁵ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 5/12/2023.
- ⁵⁶ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 1/11/2023.
- ⁵⁷ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 15/12/2023.
- ⁵⁸ Israeli Minister: Contacts with Cairo to establish an “advanced border obstacle” between Egypt and Gaza, *Alquds*, 26/12/2023, <https://www.alquds.com/en/posts/105332>
- ⁵⁹ ‘Atef al-Joulani, Determinants of the Egyptian Stance on Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the Israeli Aggression on Gaza Strip, Political Insights (6), al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 28/3/2024.
- ⁶⁰ King receives Israeli president, reaffirms need to work to achieve peace, *The Jordan Times* newspaper, Amman, 30/3/2022, <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/king-receives-israeli-president-reaffirms-need-work-achieve-peace>
- ⁶¹ Battlegrounds w/ H.R. McMaster | Jordan: Perspective On Integration, Conflict, Middle East Stability, Hoover Institution Channel, YouTube, 18/5/2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjYH5LeHh2I>; and Abigail NG, Jordan’s king says he would support a Middle East version of NATO, site of Consumer News and Business Channel (CNBC), 24/6/2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/24/jordans-king-says-he-would-support-a-middle-east-version-of-nato.html>
- ⁶² Quds Press, 11/9/2022.
- ⁶³ Quds Press, 3/11/2022.
- ⁶⁴ *Al-Akhbar*, 24/6/2023.
- ⁶⁵ Arab 48, 16/12/2023.
- ⁶⁶ *Alghad*, 8/12/2022 and 28/1/2023.
- ⁶⁷ PIC, 24/1/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁶⁸ Quds Press, 13/2/2022.
- ⁶⁹ *Al-Khaleej*, 8/11/2022.
- ⁷⁰ Government decides to accelerate activity to implement joint Israeli-Jordanian employment and industrial park, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, 31/7/2022, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/government-decides-to-accelerate-activity-to-implement-israeli-jordanian-employment-and-industrial-park-31-jul-2022>

- ⁷¹ Jacob Magid, Lapid meets King Abdullah, bids to lower tensions with Palestinians as holidays near, *The Times of Israel*, 10/3/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/lapid-meets-abdullah-in-effort-to-lower-tensions-with-palestinians-as-holidays-near/>
- ⁷² Eyal Zisser, Between crises, Jordan is a good neighbor, *Israel Hayom*, 24/4/2022, <https://www.israelhayom.com/opinions/between-crises-jordan-is-a-good-neighbor/>
- ⁷³ ‘Atef al-Joulani, Determinants of the Jordanian Stance on Operation al-Aqsa Flood, *Political Insights* (5), al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 29/2/2024, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2024/02/29/political-insights-5-determinants-of-the-jordanian-stance-on-operation-al-aqsa-flood/>
- ⁷⁴ *Alghad*, 13/10/2023. See also Aljazeera.net, 13/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁷⁵ Aljazeera.net, 18/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁷⁶ *Addustour*, 2/11/2023.
- ⁷⁷ Ariel Grossman, Israel And UAE Ink New Deal To Connect Ports Via Land Bridge, site of NoCamels, 7/12/2023, <https://nocamels.com/2023/12/israel-and-uae-ink-new-deal-to-connect-ports-via-land-bridge/>; Jack Dutton, Work on Israel-Saudi land bridge has begun, Israeli Foreign Ministry confirms, site of Al-Monitor, 18/7/2023, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/07/work-israel-saudi-land-bridge-has-begun-israeli-foreign-ministry-confirms>
For more, see Sharon Wrobel, Israel logistics startup forges overland trade route to bypass Houthi Red Sea crisis, *The Times of Israel*, 27/12/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-logistics-startup-forges-overland-trade-route-to-bypass-houthi-red-sea-crisis/>
- ⁷⁸ Anna Ahronheim, Thousands of airstrikes carried out by Israel in past five years, *The Jerusalem Post*, 29/3/2022, <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-702634>
- ⁷⁹ Aljazeera.net, 4/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁰ *Arab* 48, 27/10/2022.
- ⁸¹ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 11/9/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁸² Aljazeera.net, 17/9/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁸³ Site of France24, 19/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁴ Assad talks about the “conditions” of meeting Erdogan and Hamas’s “treachery,” *Sky News Arabia*, 9/8/2023.
- ⁸⁵ Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), 7/10/2023, <https://sana.sy/> (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁶ Aljazeera.net, 31/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁸⁷ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 10/2/2022.
- ⁸⁸ *Quds Press*, 12/2/2022.
- ⁸⁹ *WAFA*, 9/5/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁹⁰ *WAFA*, 20/4/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁹¹ *Felesteen Online*, 29/4/2022.
- ⁹² “Haniyyah” meets with Lebanese President Michel Aoun, *Alghad TV*, 24/6/2022.
- ⁹³ *Annahar* newspaper, Beirut, 18/6/2022.
- ⁹⁴ Israel vows to defend offshore gas rig amid escalating tensions with Lebanon, *The Times of Israel*, 8/6/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-vows-to-defend-offshore-gas-rig-amid-escalating-tensions-with-lebanon/>
- ⁹⁵ Aljazeera.net, 13/7/2022. (in Arabic)

- ⁹⁶ Jamie Prentis, Lebanon and Israel officially sign US-mediated maritime deal, *The National*, 27/10/2022, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/lebanon/2022/10/27/lebanon-and-israel-officially-sign-us-mediated-maritime-deal/>; and Lebanon and Israel sign milestone sea border deal, *CBS News*, 27/10/2022, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/lebanon-and-israel-sign-milestone-sea-border-deal/>
- ⁹⁷ Israel and Lebanon approve maritime deal; Lapid hails ‘recognition’ by enemy state, *The Times of Israel*, 27/10/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-approves-lebanon-deal-lapid-hails-recognition-by-enemy-state/>
- ⁹⁸ *Al-Akhbar*, 16/2/2022.
- ⁹⁹ *Al-Akhbar*, 16/2/2022.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 21/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁰¹ *Al-Akhbar*, 9/10/2023.
- ¹⁰² *Arabi21*, 13/10/2023.
- ¹⁰³ See Martyrs on the Road to Jerusalem, site of al-Manar TV, 12/6/2024, <https://www.almanar.com.lb/cat/qods-martyr>
- ¹⁰⁴ 428 martyrs in the war against Israel since October 7, 2023, including 305 from Hizbullah and 18 from the Amal Movement, *The Monthly* magazine, site of Information International, 22/5/2024, <https://monthlymagazine.com/> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁰⁵ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 3/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁰⁶ Annahar: Confrontation on the verge of unravelling and Hamas Claims Southern Rockets, *NNA*, 11/10/2023.
- ¹⁰⁷ Geagea: Military operations in the south did not help Gaza... and Hizbullah is unable to protect Lebanon, *Asharq al-Awsat*, 27/4/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁰⁸ The Kataeb: What happened yesterday in the south threatens to plunge Lebanon into a new war, site of LebanonFiles, 10/10/2023, <https://www.lebanonfiles.com/>
- ¹⁰⁹ *NNA*, 6/12/2023.
- ¹¹⁰ Aoun completes the “rift” with Hizbullah: We are not bound by a defense treaty with Gaza, *Asharq al-Awsat*, 20/2/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹¹ Al-Fajr Forces: We launched a missile strike targeting enemy positions in the occupied territories and achieved direct hits, *NNA*, 18/10/2023.
- ¹¹² Secretary General of al-Jama’ah al-Islamiyyah in Lebanon to Aljazeera.net: We will continue our resistance in defense of Lebanon and Gaza, *Aljazeera.net*, 21/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹³ Al-Jama’ah Al-Islamiyyah in Lebanon: Victory belongs to the Resistance... We are not part of any axis, site of Al-Jama’ah Al-Islamiyyah in Lebanon, 15/12/2023, <https://www.al-jamaa.org/>
- ¹¹⁴ Secretary General of the al-Jama’ah al-Islamiyyah Sheikh Muhammad Takkoush, site of Al-Jama’ah Al-Islamiyyah in Lebanon, 5/3/2024.
- ¹¹⁵ Secretary General of the al-Jama’ah al-Islamiyyah, Sheikh Muhammad Takkoush: The Palestinian issue is our issue, and the continued occupation of our land gives us the legitimacy to resist it, site of Al-Jama’ah Al-Islamiyyah in Lebanon, 26/12/2022.
- ¹¹⁶ Al-Jama’ah Al-Islamiyyah mourn three martyrs in the face of the Zionist occupation, site of Al-Jama’ah Al-Islamiyyah in Lebanon, 10/3/2024; and Al-Jama’ah Al-Islamiyyah in Lebanon and its military resistance wing “Al-Fajr Forces” proudly Announces, site of Al-Jama’ah Al-Islamiyyah in Lebanon, 26/4/2024.
- ¹¹⁷ Dozens of rockets fired from Lebanon into Israel and Tel Aviv mulls possible Tehran involvement, *Aljazeera.net*, 6/4/2023. (in Arabic)

- ¹¹⁸ Rocket fire from Lebanon causes significant damage to the north of the enemy entity, site of al-Manar TV, 6/4/2023, <https://almanar.com.lb/10510348>
- ¹¹⁹ Bassil during an iftar in Byblos: We refuse to let anyone come and use our land to send messages, NNA, 12/4/2023.
- ¹²⁰ Since [Operation] al-Aqsa Flood.. these are the most prominent al-Qassam operations from Lebanon against Israel, Aljazeera.net, 29/2/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹²¹ “Al-Qassam” shows footage of rocket launches from southern Lebanon... Timing and implications, Quds Press, 3/5/2024, <https://qudspress.com/131092>
- ¹²² “Islamic Jihad” announces an operation against Israel from southern Lebanon and the martyrdom of resistance fighters, *al-Quds al-Arabi*, 9/10/2023; and Israeli shelling kills 3 [members] of al-Quds Brigades in southern Lebanon, *Asharq al-Awsat*, 8/5/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹²³ “Implicating Lebanon”... Mikati condemns the explosion in Beirut’s southern suburbs Sky News Arabia, 2/1/2024; and Lebanon condemns the assassination of al-‘Arouri and his companions, and UNIFIL warns of the consequences of escalation, Aljazeera.net, 3/1/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁴ Since the [Operation] al-Aqsa Flood.. these are the most prominent al-Qassam operations from Lebanon against Israel, Aljazeera.net, 29/2/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁵ Al-Jama’ah Al-Islamiyyah condemns the assassination of commander Saleh al-‘Arouri, site of Al-Jama’ah Al-Islamiyyah in Lebanon, 2/1/2024.
- ¹²⁶ The census was conducted based on documented news that occurred between 7/10/2023 and 12/6/2024, by the Archive and Information Department at al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations.
- ¹²⁷ For more, see 43rd session of GCC Supreme Council issues final communique, site of Emirates News Agency (WAM), 10/12/2022, <https://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395303110361>; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Issues Statement Following Consultative Meeting of GCC Member States, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, SPA, 15/4/2023, <https://www.spa.gov.sa/w1889079>; Statement Issued by 156th Session of GCC Ministerial Council, SPA, 11/6/2023, <https://www.spa.gov.sa/w1918903>; and Final Communiqué Issued by the Supreme Council in its Forty-Fourth Session, SPA, 5/12/2023, <https://www.spa.gov.sa/en/N2009183>
- ¹²⁸ Ibid.
- ¹²⁹ *Aliwaa* newspaper, Beirut, 15/4/2022, <https://aliwaa.com.lb>; and RT, 29/5/2022.
- ¹³⁰ Arabi21, 7/1/2023. See also Overwhelming majority in Arab states want democracy but reject recognition of Israel, site of Jewish News, 6/1/2023, <https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/overwhelming-majority-in-arab-states-want-democracy-but-reject-recognition-of-israel/>
- ¹³¹ Jonathan Shamir, No More Arab States Will Normalize Ties With Israel, Netanyahu Gov’t ‘Embarrassed’ UAE, Emirati Analyst Warns, *Haaretz*, 22/5/2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-05-22/ty-article/.premium/netanyahu-govt-hampering-arab-normalization-efforts-emirati-analyst-says/00000188-4408-dc2a-a798-f59b9cb50000>
- ¹³² *Asharq al-Awsat*, 17/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹³³ For more, see Aljazeera.net, 16/4/2022 (in Arabic); site of UN News, 25/4/2022, <https://news.un.org/ar/story/2022/04/1099962> (in Arabic); SPA, 28/3/2023, <https://www.spa.gov.sa/w1880672> (in Arabic); and SPA, 5/4/2023, <https://www.spa.gov.sa/w1884230> (in Arabic)
- ¹³⁴ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 12/8/2023 (in Arabic); and Saudi Ambassador to Palestine Al-Sudairi Presents Credentials to President Abbas, SPA, 27/9/2023, <https://www.spa.gov.sa/7659d68be71>
- ¹³⁵ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 25/9/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹³⁶ For more, see Aljazeera.net, 20/4/2022 (in Arabic); Anadolu Agency, 5/5/2022 (in Arabic); Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), 30/5/2022 (in Arabic); Aljazeera.net, 29/5/2022 (in Arabic); *Alqabas* newspaper, Kuwait, 29/10/2023; and site of Foreign Ministry of Oman, 29/11/2023, <https://www.fm.gov.om/> (in Arabic)



- ¹³⁷ Interview: Qatar's FM rules out normalization with Israel, Syria, Axios, 2/2/2022, <https://www.axios.com/2022/02/02/qatar-rules-normalization-with-israel-syria>
- ¹³⁸ Written statement of Qatar: Document Number 186-20230725-WRI-03-00-EN, site of International Court of Justice, 25/7/2023, <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/203734>
- ¹³⁹ For more, see Financial Grants, Gaza Re-Construction Committee, site of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatar, <https://q-grc.ps/grants#nav18>; Anadolu Agency, 21/1/2022 (in Arabic); and *al-Quds al-Arabi*, 25/3/2022.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 19/4/2022 (in Arabic); and site of Alain News, 30/5/2022, <https://al-ain.com/article/1653903489> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴¹ Abdullah bin Zayed stresses importance of calming situation at Al-Aqsa during telephone call with Israeli counterpart, WAM, 21/4/2022, <https://www.wam.ae/en/article/hszrekzc-abdullah-bin-zayed-stresses-importance-calming>
- ¹⁴² For more, see 43rd session of GCC Supreme Council issues final communique, WAM, 10/12/2022; and Final Communiqué Issued by the Supreme Council in its Forty-Fourth Session, SPA, 5/12/2023.
- ¹⁴³ Paltimes.ps, 13/8/2023.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 18/4/2023.
- ¹⁴⁵ PIC, 24/9/2022, <https://palinfo.com/?p=298012> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁶ Aljazeera.net, 12/8/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁷ Quds Press, 5/1/2022, <https://qudspress.com/v1/index.php?page=show&id=74727>
- ¹⁴⁸ Site of Hamas, 19/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁹ Anadolu Agency, 26/4/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁰ Saudi pauses talks on normalisation with Israel, site of The Economic Times, 14/10/2023, <https://ecoti.in/TvDTjZ>
- ¹⁵¹ Dennis Ross, I Might Have Once Favored a Cease-Fire With Hamas, but Not Now, *The New York Times*, 27/10/2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/27/opinion/hamas-war-gaza-israel.html?s=08>
- ¹⁵² Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, Political Analysis: Arab Position on the Aggression on Gaza: A New Low, al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 25/11/2023, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2023/11/25/political-analysis-arab-position-on-the-aggression-on-gaza-a-new-low/>
- ¹⁵³ Baraah Darazi, "The official Arab position on al-Aqsa Flood and the aggression on Gaza: Implications and repercussions," Al-Quds International Institution (QII), January 2024.
- ¹⁵⁴ Final Communiqué Issued by the Supreme Council in its Forty-Fourth Session, SPA, 5/12/2023.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 27/10/2023.
- ¹⁵⁶ KSA Calls for Immediate Cessation of Violence between Palestinian Factions and Israeli Occupation Forces, Protection of Civilians and Restraint, SPA, 7/10/2023, <https://spa.gov.sa/e1d84d3f40u>
- ¹⁵⁷ For more, see Aljazeera.net, 21/10/2023, <https://aja.me/hico1v> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁸ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 2/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁹ Aljazeera.net, 7/10/2023, <https://aja.me/4z1a2k> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶⁰ Speech of HH The Amir at the 52th ordinary session of the Shura Council, site of The Shura Council, Qatar, 24/10/2023, <https://www.shura.qa/en/Pages/General-Secretary/Amir-Speeches/52-Session-Opening>
- ¹⁶¹ HH the Amir Participates in the Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit, site of Qatar News Agency (QNA), 11/11/2023, <https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2023-11/11/0021-hh-the-amir-participates-in-the-joint-arab-islamic-extraordinary-summit>

- ¹⁶² Kuwait reiterates support to Moroccan initiative for self-rule in Sahara, KUNA, 12/10/2023, <https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=3116032&language=en#>)
- ¹⁶³ Kuwait halts all celebratory manifestations in solidarity with the Palestinians, KUNA, 12/10/2023, <https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=3116069&Language=en>
- ¹⁶⁴ Kuwaiti Crown Prince Affirms Firm Position towards Palestinian Issue, Demands Ceasefire, Humanitarian Aid Entry, QNA, 31/10/2023, <https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2023-10/31/0032-kuwaiti-crown-prince-affirms-firm-position-towards-palestinian-issue,-demands-ceasefire,-humanitarian-aid-entry>
- ¹⁶⁵ Kuwait Acting PM: Digital technology brought about security challenges, KUNA, 15/10/2023, <https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=3117455&language=en>
- ¹⁶⁶ Site of Alkhaleej Online, 8/10/2023, <https://khaleej.online/XAWRb4>
- ¹⁶⁷ Oman calls on Palestinians and Israelis to exercise restraint, Foreign Ministry of Oman, 7/10/2023, <https://www.fm.gov.om/oman-calls-on-palestinians-and-israelis-to-exercise-restraint/>
- ¹⁶⁸ UAE Statement at the UN Security Council Open Debate on the Situation in the Middle East, Including the Palestinian Question, site of Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, 24/10/2023, <https://uaeun.org/statement/uae-unscc-mepp-24oct/>
- ¹⁶⁹ In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has called for the protection of civilians and stressed that the immediate priority is to end the violence and protect the civilian population, site of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UAE, 8/10/2023, <https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/mediahub/news/2023/10/8-10-2023-uae-population>
- ¹⁷⁰ Anadolu Agency, 9/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁷¹ Alexander Cornwell, UAE says US should push for quick end to war in Gaza, Reuters, 4/11/2023, <https://reut.rs/3P56UDv>
- ¹⁷² Stephen Kalin, U.A.E. Links Support for Rebuilding Gaza to Push for Two-State Solution, *The Wall Street Journal*, 12/12/2023, <https://on.wsj.com/4caeYNk>
- ¹⁷³ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls for the protection of civilians and the cessation of fighting between Hamas and Israeli forces, Bahrain News Agency (BNA), 9/10/2023, <https://www.bna.bh/en/TheMinistryofForeignAffairscallsfortheProtectionofciviliansandtheCessationoffightingbetweenHamasandIsraeliforces.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDsjsGfPhfKj3XeKWU0JLIo%3D>
- ¹⁷⁴ The IISS Manama Dialogue, Keynote Address, Friday 17 November 2023, site of International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), 17/11/2023, https://www.iiss.org/globalassets/media-library---content--migration/files/manama-dialogue-delta/2023/final/keynote/hrh-prince-salman-bin-hamad-bin-isa-al-khalifa_keynote-address.pdf
- ¹⁷⁵ Saudi pauses talks on normalisation with Israel, *The Economic Times*, 14/10/2023, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/saudi-pauses-talks-on-normalisation-with-israel-source/articleshow/104419632.cms?from=mdr>
- ¹⁷⁶ National Communication Centre of Bahrain: Bahrain's Ambassador to Israel returned to the Kingdom, and the Israeli Ambassador previously departed for his country, BNA, 2/11/2023, <https://www.bna.bh/en/NationalCommunicationCentreofBahrainBahrain'sAmbassadortoIsraelreturnedtotheKingdomandtheIsraeliAmbassadorpreviouslydepartedforhiscountry.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDiivG%2Bb%2B9pOUZOkGksQX9Q0%3D>
- ¹⁷⁷ Reuters, 24/11/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/bahrain-seeks-balance-anger-over-gaza-with-ties-israel-us-2023-11-24>
- ¹⁷⁸ Are the Abraham Accords stronger than the war between Israel and Hamas?, site of European Jewish Press, 30/10/2023, <https://ejpress.org/are-the-abraham-accords-stronger-than-the-war-between-israel-and-hamas>



- ¹⁷⁹ UAE-Israel land corridor operating despite war, site of Jewish News Syndicate (JNS), 14/12/2023, <https://www.jns.org/uae-israel-land-corridor-operating-despite-war>; and Israeli tech co says land transport platform can thwart Houthi, Globes, 26/12/2023, <https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-trucknet-offers-tech-platform-to-thwart-houthi-threat-1001466172>
- ¹⁸⁰ Jordan News Agency (Petra), 16/12/2023; <https://petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=266010&lang=ar&name=news> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸¹ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 28/12/2023. See also site of Arutz Sheva 7 (Israel National News), 24/12/2023, <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/382460>
- ¹⁸² Mohammed bin Salman on Iran, Israel, US and future of Saudi Arabia: Full transcript, site of Alarabiya News, 3/3/2022, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2022/03/03/Mohammed-bin-Salman-on-Iran-Israel-US-and-future-of-Saudi-Arabia-Full-transcript>. See also “Absolute Power,” *The Atlantic* magazine, April 2022 Issue, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2022/04/mohammed-bin-salman-saudi-arabia-palace-interview/622822/>
- ¹⁸³ Aljazeera.net, 24/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸⁴ Saudi foreign minister reiterates Kingdom’s position on Israel, site of Arab News, 24/5/2022, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2088851/saudi-arabia>
- ¹⁸⁵ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 20/1/2023 (in Arabic). See also Saudi Arabia Says a Palestinian State Is Key to Ties With Israel, site of Bloomberg, 19/1/2023, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-01-19/saudi-arabia-says-a-palestinian-state-is-key-to-ties-with-israel>
- ¹⁸⁶ Arabi21, 13/7/2022.
- ¹⁸⁷ Arab 48, 19/1/2023; and Arab 48, 17/5/2023.
- ¹⁸⁸ Israel’s top diplomat sees no quick breakthrough with Saudi Arabia, Reuters, 30/5/2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-top-diplomat-sees-no-quick-breakthrough-with-saudi-arabia-2022-05-30/>
- ¹⁸⁹ Arab 48, 30/8/2023.
- ¹⁹⁰ Dion Nissenbaum and Summer Said, In New Step Toward Israel Deal, Saudi Arabia Offers to Resume Palestinian Authority Funding, *The Wall Street Journal*, 29/8/2023, <https://on.wsj.com/3wB3Mcj>
- ¹⁹¹ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 29/5/2022. See also *Israel Hayom*, 29/5/2022.
- ¹⁹² Report: Israel, Saudi Arabia in normalization talks, Arutz Sheva 7 (Israel National News), 22/5/2023, <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/en/news/371792>
- ¹⁹³ Arab 48, 10/9/2023.
- ¹⁹⁴ Arab 48, 21/7/2023.
- ¹⁹⁵ Lazar Berman, In first, Israeli minister leads official delegation to Saudi Arabia, The Times of Israel, 26/9/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-first-israeli-minister-leads-official-delegation-to-saudi-arabia/>
- ¹⁹⁶ Video: Israeli minister holds holiday prayers - in Saudi capital, Arutz Sheva 7 (Israel National News), 3/10/2023, <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/en/news/377808>
- ¹⁹⁷ In Saudi Arabia, Israeli minister hails ‘blossoming’ bilateral ties, The Times of Israel, 4/10/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-saudi-arabia-israeli-minister-hails-blossoming-ties-between-countries/>
- ¹⁹⁸ Gianluca Pacchiani, Israeli anthem plays in Saudi at FIFA video game cup rehearsal, but not at ceremony, The Times of Israel, 12/7/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-anthem-plays-in-saudi-at-fifa-video-game-cup-rehearsal-but-not-at-ceremony/>
- ¹⁹⁹ Saudi General Authority of Civil Aviation (@ksagaca), X (Twitter), 15/7/2022, 1:56 a.m., <https://x.com/ksagaca/status/1547716582545076224>

- ²⁰⁰ Arab 48, 15/7/2022.
- ²⁰¹ See *al-Quds al-Arabi*, 4/8/2022; and Arab 48, 26/2/2023.
- ²⁰² UK Abraham Accords Group, Sharaka sign agreement in Dubai, site of Gulf News, 11/1/2022, <https://gulfnews.com/uae/uk-abraham-accords-group-sharaka-sign-agreement-in-dubai-1.84895235>
- ²⁰³ Three members of the UAE Federal National Council visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial and the Israeli Knesset, The Times of Israel, 7/2/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-first-uae-parliamentary-delegation-visits-the-knesset/>
- ²⁰⁴ Lazar Berman, Herzog lands in Emirates for landmark visit, is greeted by Emirati FM, The Times of Israel, 30/1/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/herzog-takes-off-for-united-arab-emirates-for-landmark-visit/>
- ²⁰⁵ Israeli presidential plane flies through Saudi airspace for Herzog visit to UAE, site of The Cradle, 30/1/2022, <https://thecradle.co/articles-id/4877>
- ²⁰⁶ Alexander Cornwell, Israeli president presses on with Dubai visit after UAE intercepts missile, Reuters, 31/1/2022, <https://reut.rs/3P5LG8J>
- ²⁰⁷ WAM, 9/6/2022, <https://wam.ae/a/hszrewb1> (in Arabic)
- ²⁰⁸ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 14 and 15/9/2022 (in Arabic); and *al-Khaleej*, 16/9/2022.
- ²⁰⁹ For more, see *Alquds*, 4/3/2022 (in Arabic); *al-Quds al-Arabi*, 16/3/2022; *al-Khaleej*, 27/7/2022; RT, 11/10/2023 (in Arabic); and *Asharq al-Awsat*, 1/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²¹⁰ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 11/1/2022.
- ²¹¹ 4 European envoys told by Brussels to ditch tour of Western Wall with Israel's Erdan, The Times of Israel, 9/12/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/4-eu-envoys-ditch-erdan-led-tour-of-western-wall-after-directive-from-brussels/>; Netanyahu meets with delegation of visiting UN ambassadors, touts Abraham Accords, The Times of Israel, 11/12/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-meets-with-delegation-of-visiting-un-ambassadors-touts-abraham-accords/>; and Melissa Weiss, In first, U.N. delegation travels to both UAE and Israel, site of Jewish Insider, 11/12/2022, <https://jewishinsider.com/2022/12/gilad-erdan-lana-nusseibeh-israel-uae-ambassadors-united-nations/>
- ²¹² Saif bin Zayed, Nahyan bin Mubarak inaugurate Abrahamic Family House, a new centre for learning, dialogue and the practice of faith, WAM, 17/2/2023, <https://www.wam.ae/en/article/hszrghkt-saif-bin-zayed-nahyan-bin-mubarak-inaugurate>
- ²¹³ Jennifer Bell, UAE's first fully equipped Jewish neighborhood to be established, says Rabbi, *The Jerusalem Post*, 15/4/2022, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-704293>
- ²¹⁴ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 15/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²¹⁵ JOINT STATEMENT: PM Bennett visits the Kingdom of Bahrain, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, 15/2/2022, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/joint-statement-pm-bennett-visits-the-kingdom-of-bahrain-15-feb-2022>; and Lahav Harkov, Hatikvah plays at Bahrain Royal Palace as Bennett arrives, *The Jerusalem Post*, 15/2/2022 <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-696526>
- ²¹⁶ Foreign Minister signs Joint Warm Peace Strategy with Israeli counterpart, BNA, 28/3/2022, <https://www.bna.bh/En/ForeignMinistersignsJointWarmPeaceStrategywithIsraelicounterpart.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDuAPexp0oqjwXN4esuLWGxc%3D>
- ²¹⁷ Michael R. Gordon and David S. Cloud, U.S. Held Secret Meeting With Israeli, Arab Military Chiefs to Counter Iran Air Threat, *The Wall Street Journal*, 26/6/2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-held-secret-meeting-with-israeli-arab-military-chiefs-to-counter-iran-air-threat-11656235802>

- ²¹⁸ Israel, UAE, Bahrain, and Morocco working toward a common cyber defense, i24NEWS, 14/12/2022, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/middle-east/technology-science/1671047794-israel-the-emirates-bahrain-and-morocco-working-toward-a-common-cyber-defense>
- ²¹⁹ Aljazeera.net, 10/6/2022, <https://aja.me/93zg1> (in Arabic)
- ²²⁰ Arab 48, 17/1/2022.
- ²²¹ Bennett offers UAE 'security and intelligence support' after attack by Houthis, The Times of Israel, 18/1/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/bennett-offers-uae-security-and-intelligence-support-after-attack-by-houthis/>
- ²²² Israel offers to help UAE bolster defenses after Houthi attacks, Axios, 2/2/2022, <https://www.axios.com/2022/02/02/israel-uae-bolster-defenses-houthi-attacks-yemen>
- ²²³ Israeli radars to be used in UAE to detect Iran missiles, drones – report, *The Jerusalem Post*, 28/6/2022, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-710586>
- ²²⁴ Emirati official reveals Israel helped repel a cyber attack on the Gulf state, i24NEWS, 29/6/2023, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/middle-east/technology-science/1688021853-emirati-official-reveals-that-israel-helped-repel-a-cyber-attack-on-the-gulf-state>
- ²²⁵ Elbit Systems Emirates Awarded \$53 Million Contract to Supply DIRCM and Airborne EW Self Protection Systems to the UAE, site of Elbit Systems, 3/1/2022, <https://elbitsystems.com/pr-new/elbit-systems-emirates-awarded-53-million-contract-to-supply-dircm-and-airborne-ew-self-protection-systems-to-the-uae>
- ²²⁶ Yossi Melman, Why Israel is reluctant to give the UAE help against the Houthis, Middle East Eye, 9/2/2022, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/yemen-houthis-uae-israel-reluctant-help-why>
- ²²⁷ Alexander Cornwell and John Irish, Exclusive: Israel to sell air defence system to United Arab Emirates, Reuters, 23/9/2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/exclusive-israel-sell-air-defence-system-united-arab-emirates-sources-say-2022-09-22/>
- ²²⁸ Israel, UAE unveil unmanned naval vessel they jointly developed, The Times of Israel, 20/2/2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/israel-uae-unveil-unmanned-naval-vessel-they-jointly-developed/
- ²²⁹ 60 Nations, International Organizations Kick Off Largest Maritime Exercise in Middle East, site of US Navy, 31/1/2022, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2917383/60-nations-international-organizations-kick-off-largest-maritime-exercise-in-mi/>; Judah Ari Gross, Israel to join massive US-led naval exercise in Red Sea for first time, The Times of Israel, 31/1/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-to-join-massive-us-led-naval-exercise-in-red-sea-for-first-time/>; and Large-Scale International Exercise in Middle East, Africa Concludes, US Navy, 18/2/2022, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/NEWS-ARTICLES/News-Article-View/Article/2940622/large-scale-international-exercise-in-middle-east-africa-concludes/>
- ²³⁰ Israeli paratroopers perform joint jump in Bahrain, i24NEWS, 27/10/2022, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/middle-east/the-gulf/1666883386-israeli-bahraini-emirati-and-american-paratroopers-perform-a-joint-jump>
- ²³¹ Anna Ahronheim, A first: UAE officer to learn at Israel's National Defense College next year, *The Jerusalem Post*, 30/6/2022, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-710804>
- ²³² Bahraini official: Israel's Mossad active in Bahrain, i24NEWS, 21/2/2022, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/diplomacy/1645454309-bahraini-official-israel-s-mossad-is-active-in-bahrain>
- ²³³ Aljazeera.net, 2/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²³⁴ MOD Gantz meets His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa of Bahrain and signs historic defense MOU, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, 3/2/2022, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/mod-gantz-meets-the-king-of-bahrain-3-feb-2022>

- ²³⁵ Ami Rojkes Dombé, IAI sells coastal radar to Bahrain - 200 km from Iran, site of Israel Defense, 12/2/2022, <https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/53595>; and Bahrain Defence Forces select BATS for Supply Integrated Coastal Surveillance System, site of Bahrain Defence Forces (BATS), <https://www.bats.be/press-uk/bahrain-defence-forces-select-bats-for-supply-integrated-coastal-surveillance-system>
- ²³⁶ Reuters, 11/11/2023, <https://reut.rs/3uLfXm1>
- ²³⁷ Rachna Uppal and Lisa Barrington, "UAE plans long-term economic ties with Israel despite political strains," Reuters, 4/4/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/uae-plans-long-term-economic-ties-with-israel-despite-political-strains-2023-04-03/>
- ²³⁸ N7 partners convene in Bahrain on free trade between Israel and its Arab neighbors, site of Atlantic Council, 10/7/2023, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/news/press-releases/n7-partners-convene-in-bahrain-on-free-trade-between-israel-and-its-arab-neighbors/>
- ²³⁹ UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs (@mofauae), X (Twitter), 17/9/2023, 2:19 a.m., <https://x.com/mofauae/status/1703186949077356746>
- ²⁴⁰ See CBS, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/fr_trade12_2023/td1.pdf
- ²⁴¹ Rachna Uppal and Lisa Barrington, "UAE plans long-term economic ties with Israel despite political strains," Reuters, 4/4/2023.
- ²⁴² Dubai International Chamber announces plans to open representative office in Israel, WAM, 6/6/2022, <https://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395303054848>
- ²⁴³ UAE-Israel Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement to come into force on 1st April, WAM, 30/3/2023, <https://www.wam.ae/en/article/hszrgs5w-uae-israel-comprehensive-economic-partnership>
- ²⁴⁴ *Alquds*, 23/1/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁴⁵ *Al-Khaleej*, 8/11/2022.
- ²⁴⁶ Aljazeera.net, 25/5/2023 (in Arabic); and Anadolu Agency, 14/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁴⁷ UAE, Israel Cooperate To Advance Maritime Transport Sector, site of Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, UAE, 4/4/2022, <https://www.moei.gov.ae/en/media-center/news/4/4/2022/uae-israel-cooperate-to-advance-maritime-transport-sector>; and WAM, 3/4/2022, <https://wam.ae/a/hszrehes> (in Arabic)
- ²⁴⁸ Site of Ministry of Economy and Industry, Israel, 4/1/2023, https://www.gov.il/ar/departments/news/diamond_2022 (in Arabic)
- ²⁴⁹ Aljazeera.net, 20/9/2022, <https://aja.me/vimepr> (in Arabic)
- ²⁵⁰ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 20/10/2022.
- ²⁵¹ See CBS, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/fr_trade12_2023/td1.pdf
- ²⁵² Iraqi News Agency (INA), 26/5/2022, <https://www.ina.iq/156976--.html> (in Arabic)
- ²⁵³ INA, 15/7/2022, <https://www.ina.iq/160834--.html> (in Arabic)
- ²⁵⁴ INA, 26/5/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁵⁵ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 27/5/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁵⁶ Aljazeera.net, 29/3/2022, <https://aja.me/vpdp99> (in Arabic)
- ²⁵⁷ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 5/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁵⁸ *Paltimes.ps*, 13/8/2023.
- ²⁵⁹ *Al-Youm al-Sabi'*, 24/12/2023.
- ²⁶⁰ Aljazeera.net, 20/10/2023, <https://aja.me/5ev585> (in Arabic)
- ²⁶¹ *Al-Khaleej*, 21/12/2023.

- ²⁶² Yemeni Parties Condemn Normalization with Israel as a Departure from Arab and Islamic Consensus, site of Alislah-ye.net, <https://alislah-ye.net/nprint.php?sid=6657>
- ²⁶³ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 3/2/2021.
- ²⁶⁴ Ammar al-Ashwal, Israel and the Transitional Council in South Yemen: Reality and Prospects of the Relationship, site of Carnegie Endowment for Middle East, 10/3/2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/2021/03/israeyl-walmjls-alantqaly-fy-jnwb-alymn-waqalalalaqh-waafaqha?lang=ar> (in Arabic)
- ²⁶⁵ The Israeli assassin who teamed up with Mohammad Dahlan, Ynetnews, 17/10/2018, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5372648,00.html>
- ²⁶⁶ Houthi: If the US intervenes directly, we are ready to participate in the bombing, site of al-Alam TV, 10/10/2023.
- ²⁶⁷ Aljazeera.net, 19/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁶⁸ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 17/12/2023.
- ²⁶⁹ Suez Canal, site of State Information Service, 19/9/2022, <https://sis.gov.eg/Story/171459/Suez-Canal?lang=en-us>
- ²⁷⁰ How the Houthi attacks in the Red Sea have affected Israeli ports, i24NEWS, 20/2/2024, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/diplomacy-defense/1708457993-how-the-houthi-attacks-in-the-red-sea-have-affected-israeli-ports>
- ²⁷¹ Red Sea tensions: Maritime traffic in Suez at a crawl, more than doubles in Cape of Good Hope, Anadolu Agency, 27/5/2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/economy/red-sea-tensions-maritime-traffic-in-suez-at-a-crawl-more-than-doubles-in-cape-of-good-hope/3231794>
- ²⁷² Suez Canal revenues fell by 50% due to Red Sea tensions | PlanningMin, site of business today Egypt, 28/4/2024, <https://www.businesstodayegypt.com/Article/1/4522/Suez-Canal-revenues-fell-by-50-due-to-Red-Sea>
- ²⁷³ The Houthis claim a large-scale attack with 37 drones in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, site of Nova Agency, 9/3/2024, <https://www.agenzianova.com/en/news/gli-houthi-rivendicano-un-attacco-su-larga-con-37-droni-nel-mar-rosso-e-nel-golfo-di-aden/>; and By the Numbers: Yemeni Support Front for Palestine, site of Alkhanadeq, 8/3/2024, <https://alkhanadeq.org.lb/post/6778>
- ²⁷⁴ Arab 48, 21/5/2024. See also *al-Quds al-Arabi*, 29/5/2024.
- ²⁷⁵ Statement from Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III on Ensuring Freedom of Navigation in the Red Sea, U.S. Department of Defense, 18/12/2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3621110/statement-from-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-on-ensuring-freedom-of-n>
- ²⁷⁶ US Navy has spent \$1 billion on munitions to thwart attacks in Middle East, US Navy Secretary says, site of Cable News Network (CNN), 16/4/2024, https://edition.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-04-16-24#h_a9d38b12f9179c55f744510a712bcecl
- ²⁷⁷ Terrorist Designation of the Houthis, Press Statement, Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State, 17/1/2024, <https://www.state.gov/terrorist-designation-of-the-houthis/>
- ²⁷⁸ UN, Security Council, S/RES/2722 (2024), 10/1/2024, [https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F2722\(2024\)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F2722(2024)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False)
- ²⁷⁹ Some 424 U.S. and British airstrikes on targets in Yemen have killed 37 people and wounded 30, Reuters, 4/4/2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/houthis-say-37-killed-hundreds-us-uk-strikes-yemen-2024-04-04/>
- ²⁸⁰ Aljazeera.net, 22/2/2024. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸¹ Middle East Eye (@MiddleEastEye), X (Twitter), 11/12/2023, 8:30 p.m., <https://x.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1734279380724048273>

- ²⁸² The National Alliance condemns the genocidal crimes committed by the Zionist occupation in Gaza and condemns international complicity, Alislah-ye.net, 17/10/2023, https://alislah-ye.net/news_details.php?lng=arabic&sid=10739
- ²⁸³ RT, 5/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸⁴ *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 28/5/2022. See also *Israel Hayom*, 28/5/2022.
- ²⁸⁵ Aljazeera.net, 5/12/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸⁶ Aljazeera.net, 12/2/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸⁷ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 20/1/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸⁸ Raialyoum, 23/9/2022.
- ²⁸⁹ Arab 48, 14/11/2022.
- ²⁹⁰ *Al-Ayyam*, Ramallah, 3/2/2023.
- ²⁹¹ Anadolu Agency, 2/2/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹² *Asharq al-Awsat*, 4/2/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹³ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 4/2/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁹⁵ Lior Haiat (@LiorHaiat), X (Twitter), 17/4/2023, 5:51 p.m., <https://x.com/LiorHaiat/status/1647976012666290181>
- ²⁹⁶ Barak Ravid, Scoop: Israel offers to host warring Sudanese generals for talks, Axios, 24/4/2023, <https://www.axios.com/2023/04/24/sudan-israel-invite-burhan-hemedti-talks>
- ²⁹⁷ Aljazeera.net, 24/4/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹⁸ Aljazeera.net, 19/4/2023. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹⁹ Aljazeera.net, 8/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁰⁰ Hemedti's political aide refers to Hamas as 'terrorist organization' during interview on Israeli TV, site of Sudan Post, 24/4/2023, <https://www.sudanspost.com/hemedtis-political-aide-refers-to-hamas-as-terrorist-organization-during-interview-on-israeli-tv/>
- ³⁰¹ *The Jerusalem Post*, 17/7/2023.
- ³⁰² *Asharq al-Awsat*, 12/3/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³⁰³ Israel signs contract to build embassy in Morocco, site of Abraham Accords Peace Institute (AAPI), 3/8/2022, <https://www.aapeaceinstitute.org/latest/israel-signs-contract-to-build-embassy-in-morocco>
- ³⁰⁴ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 22/7/2022 (in Arabic); and Israel's army chief pays tribute to Morocco's Jewish community, i24NEWS, 21/7/2022, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/middle-east/north-africa/1658379780-israel-s-army-chief-pays-tribute-to-morocco-s-jewish-community>
- ³⁰⁵ Israeli Police Commissioner Yaakov Shabtai visited Rabat, The Times of Israel, 1/8/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/shabtai-takes-off-to-morocco-for-first-official-visit-by-israels-top-cop/>; and Israeli police chief concludes several agreements with Morocco, i24NEWS, 11/8/2022, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/diplomacy/1660240740-israeli-police-chief-concludes-several-agreements-with-morocco>
- ³⁰⁶ Israel hosts Moroccan military chief in historic first, i24NEWS, 13/9/2022, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/defense/1663094228-israel-hosts-moroccan-military-chief-in-historic-first>
- ³⁰⁷ Israel inks three transportation deals boosting links with Morocco, The Times of Israel, 29/5/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-inks-three-transportation-deals-boosting-links-with-morocco/>
- ³⁰⁸ Lahav Harkov, Ohana: Israel to recognize Western Sahara as Moroccan, *The Jerusalem Post*, 8/6/2023, <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-745688>



- ³⁰⁹ Anadolu Agency, 8/6/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³¹⁰ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 16/6/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³¹¹ Maayan Jaffe-Hoffman, Israel, Morocco to collaborate on climate issues, *The Jerusalem Post*, 25/6/2023, <https://www.jpost.com/environment-and-climate-change/article-747598>; and Israel, Morocco aim to cooperate on environmental protection, Anadolu Agency, 25/6/2023, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/environment/israel-morocco-aim-to-cooperate-on-environmental-protection/2930887>
- ³¹² Meeting of Follow-up Committee of Moroccan-Israeli Defense Cooperation, site of Maghreb Arabe Presse (MAP), 17/1/2023, <https://www.mapnews.ma/en/actualites/politics/meeting-follow-committee-moroccan-israeli-defense-cooperation>
- ³¹³ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 24/10/2023.
- ³¹⁴ Sam Sokol, Israel Inks \$500m Air Defense Deal With Morocco, Reports Say, *Haaretz*, 15/2/2022, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2022-02-15/ty-article/israel-inks-500m-air-defense-deal-with-morocco-reports-say/0000017f-f19b-d487-abff-f3ffae520001>
- ³¹⁵ Jihane Rahhou, is in talks with Israel to purchase the Delilah short-range cruise missile for its fleet of F-5, a supersonic light fighter jet, site of Morocco World News (MWN), 7/5/2022, <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2022/05/348878/morocco-negotiating-to-acquire-israeli-cruise-missile>
- ³¹⁶ Aya Benanzizi, Morocco Purchases 150 Israeli Military Drones, MWN, 22/9/2022, <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2022/09/351475/morocco-purchases-150-israeli-military-drones>
- ³¹⁷ Ami Rojkes Dombé, Moroccan Army unveils Israeli artillery systems in new video, Israel Defense, 22/5/2023, <https://www.israeldefense.co.il/index.php/en/node/58253>
- ³¹⁸ Morocco acquires \$70 million worth of Electronic Warfare from Israel, site of Hespress, 7/11/2022, <https://en.hespress.com/52444-morocco-acquires-70-million-worth-of-electronic-warfare-from-israel.html>
- ³¹⁹ Arie Egozi, Morocco to buy Spyder air defence system from Rafael, site of Defence Industry Europe, 20/3/2023, <https://defence-industry.eu/morocco-to-buy-spyder-air-defence-system-from-rafael/>
- ³²⁰ Fatima-Zohra Fadali, Moroccan Royal Armed Forces Deploy Spyx Drones Displayed in Paris, site of Barlamantoday, 20/6/2023, <https://www.barlamantoday.com/2023/06/20/professional-provocateur-andrew-tate-indicted-for-rape-and-human-trafficking/>
- ³²¹ The “Tripartite Agreement”. Has Morocco achieved its normalization goals?, Asharq News, 6/8/2023, <https://asharq.co/8q5sx>
- ³²² Judah Ari Gross, Israel, Morocco ink deals, agree to reopen mutual liaison offices within weeks, The Times of Israel, 22/12/2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-morocco-ink-deals-agree-to-reopen-mutual-liaison-offices-within-weeks/>
- ³²³ Morocco, Israel seal MoU in aquaponics field, Hespress, 29/9/2023, <https://en.hespress.com/71794-morocco-israel-seal-mou-in-aquaponics-field.html>
- ³²⁴ Israel to bring workers from Morocco, AAPI, 21/6/2022, <https://www.aapeaceinstitute.org/latest/israel-to-bring-workers-from-morocco-i24news-afpjune-21-2022-0411-pmlatest-revision-june-21-2022-1004-pm>
- ³²⁵ Steve Postal, Trade and tourism on the rise among Abraham Accords states, AAPI, 19/2/2023, <https://www.aapeaceinstitute.org/latest/trade-and-tourism-on-the-rise-among-abraham-accords-states>
- ³²⁶ *Al-Youm al-Sabi’*, 7/10/2023.

- ³²⁷ HM the King Addresses a Speech to Extraordinary Arab-Islamic Summit, site of Kingdom of Morocco, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, 11/11/2023, <https://diplomatie.ma/en/hm-king-addresses-speech-extraordinary-arab-islamic-summit>
- ³²⁸ UN General Assembly adopts Gaza resolution calling for immediate and sustained 'humanitarian truce, UN News, 26/10/2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142847>; and EliCohen (@elico1), X(Twitter), 28/10/2023, 12:17 a.m., <https://x.com/elico1/status/1718014116231602565>
- ³²⁹ Wafa, 18/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³³⁰ *The New Khalij*, 30/11/2024. (in Arabic)
- ³³¹ The war against Gaza and the discontent of the Moroccan street... Does it set back the process of normalizing relations between Morocco and Israel?, site of Monte Carlo Doualiya, 24/11/2023, <https://mc-d.co/1w84>
- ³³² How Do MENA Citizens View Normalization With Israel?, site of Arab Barometer, 12/9/2022, <https://www.arabbarometer.org/2022/09/how-do-mena-citizens-view-normalization-with-israel/>
- ³³³ Arabi21, 5/5/2022.
- ³³⁴ Benkirane: The party's position is firm in supporting the Palestinian resistance and rejecting normalisation and Zionist penetration, site of Justice and Development Party (JDP), 15/1/2023, <https://www.pjd.ma/media/178662.html>; Israeli foreign minister sees 'Abraham Accords' summit in Morocco in March, Reuters, 2/1/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-foreign-minister-sees-abraham-accords-summit-morocco-march-2023-01-02/>; and Jacob Magid, delayed several times amid escalating tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, The Times of Israel, 20/6/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/morocco-cancels-next-months-negev-forum-over-israeli-settlement-announcements/>
- ³³⁵ Anadolu Agency, 25/7/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³³⁶ Anadolu Agency, 28/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³³⁷ Muhammad al-Siddiqui, Progress and Socialism calls for stopping normalisation with Israel and prosecuting it before the International Criminal Court, site of Al3omk.com, 22/11/2023, <https://al3omk.com/889456.html>
- ³³⁸ *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 27/1/2022.
- ³³⁹ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 16/2/2022.
- ³⁴⁰ AbdulRazzaq bin Abdullah, Algerian lawmakers seek to criminalize normalization with Israel, Anadolu Agency, 17/5/2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/algerian-lawmakers-seek-to-criminalize-normalization-with-israel/2590611>
- ³⁴¹ Dalila Henache, Algeria Withdraws From the IPU's Presidency Group, site of Echorouk Online, 1/5/2023, <https://www.echoroukonline.com/algeria-withdraws-from-the-ipus-presidency-group>
- ³⁴² Anadolu Agency publishes the text of the "Algiers Declaration" for Palestinian reconciliation, Anadolu Agency, 13/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³⁴³ 'Atef al-Joulani, Policy Paper: The Algiers Declaration's Chances of Achieving Palestinian Reconciliation, al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 10/11/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³⁴⁴ PIC, 29/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁴⁵ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 6/11/2023.
- ³⁴⁶ Sama, 8/10/2023.
- ³⁴⁷ Aljazeera.net, 28/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁴⁸ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 13/10/2023.
- ³⁴⁹ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 13/10/2023.
- ³⁵⁰ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 24/10/2023.



- ³⁵¹ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 7/12/2023.
- ³⁵² *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 29/3/2024.
- ³⁵³ Arabi21, 18/4/2024.
- ³⁵⁴ Itamar Eichner and Einav Halabi, Turning a new leaf: Israel's foreign minister and Libyan counterpart make history in secret meeting, Ynetnews, 27/8/2023, <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/syi4vhta3>
- ³⁵⁵ Samy Magdy, Libya's foreign minister suspended, flees country after meeting with Israel's chief diplomat, AP, 28/8/2023, <https://apnews.com/article/libya-israel-meeting-normalization-arab-world-62d6d37df1838ecba9a604e80b675733>
- ³⁵⁶ President of the Union of Libyan Jews to i24NEWS: Libyan-Israeli meetings are not new, i24NEWS, 28/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁵⁷ Samy Magdy, Libya's foreign minister suspended, flees country after meeting with Israel's chief diplomat, AP, 28/8/2023.
- ³⁵⁸ Aljazeera.net, 28/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁵⁹ Aljazeera.net, 28/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁶⁰ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 28/8/2023.
- ³⁶¹ Aljazeera.net, 28/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁶² Anadolu Agency, 25/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁶³ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 23/2/2024.
- ³⁶⁴ *Al- 'Arabi al-Jadid*, 3/11/2023.
- ³⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶⁶ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 2/11/2023.
- ³⁶⁷ Anadolu Agency, 18/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁶⁸ "It is Tunisia's duty to stand by the Palestinian people," says President Kais Saied, site of Agence Tunis Afrique Presse (TAP), 9/10/2023, <https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Top-News-EN/16698686--it-is-tunisia-s>
- ³⁶⁹ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 5/11/2023; and Tunisia Calls for Concerted Action to End to Israeli Aggression against Gaza Strip, QNA, 3/11/2024, <https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2023-11/03/0030-tunisia-calls-for-concerted-action-to-end-to-israeli-aggression-against-gaza-strip>
- ³⁷⁰ WAFA, 9/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁷¹ *Al- 'Arabi al-Jadid*, 11/1/2024; and Basma El Atti, Tunisia will not endorse legal actions in ICJ genocide case to avoid "implicit recognition" of Israel, site of The New Arab, 11/1/2024, <https://www.newarab.com/news/tunisia-will-not-endorse-legal-actions-against-israel-icj>
- ³⁷² Soumaya Ghannoushi (@SMGhannoushi), X (Twitter), 22/11/2023, 2:31 p.m., <https://x.com/SMGhannoushi/status/1727303714082292162>
- ³⁷³ *Al- 'Arabi al-Jadid*, 26/10/2023.
- ³⁷⁴ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 19/12/2023.
- ³⁷⁵ Shirir Avitan Cohen, Israel engaging 4 Muslim nations to expand Abraham Accords, *Israel Hayom*, 7/3/2023, <https://www.israelhayom.com/2023/03/07/israel-working-to-expand-abraham-accords-with-4-more-nations/>
- ³⁷⁶ Abdullah Mawlud, Mauritania denies participating in a training program organized in Israel, *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 29/3/2023; and see Israel hosts agricultural experts from Africa to help fight climate change, i24NEWS, 26/3/2023, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/africa/1679813978-israel-hosts-agricultural-experts-from-africa-to-help-fight-climate-change>

- ³⁷⁷ An anti-normalisation student initiative issues a statement denouncing the participation of a Mauritanian delegation in a training program organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Zionist entity (text of the statement), Alwiam News Agency, 27/3/2023, <https://alwiam.info/ar/29458>
- ³⁷⁸ Al-Mayadeen Channel, 10/7/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³⁷⁹ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 11/7/2022.
- ³⁸⁰ Lazar Berman, Netanyahu and Somalian president met secretly in 2020, ex-diplomat claims, The Times of Israel, 12/7/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-and-somalian-president-met-secretly-in-2020-ex-diplomat-claims/>; and see Raphael Ahren, Somalia's president recently held first-ever meeting with Israeli PM, The Times of Israel, 5/7/2016, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/somalias-president-recently-held-first-ever-meeting-with-israeli-pm/>
- ³⁸¹ Arabi21, 14/10/2022.
- ³⁸² Establishing a youth student front against normalisation and in support of the Palestine issue, site of The Democratic Way, 20/1/2023, <https://annahjaddimocrati.org/ar/11564> (in Arabic)
- ³⁸³ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 5/2/2024.
- ³⁸⁴ Israel's aggression on Gaza reduces trade exchange with Morocco by 61%, Hespress, 17/1/2023, <https://en.hespress.com/78273-israels-aggression-on-gaza-reduces-trade-exchange-with-morocco-by-61.html>
- ³⁸⁵ *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 15/10/2023.
- ³⁸⁶ Imane Lechheb, Survey: 93% of Moroccans support Palestinian resistance, Hespress, 1/1/2024, <https://en.hespress.com/77389-survey-93-of-moroccans-support-palestinian-resistance.html>
- ³⁸⁷ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 19/10/2023.
- ³⁸⁸ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 17/4/2024.
- ³⁸⁹ A popular protest in Nouakchott against normalization and in support of Jerusalem, Alquds News Agency, 22/9/2023, <https://alqudsnews.net/p/197925>
- ³⁹⁰ Libyan News Agency (LANA), 20/10/2023, <https://lana.gov.ly/index.php?lang=ar> (in Arabic)
- ³⁹¹ Anadolu Agency, 12/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁹² Aljazeera.net, 20/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁹³ Demonstrations of support for Gaza and Palestine accompany Friday prayers, site of Al-Modon, 20/10/2023, <https://www.almodon.com>
- ³⁹⁴ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 24/11/2023.
- ³⁹⁵ WAFA, 31/7/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³⁹⁶ Quds Press, 11/8/2023.
- ³⁹⁷ Tens of thousands rally in Mideast, West to support Israel, Palestinians, Reuters, 14/10/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/supporters-palestinians-israel-protest-pray-war-intensifies-2023-10-13/>



Chapter Seven

The Palestine Issue and the Muslim World

The Palestine Issue and the Muslim World

Introduction

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is one of the largest political blocs globally, comprising 57 member countries. These countries hold varying perspectives on issues affecting the Muslim world, including the Palestine issue, complicating efforts to cover the positions of all OIC countries in a single chapter of this report. Therefore, we will focus on the positions and activities of the OIC, using Türkiye and Iran as case studies, while also providing an overview of significant stances from other countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan. Furthermore, we will also examine public engagement with the Palestine issue and the trend of normalization with Israel.

First: Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

The dynamics within the OIC reflect the broader realities of its member countries; greater political differences among these countries lead to increased ineffectiveness of the organization. The divide regarding the Palestine issue deepened in 2022–2023, particularly with the wave of normalization among key Muslim countries that are considered central and influential in shaping OIC policies. During this period, the OIC struggled to support the Palestine issue and failed to take meaningful action to prevent Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. Therefore, observers note a lack of positive change in the Organization's positions, with some even suggesting a decline, especially in light of the Israeli war in GS at the end of 2023.

The OIC, which was established in 1969 with the Palestine issue—particularly Jerusalem—as a central focus, cannot remain uninvolved in developments related to Palestine, at least not without offering condemnation of Israeli aggressions. In January 2022, the OIC General Secretariat condemned Israel's ongoing eviction and demolition of Palestinian homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of Jerusalem. In its statement, the OIC characterized these actions “as part of the

policies of Judaization, colonial settlement, and forced displacement of Palestinian families in flagrant violation of international law and the Geneva Conventions.”¹

On the other hand, the OIC welcomed the report issued by Amnesty International which described Israel as an apartheid state, and it considered the report “as an international instrument, considering it yet another confirmation of the violations, crimes and racial policies of the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people.” The OIC called on “the international community to take the necessary measures to hold Israel, the occupation force, to account for its violations, crimes and policies of apartheid against the Palestinian people.”²

In the same context, the OIC welcomed the decision of the African Summit “to suspend granting Israel the status of an observer member in the African Union (AU),” viewing it as aligned with the historical support of AU countries for the just Palestine issue. This decision also serves as a rejection of Israel’s policies of colonial settlement, ethnic cleansing and apartheid against the Palestinian people. The Organization stressed that “Israel, the occupying power, should not be rewarded for its grave violations of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.”³

In the context of the centrality of the Palestine issue and Jerusalem, the Islamabad Declaration, issued at the conclusion of the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in March 2022, emphasized “its principled and continued all-level support to the Palestinian people to regain their inalienable legitimate national rights, including their right to self-determination and the independence of the State of Palestine along the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.” The declaration reaffirmed that Jerusalem “is an integral part of the occupied Palestinian Territory of the State of Palestine” and called on “the international community to compel Israel, the occupying power, to desist from its colonial practices and abide by all international resolutions” on Jerusalem, and “to refrain from all measures, practices and decisions aimed at altering the character and legal status of the Holy City, including through intensification of Jewish colonial settlements therein and forcible expulsion of its Arab Palestinian inhabitants; and to desist from the desecration” of Islamic holy sites, including attacks on Jerusalem.⁴

The final communiqué from the extraordinary meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the Level of Permanent Representatives, held in April 2022 to

address the Israeli attacks on *al-Aqsa* Mosque, stressed that “there can be no security and stability without its full liberation from occupation and return to its Palestinian people and Islamic Ummah [Muslim nation].” The OIC rejected “all illegal measures in the city, including attempts at temporal and spatial division of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque” and called for urgent action from the international community to halt Israeli violations against holy sites.⁵

The year 2023 saw no improvement for the Palestine issue compared to 2022. Israeli attacks intensified following the formation of a new Israeli government at the end of 2022. This coalition, which included far-right parties and figures, emboldened settler aggression against Palestinian holy sites, villages and cities in WB. The risk to *al-Aqsa* Mosque increased significantly, especially with the full backing given to settler organizations advocating for its demolition and the construction of the alleged temple in its place.

In light of this reality, the Conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC) reaffirmed its support for Palestine’s bid to obtain full member state status at the UN. The final statement issued from the 17th session of the Conference, held in Algiers in late January 2023, expressed “unwavering support to the cause of Palestine and preservation of Al-Quds Al-Sharif,” as well as “support to the people of Palestine in their quest for their legitimate and inalienable rights to self-determination and right to return.” The statement also urged Palestinian factions to “scale up their efforts to face together the Zionist illegal policies and practices.”⁶

Following the storming of *al-Aqsa* Mosque by an Israeli government minister, the OIC held an Open-ended Extraordinary Meeting of its Executive Committee on 24/5/2023, at the OIC General Secretariat headquarters in Jeddah. The meeting condemned the Israeli minister’s action as a provocative step that “would prejudice the feelings of millions of Muslims around the world and threaten security and stability in the region.” The meeting also stressed that “there is no sovereignty for Israel over al-Quds and the holy sites, and that East Jerusalem is an occupied Palestinian land.”⁷

The most significant development in the Palestine issue in 2023 was Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which began on 7/10/2023, followed by what may be considered the largest aggression against the Palestinian people since the *Nakbah* in 1948. Despite the killing of thousands of civilians in GS, mostly women and children,

the OIC did not hold its “emergency” or extraordinary ministerial-level meeting until a month after the aggression began, reflecting the Organization’s inability to effectively support the Palestine issue. This ineffectiveness was further underscored by the meeting’s outcome, which was limited to condemnation and denunciation without any practical steps, not even minimal actions like delivering necessary aid to the people of GS. In this context, the statement issued by the joint extraordinary Arab and Islamic Summit emphasized the importance of protecting civilians and condemned any attempts to target them. It also rejected calls for the displacement of the GS population. The summit strongly condemned the UN Security Council’s failure to take decisive action to halt war crimes committed by Israel against the Palestinian people in GS and across the Palestinian territories. The statement reaffirmed that “peace” and security in the region can only be achieved by ending the Israeli colonial occupation and its oppressive practices, while ensuring the Palestinian people’s inalienable rights, particularly their right to self-determination, independence and return, in accordance with international law and relevant UN resolutions.⁸

Second: Türkiye

The Sword of Jerusalem Battle in 2021 occurred amid ongoing diplomatic estrangement between Israel and Türkiye. However, many felt that Türkiye’s response fell short of expectations, and the Palestinian resistance issued some criticism at the time.

Several politicians and party leaders in Türkiye have condemned Israeli aggression. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan described Israel as a “terror state,” accused it of committing war crimes,⁹ called on the international community to deliver “a strong and deterrent lesson” to Israel for its actions against the Palestinians,¹⁰ and held countries that supported Israel jointly responsible for these crimes.¹¹ Erdoğan affirmed that Türkiye would support Jerusalem as it supported Azerbaijan.¹² He made bold proposals regarding the status of Jerusalem and the broader Palestine issue, including administering Jerusalem through representatives of the three monotheistic religions and providing international protection for the Palestinian people.¹³

The Turkish president also reached out to Palestinian President Mahmud ‘Abbas and the head of Hamas political bureau Isma‘il Haniyyah, alongside engaging in diplomatic contacts with leaders from Arab, Muslim and Western countries to help halt the Israeli war.

Despite this progressive stance, Ankara appeared to fall short of Palestinian expectations. Statements evaluating Türkiye position after the war underscored this sentiment, calling for a response more aligned with the unique nature of that war compared to previous ones, and one more fitting of Türkiye’s role as a leading regional power and a Muslim ally of the Palestinian people. In his speech, Yahya Sinwar, the leader of Hamas in GS, expressed appreciation for the Turkish position but also called for greater support.¹⁴ Türkiye was not among the countries that Haniyyah specifically thanked at the end of the war,¹⁵ although he later expressed his appreciation for the Turkish position in a subsequent press interview.¹⁶

Operation al-Aqsa Flood in October 2023 occurred under markedly different circumstances, characterized by the rapprochement and restoration of Turkish diplomatic relations with Israel and several Arab countries. Therefore, the ceiling of the Turkish position was different from that in previous confrontations between the Palestinian resistance in GS and Israel. Nonetheless, the war was exceptional in both its nature and motives, as well as in the intensity of Israeli crimes and massacres against Palestinian civilians and infrastructure.

Turkish Foreign Policy

Ankara’s position during Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the official political statements it issued signify a significant shift in Turkish foreign policy over the past two years, impacting several foreign policy issues, including the Palestine issue and relations with Israel.

Since late 2020 and early 2021, coinciding with Joe Biden’s election as US president and the arrival of a democratic administration, Türkiye has pursued a new foreign policy aimed at calming and addressing points of contention with various regional powers that had experienced lukewarm or tense relations over the past decade, particularly the KSA-UAE-Egypt axis. This approach also extends to Israel, with which diplomatic relations had deteriorated significantly after Türkiye withdrew its ambassador to Tel Aviv and declared Israel’s ambassador persona non grata in 2018. This decline followed then US President Donald Trump’s decision

to relocate the US embassy to Jerusalem and the killing of dozens of Palestinian youths at the hands of Israeli forces in GS during their aggression against the Marches of Return.

The years 2022 and 2023 marked the culmination of efforts to restore relations with Arab countries. Diplomatic and political ties with these and other Arab countries were re-established, accompanied by meetings and reciprocal visits by heads of state. The Turkish president met with his Egyptian counterpart on the sidelines of the World Cup opening in Qatar, visited both the KSA and UAE, and hosted Saudi Crown Prince Muhammed bin Salman and UAE President (former Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi) Mohammed bin Zayed. He also met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry in Ankara.

In 2023, diplomatic relations with Israel were also restored, leading to the official exchange of ambassadors after years of estrangement. Both sides affirmed the political will to maintain bilateral relations in a “stable state” that will not be disrupted in the future.

The year 2023 was a pivotal one for Turkish domestic politics, dominated by key internal issues. It began with the devastating earthquake in February, followed by the critical presidential and parliamentary elections in May, which brought heightened attention to economic challenges, the refugee and foreign resident situation, and the subsequent government formation process. Additionally, preparations for local elections scheduled for the first quarter of 2024 were underway.

This focus on domestic affairs contributed to the stability and continuation of Türkiye’s rapprochement with various regional actors, including Israel, while underscoring a commitment to avoiding foreign policy crises and attracting foreign investments.

Normalization with Israel

Türkiye severed diplomatic relations with Israel in 2010 after the attack on the Mavi Marmara ship in international waters, which resulted in the deaths of Turkish solidarity activists. Relations were restored in 2016 as part of an agreement to normalize relations between the two countries. However, in May 2018, Ankara expelled the Israeli ambassador and recalled its own ambassador from Tel Aviv after Israel’s attack on the Marches of Return protests in GS, which led to the deaths of dozens of Palestinians, as well as the decision to relocate the US embassy to Jerusalem.¹⁷

Since then, opposition voices have called for restoring diplomatic relations with Israel and other Arab countries, with figures close to the ruling party gradually joining these calls. The main motivations for renewing and improving relations with Israel included relieving the fluctuating economic situation from the pressures of foreign policy crises, calming tensions in various areas to attract investments, avoiding future economic shocks related to regional stances, improving relations with the US by restoring ties with Israel, and cooperating with Israel on the East Mediterranean gas file.¹⁸ The East Mediterranean issue has become a priority for Turkish decision-makers in recent years, as it involves both energy security and geopolitical competition in the region. Greece has spearheaded an alliance that includes Egypt, Israel and other countries, and later established the East Mediterranean Gas Forum to share the region's resources while disregarding Türkiye's rights, despite having the longest coastline in the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁹ In response, Türkiye has sought to counter or disrupt this alliance, aiming to win over some of its members, by demarcating the maritime borders with Libya, offering similar agreements to Egypt, and attempting to convince Israel to export its gas through Türkiye rather than Greece.²⁰

The initial efforts to restore diplomatic relations between Türkiye and Israel began with phone calls between the foreign ministers of both countries,²¹ followed by visits from government delegations to lay the groundwork for advancing relations.²² The most notable step occurred in March 2022, when Israeli President Isaac Herzog visited Ankara. During this visit, President Erdoğan described it as “an opportunity to develop our energy cooperation,” stressing the possibility of cooperation in the defense field. Herzog said, “Israel and Turkey can and should have a cooperation that can positively affect this entire region we call home.”²³ During the visit, Erdoğan reiterated his country's support for a two-state solution and urged Herzog to improve conditions for Palestinians, emphasizing Türkiye's sensitivities regarding the Palestine issue, while Herzog acknowledged, “We will not agree on everything,” adding, “But we shall try to restart our relations and build them in a measured and cautious manner, and with mutual respect between our states.”²⁴

The process continued with then-Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu's visit to Israel and WB in May 2022, during which he said, “We agreed to reenergize our relations in many areas,” and highlighted “many opportunities in areas such as clean energy, high-tech, agri-tech, tourism and agriculture.”²⁵



In July 2022, the two sides exchanged economic and trade attachés,²⁶ and in August 2022, they agreed to exchange ambassadors.²⁷ In September 2022, Erdoğan met with Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.²⁸ In October 2022, Şakir Özkan Torunlar was appointed Turkish ambassador to Tel Aviv,²⁹ and in that same month, Defense Minister Benny Gantz announced the resumption of security cooperation between Israel and Türkiye.³⁰

Before the end of the year, Erdoğan received a phone call from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, marking the end of years of estrangement. Both leaders emphasized their desire to restore relations and enhance energy cooperation.³¹ In February 2023, Erdoğan welcomed Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, expressing gratitude for Israel's support and solidarity with Türkiye following the devastating earthquake.³² In September 2023, Erdoğan met with Netanyahu at the “Turkish House” in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meetings, where they agreed to exchange visits, though no dates were set.³³

Meanwhile, Turkish politicians emphasized that the East Mediterranean gas file was a key factor in restoring relations with Israel. They repeatedly stressed that this reconciliation would not come at the expense of the Turkish position on the Palestine issue,³⁴ even asserting that the restoration of relations was intended to defend the Palestine issue.³⁵ Ankara sought to maintain a balanced position by denouncing Israeli actions at *al-Aqsa* Mosque, reiterating that Jerusalem is a red line,³⁶ condemning the assassination of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and calling for an international investigation.³⁷ At the same time, it condemned Palestinian attacks in Israel, calling them “heinous terror attacks” in Erdoğan's words,³⁸ and labeled one operation in East Jerusalem as a “terrorist” act, despite its location.³⁹

While Turkish authorities stopped an Iranian assassination cell that was said to have aimed to assassinate Israeli figures on Turkish soil,⁴⁰ they also dismantled several Mossad cells and networks.⁴¹ Ankara received several officials from Israel, and Erdoğan received Palestinian President Mahmud ‘Abbas, emphasizing, “We cannot tolerate any acts attempting to change the historical status quo of holy places, particularly *al-Aqsa* Mosque.”⁴²

Operation al-Aqsa Flood

On 7/10/2023, Ezzedein al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, announced the launch of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which involved crossing into

the 1948 occupied territories, eliminating the Israeli force besieging GS, seizing control and engaging in combat in several settlements in the GS envelope, and subsequently returning to GS with dozens of captured Israeli soldiers and officers. The operation was a surprise to all parties, particularly as it marked a proactive offensive, differing from previous confrontations between the Palestinian resistance and Israel.

The operation was seen as a significant blow to the Israel's military and security apparatus in terms of planning, preparation, camouflage and execution, as well as in terms of losses—both in deterrence and direct human casualties among officers, soldiers, vehicles and equipment. For the first time in decades, Israel declared a state of war and called up over 300 thousand reservists.

In Türkiye's first official response to the operation, Erdoğan urged both Israelis and Palestinians to exercise restraint and avoid actions that could escalate tensions.⁴³ A statement from the Turkish Foreign Ministry said, "We are deeply concerned about the violence and tension [that have] occurred in Israel and Palestine." The statement strongly condemned the "loss of civilian lives," called "on the parties to act with restraint," and offered "to contribute to the best of our ability to ensure that these developments can be taken under control."⁴⁴

Since the early days of the operation, Turkish political parties have expressed divergent views. The Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*—CHP), the largest opposition party, labeled Hamas a "terrorist organization"⁴⁵ and the İYİ Party referred to the operation as a "terrorist act." In contrast, conservative Islamic parties such as the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*), Future Party (*Gelecek Partisi*—GP), New Welfare Party (*Yeniden Refah Partisi*—RP), and Free Cause Party (*Hür Dava Partisi*—Hüda-Par) openly supported the Palestinian side, the Palestinian resistance, and Hamas in particular.⁴⁶ Official Turkish positions focused on "rejecting the killing of civilians,"⁴⁷ demanding the release of the "hostages" held by Hamas,⁴⁸ seeking to mediate between the Palestinian and Israeli sides,⁴⁹ and calling on "all parties" to de-escalate. Media outlets aligned with the government, the ruling party and the opposition, emphasized Türkiye's role as a neutral mediator, similar to its role in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Some Israeli media reports claimed that Türkiye had asked Hamas leaders residing on its territory to leave, but both sides quickly denied these claims.⁵⁰



This official Turkish stance was driven by several key factors, the most significant being:

1. The attack occurred within the 1948 occupied territories, which Türkiye recognizes as part of the “State of Israel.”
2. The spread of misleading Israeli propaganda in the early days of the operation, including false claims of beheading children and raping women, which were later debunked.
3. Efforts to avoid any foreign policy tensions that could impact Ankara’s foreign relations and, consequently, its economy.
4. Commitment to the path of normalization and rapprochement with Israel.
5. An initial assessment suggesting that the operation was influenced by an Iranian decision aimed at disrupting the rapprochement process between Türkiye and Israel.
6. Ankara may have believed that by maintaining a neutral stance and positioning itself as a mediator, it could influence the course of events and help bring an end to the aggression.
7. Ankara sought to align its stance on the Palestine issue with influential Arab countries, particularly Egypt, Jordan, KSA and the UAE, avoiding unilateral decisions that could carry political, economic and potential security risks, as well as affect its relations with third parties, especially the US.

Later, following the start of Israel’s ground operation in GS, Türkiye’s official stance shifted toward stronger support for the Palestinians and direct condemnation of Israel. Ankara condemned Israel’s targeting of civilians, labeled its actions in GS as war crimes,⁵¹ refused to designate Hamas as a “terrorist organization” by recognizing it as a national liberation movement,⁵² referred to Israel as a “terrorist state,”⁵³ threatened to prosecute Netanyahu, and vowed to cut ties with him.⁵⁴

This shift in the official position was influenced by several factors, including:

1. The scale of the crimes committed by Israeli forces in GS, particularly against civilians.
2. The exposure of Israeli propaganda surrounding Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023.
3. A deeper understanding of the operation’s motives, rooted in the Palestine issue rather than external pressures.

4. The steadfastness of the Palestinian resistance on the ground, demonstrating its invincibility and refusal to surrender.
5. Aligning with the sentiment of the Turkish public, which has shown solidarity with the Palestinians and their resistance.
6. The impact of Turkish opposition parties, particularly the conservative ones, which have adopted stronger positions than the government, leaving it embarrassed and concerned about the upcoming local elections.
7. The Israeli government adopted a sharp tone toward Türkiye, particularly President Erdoğan. Israeli security institutions threatened to assassinate Hamas leaders in multiple countries, including Türkiye, prompting a direct warning from Turkish intelligence.⁵⁵ President Erdoğan responded firmly, stating, “Israel would pay a very heavy price,” if it followed through with such actions.⁵⁶ Additionally, Turkish authorities arrested 33 individuals suspected of conducting intelligence activities on behalf of Israel during the war.⁵⁷

The Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*—AKP) organized a mass demonstration in support of GS, during which President Erdoğan delivered a speech.⁵⁸ The Turkish Foreign Ministry engaged in intensive diplomatic efforts, with Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan meeting with Hamas leadership and Erdoğan holding a phone conversation with Haniyyah.⁵⁹ Ankara also advocated for a political approach based on guarantorship, with Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan suggesting that “the countries that will be guarantors to the Palestinian side should be from the region. This includes Türkiye. Other countries should be guarantors for Israel. Once an agreement is reached that both parties agree on, the guarantor countries should assume responsibility for fulfilling its requirements.”⁶⁰

Practical measures announced by Türkiye included the cancellation of Erdoğan’s visit to Israel and the suspension of dialogue on cooperation in the gas sector.⁶¹ Later, Ankara recalled its ambassador to Tel Aviv for consultations⁶² after Israel had withdrawn its ambassadors from Arab and Muslim countries, fearing public backlash following the massacre at the National Baptist Hospital.⁶³ Regarding the potential prosecution of Netanyahu, which Türkiye has repeatedly hinted at, the government has yet to take any concrete action. However, Turkish lawyers have submitted a request to the ICC to arrest Netanyahu and other Israeli officials.⁶⁴ The Turkish president emphasized that his country would not remain silent about

Israeli violations, which he described as genocide, and pledged to confront the US and the countries supporting Israel.⁶⁵

Apart from recalling its ambassador, canceling Erdoğan's visit, and freezing gas talks—measures that appear to be natural developments following the outbreak of the war—along with hosting dozens of wounded Palestinians in its hospitals,⁶⁶ Türkiye's stance remained largely verbal and rhetorical. However, even within these limits, it was ahead of the positions of many Arab countries. The official Turkish position did not extend to more concrete actions, such as pursuing legal steps to try Netanyahu, filing a complaint with the ICJ to label the events in GS as genocide (a step later taken by South Africa), cutting diplomatic ties with Israel, influencing Israel's supporters, or lobbying to impact trade and economic relations with Israel, including Azerbaijani gas passing through Türkiye to Israel.

Moreover, AKP MPs, along with their allies from the Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*—MHP), voted against a proposal by opposition parties to have the Turkish parliament investigate goods being exported from Türkiye to Israel during wartime and their impact on the situation in GS.⁶⁷

In light of the slowdown in Turkish diplomatic activity and reduced focus on mediation, Türkiye has limited itself to collective action with other Arab and Muslim countries, following the outcomes of the joint extraordinary Arab and Islamic Summit in Riyadh. As Ankara aligns with the positions of key Arab countries influential on the Palestine issue, it appears to be reserving its efforts for the post-ceasefire phase and the war's aftermath, particularly in areas where it excels, such as relief operations. Türkiye has already mobilized several relief and medical campaigns to Egypt near the Egyptian-Palestinian border and announced plans to build a field hospital in GS. Additionally, Türkiye's considerable experience in reconstruction and its reliable performance could play a significant role in the rebuilding process. This may also extend to a political process that emerges after the war, with Türkiye proposing to serve as a guarantor state for the Palestinian side, alongside other guarantors for both Israeli and Palestinian parties.

At the time of writing this report, Ankara has not provided many details about this proposal, which appears to still be in its early stages and under discussion with various parties. However, the core idea is that a ceasefire without a corresponding political process will likely lead to future military confrontations and escalation. The political process, according to Türkiye, should be based on a two-state solution,

but with a different approach this time. Türkiye envisions the involvement of third-party countries and entities, particularly in GS and WB, to disengage the two sides, monitor the situation, and prevent further escalation. This model draws on examples like Cyprus, where Türkiye, Greece and Britain act as guarantor states, the South Caucasus between Armenia and Azerbaijan (with Russia and Türkiye as guarantors), and to a lesser extent, Syria (with Türkiye and Russia as guarantors).

Türkiye has generally aimed to separate its relations with Israel from its stance on Palestinian issues. While Türkiye will not hesitate to criticize Israel for actions against Palestinians or holy sites, this does not necessarily mean relations will break down as they have in the past, which was evident during the reporting period. However, the results of the March 2024 Turkish local elections, in which AKP suffered significant losses, signaled public dissatisfaction with Erdoğan, his government, and their handling of GS and Palestine. This outcome has prompted Erdoğan and his government to adopt clearer measures in support of the Palestinians and the resistance, escalating actions against Israel to the point of freezing trade relations and refusing to resume them until the aggression on GS ceases, in addition to backing South Africa's case against Israel at the ICC.

Third: Iran

Operation al-Aqsa Flood dramatically shifted strategic expectations. Prior to the operation on 7/10/2023, the focus within political, security and strategic circles throughout 2022 was primarily on two key issues. Firstly, there was considerable attention on the growing normalization process between Arab countries and Israel, with keen anticipation regarding the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's stance on this normalization, which the Israeli side has confirmed is advancing. It was widely assumed that further Arab and Muslim countries would follow suit in normalizing relations with Israel, potentially diminishing the priority of the Palestine issue for the peoples of the region. The second event was the Israeli army's confrontation with PIJ in the "Unity of the Arenas" battle that broke out in early August 2022, in addition to the resistance operations that took place in WB. It is important to note that the concept of "Unity of the Arenas" had previously been a concern for



Israel, which recognized the difficulty of fighting a war on more than one front and is incapable of withstanding a full-scale confrontation that would reach deep into Israel.⁶⁸ Reserve Colonel Kobi Merom told Israel's Channel 13 that he thinks this will not be the image of the next war. The challenge is to confront Hizbullah and Hamas. The war will not be confined to a single arena but will unfold across multiple arenas, significantly larger in scale, with thousands of rockets targeting the home front and resulting in hundreds of casualties and extensive damage.⁶⁹

The third issue in 2022 was the failure of negotiations between Iran and the US regarding Iran's nuclear program. In that year, indirect nuclear negotiations between Iran and the US have persisted without yielding any tangible results. Certain Israeli officials have acknowledged exerting pressure on the Biden administration to refrain from entering into such an agreement. Additionally, both Israel and the US have maintained their rhetoric and implied military threats against Iran, citing the need for "open options" to deter Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

As these negotiations faltered, Israeli statements and threats of military action against this program were relatively muted. However, as Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid became convinced that a deal was becoming increasingly unlikely, he reprioritized national security challenges to focus on countering resistance in WB and the urgent need to strengthen the PA, which was increasingly losing influence.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, National Security Adviser and National Security Council Director Eyal Hulata declared to the 2022 Israel Democracy Institute Annual Conference on National Security and Democracy that "The main security challenge facing Israel continues to be Iran and it is multi-dimensional. The Iranian nuclear issue and Iran's activity in the region are the heart of the matter."⁷¹

Furthermore, Israel capitalized on the wave of protests in Iran following the death of young woman Mahsa Amini, which began in late 2022. Israeli media cited experts in Tel Aviv who emphasized the opportunity to leverage what they termed the "anti-veil protests in Iran" as a means to overthrow the regime.⁷²

One of the most significant and strategically influential events of 2022 was the reestablishment of relations between Hamas and Syria after years of estrangement. This resurgence has been debated and criticized in numerous Palestinian and Arab circles. Iran and Hizbullah in Lebanon played direct roles in facilitating this reconciliation, with the shared goal of uniting all forces in the resistance against Israel. Actually, Operation al-Aqsa Flood underscored the strategic effectiveness

of expanding the resistance front against Israel. This was particularly evident in the subsequent need for broad support for Hamas and the Palestinian population in GS.

Iran has maintained its stance of rejecting any form of normalization with Israel across different levels. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian “slammed the move of some Islamic countries to establish and normalize ties with the Zionist regime as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause. Amirabdollahian reiterated that those countries will regret their move.”⁷³ On the occasion of Quds Day, the Leader of the Revolution, Sayyed Ali Khamenei, underscored that “all of Palestine has turned into an arena of resistance,” emphasizing that “no scheme or plan about Palestine is implementable in the absence of Palestine or against the consent of its owners, the Palestinians. This means that all former agreements.... have been nullified.”⁷⁴

Determinants of the Iranian Position

1. Reiterating the pivotal role of Palestine in Iranian foreign policy, particularly in supporting Palestinian resistance and rejecting recognition of Israel.
2. Geopolitical considerations and Iran’s aspiration to bolster its regional presence and influence as a pivotal force, safeguarding significant gains achieved in preceding years.
3. Iran aims to uphold its strategic alliances with affiliated forces and movements in the region, particularly those aligned with the resistance front. This entails bolstering the strength and influence of these movements while ensuring their continued relevance in the regional landscape.
4. Iran seeks to fortify its regional deterrence capabilities, with a specific focus on managing relations with Israel. Accumulating strength is regarded as a pivotal Iranian strategic imperative in this regard.
5. Iran’s desire to steer clear of entanglement in a widespread regional conflict or direct confrontation with the US is evident. The swift dispatch of US warships to the region serves as a clear message aimed at dissuading Iran from direct participation in the standoff.
6. The challenges confronting the Iranian economy amidst ongoing international sanctions, soaring inflation rates and the depreciation of the Iranian currency.



7. Iran's immediate focus on de-escalation with the US and European countries, alongside sustained engagement with influential regional stakeholders.

Iranian Stance on Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the Israeli War on Gaza Strip

Iran, like other parties, was taken aback by the Hamas attack on 7/10/2023 in the GS envelope. This occurred at a critical juncture for Iran, as it had recently finalized a prisoner exchange agreement with the US, unlocking \$6 billion of its frozen oil revenues in South Korea just two months prior.⁷⁵ The attack coincided with Iran's efforts to ease tensions in regional relations, exemplified by its landmark agreement with Saudi Arabia on 10/3/2024.⁷⁶ This analysis delves into Iran's response to Operation al-Aqsa Flood, examining the factors influencing its stance and actions.

Iran has consistently backed the resistance since the war's onset. However, its stance on Operation al-Aqsa Flood was marked by meticulous calculations and intricate balancing acts, aiming to safeguard and fortify gains while averting potential adverse repercussions.

From the outset, Iran has been eager to disassociate itself from the October 7th attack orchestrated by Hamas. It has stressed that the operation was an independent decision made by Palestinian resistance factions based on their own assessments and considerations. At the same time, the Iranian leadership across all branches (including the Supreme Leader, the Presidency, the government, the military, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), legislative bodies and the media...) has provided robust political backing to the Resistance. They have hosted prominent delegations from Hamas and resistance factions, and has consistently adopted and defended the resistance and its objectives in both regional and international forums. While denying direct involvement in the October 7th attack, Iran has lauded the operation and reiterated its solidarity with the Palestinian resistance. This support was evident during Operation al-Aqsa Flood and in response to Israeli war on GS, where Iran endorsed the political and on-the-ground strategies pursued by the Palestinian resistance in managing the war. Since the outset of the war, Iran has demonstrated a clear intention to swiftly conclude hostilities and secure a lasting ceasefire. Iranian diplomacy, spearheaded by Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, has diligently pursued this goal. Despite its reluctance to engage directly in the war theater and to avert escalation into a broader regional conflict,

Iran has encouraged its allied forces in Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq to actively support the Palestinian resistance, tailoring its involvement to the specific circumstances of each theater. It is evident that Iran has played a significant yet undisclosed role in coordinating actions across the various theaters of the conflict. In terms of public interaction, the Iranian streets witnessed a wide mass movements in support of the resistance and the Palestinians in GS, similar to the ongoing state of popular sympathy in the Arab and Muslim world.

On the morning after the Operation on 8/10/2023, the world and the region entered a new phase of calculations and expectations, creating confusion among Israel's allies and international sponsors; the US and European countries. These countries issued stern warnings to Iran and Hizbullah, specifically threatening repercussions if they participated in the confrontations against Israel that erupted following Operation al-Aqsa Flood. Meanwhile, people in most Arab and Muslim countries took to the streets, raising slogans in support of the Palestine issue and the resistance.

From the outset of the operation, Israel directly accused Iran, when Israeli President Isaac Herzog said that the attack was “supported and directed by their [Hamas] proxy commanders in Iran.”⁷⁷ *The Wall Street Journal* newspaper also confirmed that “Iranian security officials helped plan Hamas’s Saturday surprise attack on Israel.”⁷⁸

Perhaps the aim of these accusations might have been to downplay Hamas’ ability to carry out such an operation, which revealed two contradictory types of accumulations. The first is the positive accumulation in Hamas’ capabilities, notably in terms of preparation, training, steadfastness and determination, which led to the success of this exceptional operation. The second is the negative accumulation of a decline in Israeli deterrence over the past three decades, including the drop in army personnel morale and distrust of its political leadership, which was starkly revealed by Operation al-Aqsa Flood. This prompted an urgent US alert and threats from President Biden to Iran not to engage in this confrontation. He stated, “we stand ready to offer all appropriate means of support to the Government and people of Israel,” and added that “Israel has a right to defend itself and its people. The United States warns against any other party hostile to Israel seeking advantage in this situation.”⁷⁹



At the same time, the US has raised doubts about Iran's role in what happened. A senior White House official told reporters "It's too early to say whether the state of Iran was directly involved or planning, supporting," and "We are going to be looking at that very closely," adding, "That said, there's no doubt Hamas is funded, equipped, armed by Iran and others." As for President Biden, he stated that "The United States unequivocally condemns this appalling assault against Israel," and added, "The United States warns against any other party hostile to Israel seeking advantage in this situation. My Administration's support for Israel's security is rock solid and unwavering."⁸⁰ From the outset, Iran, under the leadership of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, disclaimed any involvement in Operation al-Aqsa Flood and stressed that "this action was carried out by the Palestinians themselves. Intelligent designers, the brave youth, and active, self-sacrificing Palestinians have been able to create this epic," and that Israel "has suffered an irreparable defeat, both in terms of military and intelligence," adding, "that this devastating earthquake has managed to destroy some of the main structures of the usurping regime's rule, which cannot be rebuilt so easily."⁸¹

This is how Hamas's Operation al-Aqsa Flood shifted the focus of discussions, analysis and strategic expectations away from the normalization process, negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, and the future of the Palestine issue. Instead, it initiated a debate about the future of Israel itself. Hamas's operation disrupted the Israeli security and military foundations, exposing the inability of these sectors to anticipate, confront or thwart the attack.

The questions that arose following Operation al-Aqsa Flood concern the capabilities of the resistance and its allies, the regional and international situation, and the potential for a major confrontation in the region. This is especially pertinent after the US deployed an aircraft carrier to the Mediterranean to protect Israel and deter any potential interventions by other parties, such as Iran.

Iran promptly endorsed the operation after it occurred. However, in his praise, Khamenei carefully emphasized that this Palestinian action "was a response to the crimes of the usurping enemy," and that Iran had no role in either its planning or execution. Speaking at the joint graduation ceremony for the cadets studying in the academies of Iran's Armed Forces, Khamenei stated, "We praise the minds and efforts of the resourceful, intelligent designers and the brave youth of Palestine... But those who say that non-Palestinians are behind what the Palestinians have done

do not know the Palestinian nation. They underestimate the Palestinian nation.” He explained that “the courageous, self-sacrificing move of the Palestinians was a response to the crimes of the usurping enemy, which have continued for many years,” and that after Israel:

has been slapped in the face, it has adopted the policy of playing the victim...The media that is owned by Global Arrogance helps it show that it is oppressed...This show of innocence is one hundred percent false. It is a lie! Just because the Palestinian mujahideen [resistance fighters] have been able to escape the siege on Gaza and reach the military and non-military Zionist centers, does that mean the Zionists are innocent?... It is oppressive, aggressive, ignorant, and talking nonsense.⁸²

In later statements, Khamenei asserted that “The war in Gaza isn’t a war between Gaza and Israel. It’s a war between falsehood and truth,” and emphasized that “when we take a closer look at what is taking place, we realize that the victors in this battle are the people of Gaza and Palestine.”⁸³ Also, in a meeting with a number of the academic elites and outstanding scientific talents, Khamenei highlighted the following aspects of Operation al-Aqsa Flood:⁸⁴

- “No matter what the Zionist regime does, it will not be able to compensate for the disgraceful defeat that it has experienced.”
- “What numerous intelligence reports show us is that current policy these days—that is, the Zionist regime’s policy during the past week—is being formulated by the US,” and that “The current usurping government of the Zionist regime must definitely be prosecuted today. They must be prosecuted, and the US government must realize it is responsible in this matter.”
- “Those who are in the settlements are not civilians at all. They are all armed.”
- “What the world is seeing is the genocidal crime of the usurping regime,” and “The bombings must stop immediately.”

In another meeting, Khamenei said:

The events that have unfolded in recent days in Palestine, especially the bombings and the martyrdom of the women, the children, and the men there, have wounded people’s hearts. However, another part of these events have revealed the incredible power of Islam in Palestine...this movement that has begun in Palestine will progress and lead to the complete victory of the Palestinians.⁸⁵



The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations reaffirmed Khamenei's earlier statement regarding Operation al-Aqsa Flood, asserting that Tehran had no involvement. It associated this stance with the "the inherent right of self-defense for all Palestinians under international law," adding, "Iran unwaveringly stands in solidarity with Palestine; however, it is important to note that Iran is not involved in Palestine's response, as these actions are solely determined by the Palestinians themselves."⁸⁶

Immediately after the operation, IRGC Leader, Major General Hossein Salami, declared that "Israel can no longer 'roister as it used to,' stressing that its era of insolence has ended," adding that, "Today is the end of the occupation and its aggression," and "The heroic Palestinians are pursuing and arresting the [Israeli] soldiers without any fears."⁸⁷ In another later speech, Salami said, "The event that shocked the world is an unprecedented event beyond the imagination of all experts, thinkers, strategists, and politicians of the world." He added, "The biggest defeat in the history of the existence of the fake Zionist regime since 1948 for this regime and the biggest victory for the Palestinian movement happened in the Al-Aqsa Flood operation."⁸⁸

On another level, in terms of coordination and consultation between Hamas and Iran, Khamenei met the head of Hamas' political bureau Isma'il Haniyyah in Tehran. Iranian state media said that the latter "briefed Khamenei on the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the crimes of the Zionist regime in Gaza, as well as the developments in the West Bank." Iran's state TV said, "Ayatollah Khamenei praised the steadfastness and resilience of the people of Gaza and expressed strong regret over the crimes of the Zionist regime, supported directly by Washington and some Western countries," while Iran's Tasnim news agency said that Khamenei "emphasized Tehran's consistent policy of supporting the Palestinian resistance forces against the Zionist occupiers."⁸⁹

Former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, have hailed the attack as "a significant achievement for the Palestinian people." He emphasized that "after the Arab Spring this is the most important event that happens in the Middle East," and "What has been achieved belongs to the Palestinian people."⁹⁰

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanani, emphasizing the unity of Iranian discourse on Operation al-Aqsa Flood and framing it as a victory for resistance movements, said, "Today's operation opened a new page in the field of

resistance and armed operations against the occupiers,” adding that it is “a turning point in the ongoing process of armed resistance by the Palestinian people.”⁹¹

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi called the leaders of the Palestinian resistance movements, Hamas and PIJ, following Operation al-Aqsa Flood. He spoke with Haniyyah, and expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the Hamas fighters and all the combatants on the battlefields, describing it a “victorious operation.”⁹² Speaking at the Tehran International Conference on Palestine, Ebrahim Raisi described the Palestine issue as “the most important concern of the Islamic world and the entire world of humanity,” adding that, “the solution to end the occupation is expulsion, punishment and forcing the occupier to pay damages.”⁹³

Iran’s comments and positions on Operation al-Aqsa Flood, particularly from the Foreign Ministry, evolved through distinct stages. In the first stage, Iran supported the operation, denied any involvement, and framed it as a victory and a significant event that revealed Israeli failures and weaknesses.

In the second stage, as the war on GS escalated into a brutal bombardment targeting civilians, including women and children, and the destruction of civilian and medical institutions, mosques and churches amid unprecedented official Western silence, Iran issued threats. They warned that continued aggression would expand the war in the region.

In the third stage, Iran initiated diplomatic efforts at Arab, Islamic and international levels to halt the Israeli war and genocide committed against the Palestinian people in GS. Iran also stressed that the Axis of Resistance factions independently make their own decisions, and that Iran does not dictate actions to anyone. This was reiterated by Quds Force commander Brigadier General Esmail Qaani, who stated, “The resistance groups grew step by step, and today all the elements of the resistance front at the regional level are the owners of their own decisions and judgments.”⁹⁴

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian stressed in a telephone conversation with his Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijjarto that “The continuation of the Israeli regime’s attacks on Gaza under the current circumstances will complicate the situation and increase the possibility of the spread of war.”⁹⁵ Amirabdollahian also said, “If the Americans don’t want the war to spread in the region, they need to control Israel,” and “highlighted the importance of holding a high-level meeting of Islamic countries on Palestine.”⁹⁶

The Iranian foreign minister threatened to open new fronts through other resistance movements against Israel if the war and siege on GS continue, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. Upon his arrival in Lebanon, Amirabdollahian emphasized that the “Islamic Republic will continue to support the Palestinian nation and the resistance movement in the occupied territories,” and that “some Western officials asked me if it is possible to open new fronts against the Zionist regime, and I said that continuing war crimes by the Zionists, any possibility from other resistance currents is possible,” he added.⁹⁷

The statements and positions of the Iranian Foreign Minister, consistent with those of other Iranian officials at various levels, and in contrast to the positions of any Arab or Muslim countries, have always connected Operation al-Aqsa Flood with the end of Israel.

For Amirabdollahian, the incident was a true disaster for Israel, which “is in its worst state, and the ‘Al-Aqsa Flood’ operation has proven that, and the American presence alongside Israel proves that it is on the verge of complete collapse.” He added that the forced displacement in Gaza indicates that Israel is experiencing unprecedented confusion and shock. It cannot emerge victorious from this war, and the world bears responsibility for the war crimes it committed, adding also that it is the resistance that will set the conditions if the current war of aggression is halted. Amirabdollahian proposed “holding an emergency meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation regarding the situation in Gaza.” In a call with the UN Secretary-General, he emphasized the need for legal action regarding Israel’s crimes and asserted that “no one can impose a project on the Palestinian people.”⁹⁸

Minister Amirabdollahian warned of the threat of a wider war if the aggression is not halted, saying, “We hope that political efforts will prevent the war from expanding, otherwise no one knows what will happen in the next hour; Iran cannot remain as a spectator to this situation.” He added, “If the scope of the war expands, heavy losses will befall the U.S. as well.”⁹⁹

In an interview with the National Public Radio (NPR) in New York City, when attending a General Assembly session on the war in Gaza, on 27/10/2023, Amirabdollahian said, “I met with some leaders of the countries of my region and with the leaders of the resistance in Lebanon and also the Palestinian groups... What I gathered from the plans that they have—they have their finger on the trigger,” adding, “I believe that if this situation continues and women and children

and civilians are still killed in Gaza and the West Bank, anything will be possible... Therefore they have their own calculations for their own security, and as I've said they decide for themselves.”¹⁰⁰

On the diplomatic front, Amirabdollahian met with UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Tor Wennesland and stated that “If the United Nations wants to do something, it should immediately stop the Israeli regime’s attacks, especially against citizens and civilians.”¹⁰¹ “We had close and continuous consultations with Russia and China for a ceasefire and the cessation of war in Gaza and the West Bank.” In another event he stated, “We had close and continuous consultations with Russia and China for a ceasefire and the cessation of war in Gaza and the West Bank.”¹⁰²

This is how Iran’s positions have supported Operation al-Aqsa Flood since its announcement, linking this support to the right of Hamas and other resistance movements to defend themselves against the Israeli occupation’s decades-long crimes against the Palestinian people. Iran has hinted at expanding the scope of the war to exert pressure and stop the war on GS. Additionally, Iran has engaged in active diplomatic efforts at international, Arab and Islamic levels to try to stop the war, but to no avail.

In parallel to these Iranian diplomatic endeavors, Israel linked the attacks on Syria to a warning that Iran should not interfere in the war. The Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated that Israel’s strikes on Syria during Amirabdollahian’s visit to Damascus were a warning to Iran and all “terrorist organizations” to stay out of war. He clarified that the strike was not intended to target the minister but served as a warning to Syria, which acts as a corridor for delivering Iranian missiles to Hizbullah.¹⁰³ A spokesperson for US Central Command (CENTCOM) told *Newsweek* magazine, “We are monitoring across the region for any indicators or warnings that these groups [Iran’s allied forces] would consider piling on or entering this conflict in a way that escalates it.”¹⁰⁴

US President Joe Biden categorically denied an Israeli media report claiming that “Biden officials have indicated to Israel...that if Hezbollah initiates a war against Israel, the US military will join” the Israeli forces in fighting it. Speaking to reporters, he claimed that it “was never said.” White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby added to reporters that there was “no intention to put US boots on the ground in combat.”¹⁰⁵

Ramifications and Projections

Iran's stance during Operation al-Aqsa Flood had numerous repercussions, the most significant being the resurgence of tension in Iranian-Western relations ensued, evidenced by the US House of Representatives' decision on 30/11/2023 to reinstate the freeze on the \$6 billion previously lifted on 10/8/2023 and deposited into Qatari banks, before being accessed by Iran.¹⁰⁶ Subsequent to Iran's assault on Israel on 13/4/2024, the US, along with several European countries, imposed additional sanctions on Iran.¹⁰⁷

Iran's calculated positions, initially limited to political and media support at the beginning of the conflict, fell short of the expectations of Palestinian, Arab and Muslim public, given the promises and positions expressed in previous years. Many within these circles perceived Iran's response as falling short during a critical moment when robust support, beyond mere political and media endorsements, was direly needed. However, Iran's image and status experienced a notable enhancement following Hizbullah's significant involvement on the northern front during the months of the confrontation. Additionally, the escalating role of the Yemeni Ansar Allah group in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea, particularly in actions against Israeli shipping and vessels bound for Israeli ports, further contributed to this improvement. Moreover, the participation of the Iraqi resistance also played a role in bolstering Iran's reputation and standing. In a late March 2024 Jordanian elite opinion poll, it was revealed that Iran's reputation and influence in the Arab world saw a 42% increase due to its stance on the GS war. Additionally, 45% of respondents stated that Iran and its allies' position contributed to the reduction of sectarian divisions in the region.¹⁰⁸

Iran successfully navigated the initial challenge of applying the slogan of Unity of the Arenas among the parties within the Axis of Resistance. The increased involvement of its allied forces in the conflict marks a tangible step forward, offering potential for further advancement in realizing the slogan.

The conflict has significantly impacted Israel's strategic standing in the region, tarnishing its reputation as a regional stabilizer and a bastion of Western influence. It has also hindered progress in normalization efforts and fueled increased backing from Arab, Muslim and international public for Hamas and the resistance factions. This dynamic bolstered Iran's political stance, particularly given the perceived

inadequacy of Arab official interaction with the resistance and responses to the brutal Israeli aggression on GS.

In the forthcoming period, Iran is expected to persist in navigating a cautious and balanced strategy concerning the Palestine issue. Within this framework, Iran aims to bolster its backing for the Palestinian resistance and its regional footprint while sustaining a trend of improved relations across the region. Additionally, Iran is likely to pursue efforts to defuse tensions in its dealings with the US and Western countries.

Fourth: Other Muslim Countries

Malaysia

Despite facing internal economic and political crises, and external pressures to normalize relations with Israel, the Malaysian government has maintained its consistent stance on the Palestine issue. It continued to align with the Malaysian people in supporting Palestinian rights, including their right to resist Israeli occupation. Malaysian Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah emphasized that Malaysia will remain loyal to Palestine and committed to supporting it until the occupation ends. In a call with PA Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki, he emphasized Malaysia's solidarity with Palestine against Israeli crimes, particularly those targeting *al-Aqsa* Mosque and other holy sites, and highlighted Malaysia's refusal to normalize relations with Israel, including its decision to ban Israeli players from entering the country.¹⁰⁹

Given the strong ties between Malaysian policymakers and the Palestinian resistance, particularly Hamas, it was not surprising that Israeli intelligence, Mossad, tracked Palestinian activity in Malaysia. According to Malaysian media, Mossad recruited a cell of at least 11 Malaysians to monitor Palestinian activists. The cell reportedly kidnapped a Palestinian IT expert from GS in central Kuala Lumpur on 28/9/2022, taking him to a rural house on the city's outskirts. However, Malaysian intelligence intervened within 24 hours, arresting the kidnappers and rescuing the hostage. Investigations revealed that the Mossad cell was spying on key sites, including airports, and hacking government electronic companies. Malaysian sources indicated the possible presence of other Mossad cells.¹¹⁰

Upon taking office, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim reaffirmed his country's unwavering support for the Palestine issue in a phone call with Hamas leader Isma'il Haniyyah, and expressed openness to continued communication with Hamas.¹¹¹

Echoing the Malaysian Prime Minister's stance, Malaysian Foreign Minister Zambry Abdul Kadir affirmed Malaysia's foreign policy commitment to criminalizing Israel's apartheid policy as a crime against humanity and a form of ethnic cleansing. He emphasized that Israel's actions violate humanitarian principles and international law. Kadir stressed that the government, through its international contacts, remains focused on ending the suffering of the Palestinian people and securing their legitimate rights to establish an independent state. This official position has been welcomed by grassroots organizations in Malaysia advocating for Palestinian rights. In May 2023, Minister Abdul Kadir met with representatives and leaders of these organizations during Malaysia's *Nakbah* commemoration. According to Professor Mohammad Nazari, former head of the Faculty of Accountancy at the University of Malaya, the government, as a result of this meeting, committed to opposing any form of normalization with Israel until the Palestinian people secure their rights, and to condemning Israeli crimes in all international forums.¹¹²

Regarding the Israeli aggression against *al-Aqsa* Mosque, Malaysia strongly condemned the incursion by Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. The Malaysian Foreign Ministry stated that the "orchestrated incursion was a clear provocation and aggression against the political status quo of Jerusalem and Al-Haram Al-Sharif." It called on the international community "to hold the Israeli regime accountable for the continued act of provocation and aggression," and stressed that the UN Security Council must "immediately demand the regime to halt acts of provocation in the interest of peace and stability in the region."¹¹³

In a joint statement, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah urged the UN Security Council to "demand the occupying power halt its heinous crimes against humanity as well as apartheid policies against the Palestinians, with a view to ending the occupation and achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East." This statement followed Ibrahim's meeting with Bolkiah in the Malaysian city of Putrajaya. The two leaders reiterated "their unwavering position that the Palestinians deserve their right to an

independent and sovereign state of their own, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.”¹¹⁴

In the context of the Israeli war on GS and the attempts by the US and various countries to criminalize and distort the Palestinian resistance following the resistance operation on 7/10/2023, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim addressed the Malaysian parliament, stating that his country does not support the Western pressure to denounce Hamas. He remarked, “Western and European countries have repeatedly asked Malaysia to condemn Hamas in meetings,” and added, “we, as a policy, have a relationship with Hamas from before and this will continue.” He stressed, “as such, we don’t agree with their pressuring attitude, as Hamas too won in Gaza freely through elections and Gazans chose them to lead.”¹¹⁵

Since the start of the Israeli war, Malaysia has consistently used international platforms to defend GS. Malaysia, along with Indonesia and Brunei, issued a statement at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit held in November 2023 in San Francisco, diverging from the US administration’s stance. The statement highlighted the significant disagreement between these countries and the US president regarding the situation in GS, describing it as a “catastrophe.”¹¹⁶

Malaysian Foreign Minister Zambry Abdul Kadir called for Israel to be prosecuted for war crimes in the ICJ, stressing that failure to prosecute it would set a dangerous precedent, enabling criminals worldwide. He further criticized the international community for its lack of decisive action in lifting the siege on GS.¹¹⁷

In response to US actions, Malaysia firmly rejected the proposed US law aimed at imposing sanctions on entities supporting Hamas and PIJ. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim stated that any sanctions on Malaysia could influence the government’s assessment of American companies and impact investment opportunities for them in Malaysia.¹¹⁸

On 20/12/2023, the Malaysian government took a notable step by overturning a previous government decision that allowed, since 2005, all Israeli owned and flagged ships, as well as any vessels headed to Israel, to dock at its ports.¹¹⁹ This move is seen as a form of pressure, occurring at a time when the US administration and its allies from the normalization countries were urging Malaysia to participate in the normalization process. However, Operation al-Aqsa Flood has halted this initiative.

Pakistan

In 2022–2023, Pakistan maintained its support for the Palestine issue despite reported pressure to pursue normalization. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan criticized the position of Muslim countries on key issues affecting the Muslim world, particularly Palestine and Kashmir. He said, “We have failed both the Palestinians and the people of Kashmir. I am sad to say that we have been able to make no impact at all,” adding, “We (Muslims) are 1.5 billion people and yet our voice to stop this blatant injustice is insignificant.”¹²⁰

In April 2022, Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the Israeli forces for their incursion into the courtyards of *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Pakistan reaffirmed its steadfast support for the Palestinian people and the Palestine issue, which has long been a cornerstone of its foreign policy. Pakistan also urged the international community to take immediate action to halt Israeli violations which Islamabad claimed were exacerbating violence, tension and instability in the region.¹²¹

In the previous strategic report, we observed various pressures exerted on Pakistan to normalize relations with Israel throughout 2020–2021. However, Pakistani resilience and popular opposition to normalization continued in 2022–2023. This was reaffirmed by Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari who emphasized that there was a national consensus to support both the Palestinian and Kashmiri people, irrespective of the country’s leadership. He reiterated that Pakistan would not normalize relations with Israel, stressing that the priority was for the Palestinian people to secure their rights first. He also condemned the assassination of Shireen Abu Akleh, while she was wearing the press vest, describing it as an act of unprecedented brutality. The minister expressed hope that Palestinian factions would unite in their pursuit of freedom and reaffirmed Pakistan’s unwavering support for the Palestinian people, pledging that Pakistan would not abandon Palestine, especially in its most challenging times.¹²²

Addressing a crowd of supporters, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) leader Fazlur Rehman said, “A certain lobby in Pakistan was advocating for recognizing and normalizing relations with Israel. However, your gathering here, at this moment, has raised a strong voice against the ideology of that certain lobby in Pakistan, foiling their plans and silencing them to the point where no one in Pakistan will dare speak of normalizing relations with Israel again.”¹²³

Later, the government took a decisive step to reinforce its commitment against normalization in any form. Pakistani Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, announced that a Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) anchor who visited Israel was terminated. In a press conference on 30/5/2022, the minister stated, “A policy which was in contradiction with the people’s wishes and aspirations could not be implemented.” She emphasized that “Pakistan was committed to its traditional and principled position on the Palestinian issue and Israel.” The minister also noted that the Foreign Office had “already made it clear that no delegation from the country visited Israel.”¹²⁴

As tensions escalated in WB and Jerusalem at the beginning of 2023, particularly due to repeated Israeli aggression on *al-Aqsa* Mosque, Pakistan’s representative to the UN, Munir Akram, voiced his country’s concern over the worsening situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, during a Security Council meeting. He emphasized that “the year 2022 was among the deadliest for the Palestinian people,” and conveyed that Pakistan “is also deeply alarmed by Israel’s ongoing acts of aggression, incitement and provocation against Islamic and Christian holy places.” Akram condemned “the provocative visit of Israeli Minister of National Security to the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Al-Aqsa is a holy site revered by Muslims around the world.” Further stating that the “violation of its sanctity offends the religious sensitivities of Muslims all over the world and inflames an already tense situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.” He stressed his country’s rejection of “all Israeli measures and attempts to alter the historical and legal status quo of the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque,” and urged the Security Council to “act swiftly and resolutely to bring a halt to all such Israeli violations, ensure its full compliance with International Law, and implement its own resolutions.” He also noted that “Israel’s sense of impunity” has made it persist in taking “punitive measures” against the Palestinian people.¹²⁵

Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari later said, “It would not be possible for Pakistan to normalize relations with Israel without first, the people of Palestine making that decision.” He emphasized, “Our country is clear, our history is clear, our people are clear,” Zardari expressed pride in the fact that “our passport never recognized an apartheid state,” adding, “our passports used to say that our passports are valid for all countries except South Africa and Israel.” He concluded, “Today, there is one apartheid state left in the world, and Pakistan does not recognize it.”¹²⁶

Following the repeated violent attacks on Jenin RC in 2023, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry issued a statement calling on the international community to fulfill its responsibility to halt these illegal actions by Israeli occupation forces and take steps to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people's human rights.¹²⁷

In October 2023, the Pakistani Foreign Office condemned the Israeli aggression against GS, denouncing the attack on the National Baptist Hospital as inhumane, unjustifiable, a grave violation of international law and a war crime.¹²⁸

In the same context, Pakistan's representative to the UN, Munir Akram, emphasized that Muslim countries could leverage economic, diplomatic and other means to pressure Israel and support GS. He also underscored the importance of finding common ground among Muslim countries to develop a unified strategy for exerting such pressure.¹²⁹

Indonesia

During 2022–2023, Israel continued its efforts to penetrate Muslim countries and encourage normalization. Despite strong public opposition in Indonesia, one Israeli initiative succeeded. In January 2022, a Zionist institution Yad Vashem opened the first permanent exhibition on the Nazi genocide of Jews during World War II on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. Yad Vashem chairman Dani Dayan said, "We will be happy to open an exhibition wherever there's interest in the memory of the Holocaust and its commemoration, and all the more so in the largest Muslim country in the world."¹³⁰

Later, Indonesian President Joko Widodo, during a press conference with Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh in Jakarta, emphasized the close friendship and longstanding solidarity between Palestine and Indonesia. He underscored the importance of achieving Palestinian national unity and expressed Indonesia's readiness to fully support efforts toward Palestinian national reconciliation.¹³¹

During the UN Security Council's open debate on the Middle East and the Palestine issue in January 2023, the Indonesian representative urged the international community to break "the cycle of concern and inaction." She called on Israel to uphold international law and highlighted the looming threat of an economic recession, warning that, for millions of Palestinians, hardships will only multiply.¹³²

Notably, the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) revoked Indonesia's right to host the U-20 World Cup finals, which were scheduled to take place on 20/5–11/6/2023. This decision followed Indonesia's opposition to Israel's participation in the tournament, after the governor of Bali refused to welcome the Israeli team.¹³³

Despite widespread public opposition in Indonesia to normalizing relations with Israel, reports have repeatedly surfaced about efforts to establish such ties. In September 2023, *Yedioth Ahronoth* reported on secret talks between Israeli and Indonesian officials, claiming that Israel has channels of communication with several Indonesian political parties and maintains trade and tourism relations with Jakarta. The paper also alleged that the US administration is working behind the scenes to persuade the Indonesian government to establish relations with Tel Aviv. Nevertheless, Israeli officials are still unsure whether Jakarta will settle for normalization before Saudi Arabia does.¹³⁴

However, Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the subsequent Israeli war have halted any rush by the Muslim country to normalize relations with Israel. The Indonesian president condemned the Israeli war on GS and said, "Indonesia condemns the attacks in Gaza that have resulted in people suffering and an increasing number of civilian casualties, including women and children." Widodo also condemned the Israeli attack on the National Baptist Hospital, citing violations of international humanitarian law. He added, "Indonesia will not stay silent while civilian casualties continue to count, witnessing the ongoing injustices against the Palestinian people." He also called on world leaders to "build a global solidarity to resolve the Palestinian issue fairly by observing agreed international parameters," affirming, "We will continue to voice this issue at various international events and forums."¹³⁵

The strong support for Palestine among the Indonesian public has become a pivotal factor in shaping the country's foreign policies. Some observers argue that Indonesian policymakers' stance on the Palestine issue is a major determinant of their political futures. Comparisons have been made between Indonesia's support for Palestine and the influence of the Israel lobby on US presidential elections, highlighting its impact on domestic politics. In the context of US efforts to build a partnership with Indonesia, the latter's call to end the Israeli war on GS was a central topic in the joint dialogue held in November 2023. However, the



discussions were shaped by the conflicting positions of both countries on the war in occupied Palestine and their potential effects on the future of the ruling parties in each country.¹³⁶

Fifth: Muslim Public Engagement with the Palestine Issue

Muslim public engagement in support of the Palestine issue persisted throughout 2022 and 2023. On Quds Day in April 2022, rallies were organized in various Muslim countries to commemorate the occasion. Mass demonstrations took place in Iranian cities, where participants emphasized their solidarity with Jerusalem and the Palestinian people in their struggle against Israeli occupation. The final statement of these rallies declared that Quds Day symbolizes the unity and cohesion of the *Ummah* in the face of the conspiracies of a hegemonic and arrogant system. In Istanbul, activists gathered, displaying banners in support of Palestine and condemning Israeli measures in the holy city and *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Meanwhile, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, political parties and NGOs organized a demonstration outside the US embassy to mark Quds Day and advocate for the Palestine issue. Demonstrators urged the US to cease its support for Israel and rescind its recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. They also denounced the ongoing attacks on worshippers at *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Leaders of the participating parties and NGOs presented a protest note to the US Embassy, demanding that Washington halts its support for Israel.¹³⁷

In the context of public support for the Palestinian resistance, the International Union of Muslim Scholars reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian resistance in general. The Union's President Ahmed Raissouni expressed strong confidence in Hamas's leadership, steadfastness and decision-making, highlighting its effective management in bolstering resistance against the occupation and addressing the necessities of the struggle against the enemy and its allies.¹³⁸

Observers monitoring the situation and the escalation of Israeli aggression against *al-Aqsa* Mosque at the start of 2023 anticipated further developments. This prompted the Pakistani public to participate in demonstrations organized by Jamaat-e-Islami party leader Siraj ul Haq, where they chanted slogans condemning the Israeli attacks on *al-Aqsa* Mosque.¹³⁹

In light of above developments and the Israeli attacks on holy sites in Jerusalem, as well as the targeting of Palestinian cities, villages and RCs in WB, Operation al-Aqsa Flood represents a significant turning point in the relationship between Muslim peoples and the Palestine issue and its resistance. The choice to name the military operation carried out by the Palestinian resistance on 7/10/2023, as Operation al-Aqsa Flood suggests an awareness that its implications would resonate globally. Israel's excessive targeting of civilians, particularly children and women, who have numbered in the thousands under the onslaught of the Israeli army, has starkly exposed the brutality of its actions. Concurrently, the war in GS has highlighted the impotence of Muslim countries. This realization may have spurred Muslim peoples to organize hundreds of demonstrations and thousands of events in support of the Palestinian people. For instance, Jakarta, the Indonesian capital, witnessed a massive demonstration condemning the Israeli war on GS and calling for a ceasefire. Ministers, party leaders, parliamentarians and leaders of Indonesian Islamic organizations actively participated, with organizers estimating that approximately 1.5 million people took part. Protesters raised slogans demanding the lifting of the siege on GS, the entry of humanitarian aid and an end to the war.¹⁴⁰

In Malaysia, both the government and the people, including Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who have marched in tens of thousands since the start of the war, have condemned the Israeli attacks on GS, demanded an immediate end to the war, and intensified protests against governments that support Israel.¹⁴¹

In Pakistan, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam organized a rally in the city of Larkana, Sindh province, titled "Al-Aqsa Flood" in support of GS and against the Israeli war targeting the Palestinian people. The event was attended by a representative of Hamas, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam leader Fazlur Rehman, and other leaders and figures from various Islamic groups. During the rally, Fazlur Rahman emphasized solidarity with "our Palestinian brothers" and condemned the Israeli atrocities against the people of GS. This rally was part of a broader wave of almost weekly demonstrations organized by different Pakistani political parties in various provinces since the outbreak of the war on GS.¹⁴²

In October 2023, Indian police arrested dozens of pro-Palestinian protesters during a demonstration in New Delhi against Israeli crimes in GS. The event, organized by students, featured slogans advocating for the Palestinian people's right

to resist occupation and condemning the war on GS and the killing of civilians.¹⁴³ In the southern Indian state of Kerala, political parties, activists and Islamic groups also held marches and events calling for an immediate ceasefire. One of these demonstrations drew hundreds of thousands of participants, marking it as one of the largest displays of support for the Palestinian people in India's history.¹⁴⁴ On 5/4/2024, demonstrators took to the streets of Srinagar in the Indian-administered region of Kashmir to protest the Israeli war on GS, expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people and the residents of GS.¹⁴⁵

In May 2024, students in Bangladesh organized a demonstration in response to the student movement on US campuses supporting Palestine and denouncing the Israeli war on GS. Protesters chanted slogans condemning the Israeli attacks and marched toward the US embassy in the capital under tight security. They accused US President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken of being complicit in the “genocide” in GS.¹⁴⁶

Demonstrations in support of the Palestinian people extended beyond the Muslim countries typically associated with the Palestine issue. In Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, a demonstration was held in solidarity with GS and against Israeli aggression. In Kosovo, the non-governmental organization Collective for Feminist Thought and Action organized a march in support of the Palestinian people in Pristina, the capital.¹⁴⁷ Protests also occurred in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, as well as in Belgrade and Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro, advocating for Palestine and GS, while calling for an end to Israeli aggression on GS.¹⁴⁸

In numerous African countries, large crowds took to the streets on Quds Day to condemn the Israeli war on GS. In Nigeria, the Islamic Movement organized mass demonstrations in multiple cities, where protestors chanted slogans against both Israel and the US. In Senegal, rallies were held in the capital, Dakar, expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people in GS and urging the Senegalese government to cut ties with Israel.

In Kenya, activists staging a solidarity protest for Palestinians on 25/1/2024 were met with police violence, including beatings and tear gas in Nairobi.¹⁴⁹ In Niamey, the capital of Niger, demonstrators denounced Israel's crimes in GS and called on the international community to hold Israel accountable. They waved Palestinian flags and set fire to French, US and Israeli flags.¹⁵⁰

Sixth: Normalization and Israeli Relations with Muslim Countries

Israel's efforts to normalize relations with Muslim countries have not ceased, they extended beyond the political sphere, posing potential threats to regional security. Among these efforts, Israel has signed cyber cooperation agreements with Albania. Ironically, this agreement was initiated by Israel following a large-scale cyberattack that temporarily crippled numerous Albanian government websites and digital services. Albanian authorities stated that the cyberattack was too sophisticated to have been carried out by individuals or independent groups, characterizing it as an act of state aggression. Iran was accused of the attack but vehemently denied any involvement. In response, Israel offered assistance to Albania in building a cyber defense system and expressed interest in further expanding cooperation in trade and tourism.¹⁵¹

Throughout 2022 and 2023, Israel made significant diplomatic inroads in several Muslim countries, including Azerbaijan which borders Iran. Despite earlier reports of strong Israeli-Azerbaijani cooperation, formal diplomatic representation and the establishment of an Azerbaijani embassy in Israel did not occur until late 2022. On 18/11/2022, the Azerbaijani parliament decided to open an embassy in Tel Aviv. Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid welcomed the move, stating "Azerbaijan is an important partner of Israel and home to one of the largest Jewish communities in the Muslim world."¹⁵²

This decision was preceded by a visit to Azerbaijan by Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz, during which he met with senior Azerbaijani leaders and signed several military and security cooperation agreements. This came more than six months after the two countries had already signed an agreement to expand economic relations.¹⁵³

Apparently, Israeli-Azerbaijani relations were developing. In May 2023, Israeli President Isaac Herzog visited Azerbaijan at the invitation of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, who said, "During the official visit, we had more opportunities to address important issues on our bilateral agenda. Opening of the Azerbaijani Embassy in Israel this year, of course, will elevate relations on a high level and at the same time, will create more opportunities to have closer interaction." Aliyev added that Azerbaijan provides energy and crude oil to Israel and "during

the discussions we also addressed the issue of how to expand cooperation in the energy field.” He stated:

One of the areas, which we started to cooperate in relatively recently, is the area of cybersecurity... it is not a secret that cybersecurity is an important part of national security of every country. Definitely, great experience of Israeli companies in this area will be helpful to us including training of young generation, education, which will be fundamental factor in order to achieve our goals and protect ourselves from threats.¹⁵⁴

In early 2023, a *Haaretz* investigation revealed that “over the past seven years, 92 cargo flights flown by Azerbaijani Silk Way Airlines have landed at the Ovda airbase, the only airfield in Israel through which explosives may be flown into and out of the country.” The newspaper added, “Israel has had a strategic alliance with Azerbaijan for the past two decades, and Israel sells the large Shi’ite-majority country weapons worth billions of dollars—and in return, Azerbaijan, per sources, supplies Israel with oil and access to Iran,” with which it shares a long border.¹⁵⁵

In February 2022, Israeli sources revealed, a meeting between Israel’s ambassador to Washington, Michael Herzog, and the Turkish, Azerbaijani, Kazakh and Uzbek ambassadors. According to the sources, the meeting aimed to establish a mechanism for cooperation between Israel and these countries in both bilateral and regional fields, as well as to establish a common framework for coordination across various levels.¹⁵⁶

In the same context, the Israeli Foreign Ministry announced that it had hosted two large delegations from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. The Ministry viewed these visits as a reflection of its heightened diplomatic engagement with the countries bordering Iran. As part of the visit program, the delegations held several meetings at the Foreign Ministry headquarters in western Jerusalem, where they received briefings on security matters and the Iranian threat. They also visited the Israeli army’s Southern Command, which oversees GS, where they were briefed on “the threats and security challenges Israel faces.”¹⁵⁷

According to an investigative report based on official Bangladeshi government documents and international export records, Bangladesh, despite not recognizing Israel or having diplomatic relations with it, acquired advanced Israeli surveillance equipment specifically for its National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre (NTMC), “an arm of the Bangladeshi Interior Ministry responsible for tracking

internet and social media use inside the country, as well as for online censorship and eavesdropping on citizens.” One of the cyber companies that supplied Bangladesh with surveillance programs is Passitora, a firm registered in Cyprus and controlled by Tal Dilian, an Israeli businessman and former intel commander.¹⁵⁸

Israeli press leaks have also revealed that the Pakistani Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has been using phone-hacking equipment developed by the Israeli company Cellebrite. Notably, these leaks confirmed that the FIA, along with other Pakistani police units, has been employing Cellebrite software since at least 2012, despite the absence of official relations between Pakistan and Israel.¹⁵⁹

Chadian President Mahamat Déby said during a visit to open the Chadian embassy in Tel Aviv, “This is a country laden with history and this [is] the land of civilization, of all the monotheistic faiths.” He added, “Chad and Israel are today at a decisive turning point in their relationship.” Netanyahu told Déby that Israel sees in Chad “a tremendously important relations with a major country in the heart of Africa. It is something that we want to carry to new levels, new heights.” He also highlighted the role played by the head of Israel’s Mossad intelligence service in orchestrating this relationship.¹⁶⁰

In 2023, Israel made numerous attempts to expand normalization with Muslim countries. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced its efforts to establish contacts with four Arab and Muslim countries, namely Mauritania, Somalia, Niger and Indonesia, aiming to normalize relations and incorporate them into the “Abraham Accords.”¹⁶¹

Later, Israeli Transportation Minister Miri Regev announced that Nigeria’s national airline, Air Peace, commenced direct flights to Israel for the first time on 20/4/2023. This agreement allows airlines from both countries to operate regular flights from Ben Gurion Airport to several destinations in Nigeria, such as Abuja and Lagos.¹⁶²

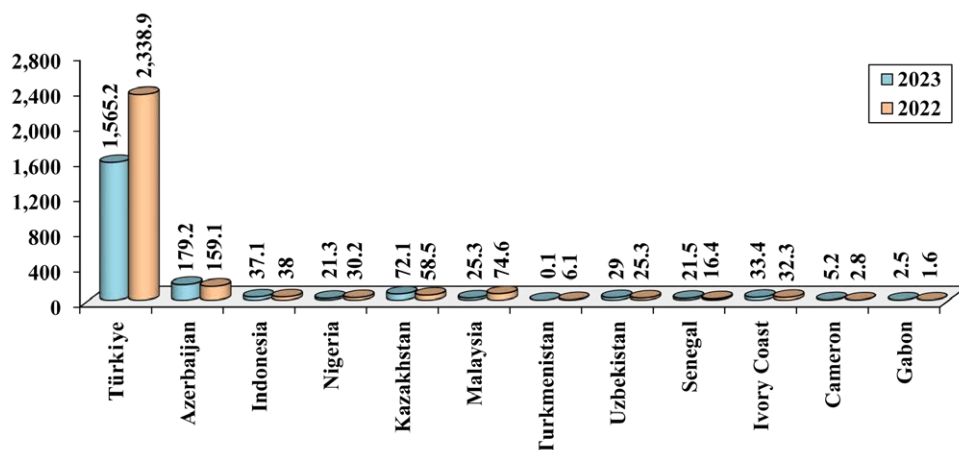
However, all Israeli normalization efforts suffered a significant setback following Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which further revealed Israel’s troubling actions and intensified public pressure to halt normalization.

The following table illustrates the volume of Israeli trade with several non-Arab Muslim countries.

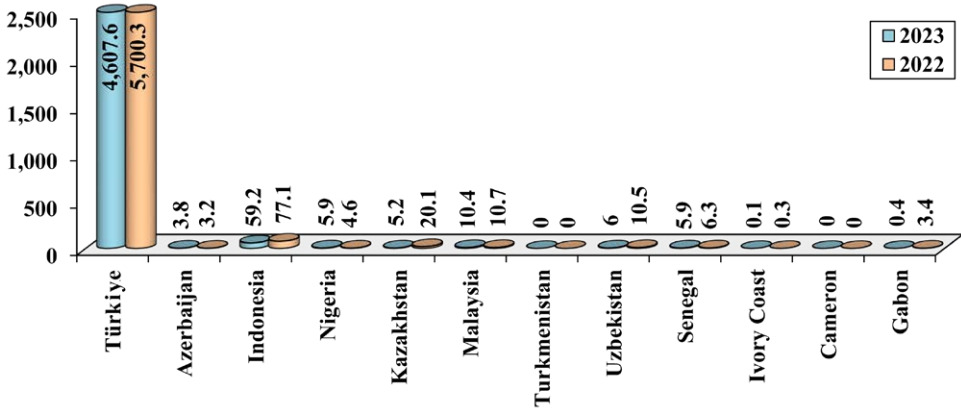
Table 1/7: Israeli Trade Volume with a Number of non-Arab Muslim Countries 2021–2023 (\$ million)¹⁶³

Country	Israeli exports to:			Israeli imports from:		
	2023	2022	2021	2023	2022	2021
Türkiye	1,565.2	2,338.9	1,919.1	4,607.6	5,700.3	4,764.3
Azerbaijan	179.2	159.1	119.7	3.8	3.2	1.8
Indonesia	37.1	38	26.1	59.2	77.1	70.7
Nigeria	21.3	30.2	89.5	5.9	4.6	4.9
Kazakhstan	72.1	58.5	32.7	5.2	20.1	1
Malaysia	25.3	74.6	9	10.4	10.7	10
Turkmenistan	0.1	6.1	15.7	0	0	0.2
Uzbekistan	29	25.3	12.8	6	10.5	3
Senegal	21.5	16.4	9.3	5.9	6.3	3.9
Ivory Coast	33.4	32.3	10.3	0.1	0.3	0.3
Cameroon	5.2	2.8	6.6	0	0	0
Gabon	2.5	1.6	3.2	0.4	3.4	0.5

**Israeli Exports to a Number of Non-Arab Muslim Countries
2022–2023 (\$ million)**



Israeli Imports From a Number of Non-Arab Muslim Countries 2022–2023 (\$ million)



Conclusion

The Muslim world's response to the Palestine issue followed its typical pattern throughout the 2022–2023 reporting period. The OIC remained in a state of “slumber,” characterized by a reliance on traditionalism and formality.

The Turkish model discussed in the report exhibited a more restrained and less reactive approach to events and developments, primarily due to the government's focus on internal political and economic issues and its efforts to strengthen relations with Israel and the Arab “moderation” countries. However, Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the Israeli war on GS came as a shock to these policies, which had been in place for some time. As the pro-resistance and anti-Israeli public sentiment in Türkiye surged, the government shifted its stance, adopting a clearer and more assertive political position, followed by several punitive economic measures. Nevertheless, the Turkish position remained “measured” and fell short of the expectations shaped by the AKP's and Erdoğan's leadership over the past two decades. The party's position appeared to align more closely with its history after losing the March 2024 municipal elections, where many voters penalized it for its stance on the resistance and the war on GS.

The second model examined in the report, the Iranian model, remained steadfast in its principles by consistently refusing to recognize Israel, rejecting normalization and supporting the Palestinian resistance. Consequently, Operation al-Aqsa Flood

aligned with its objectives, and Iran provided political, media, financial and military support while asserting that the operation was a purely Palestinian-Hamas decision. Iran also encouraged its regional allies to support the resistance, with Hizbullah in Lebanon and Ansar Allah (Houthis) in Yemen playing significant roles, along with contributions from the resistance in Iraq.

The official response in several Muslim countries has been positive, including Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Senegal and others. Muslim public engagement has also been significant in many Muslim countries, with large-scale activities and demonstrations taking place in India and Sri Lanka. Additionally, Muslim communities in Europe, US and Australia have actively shown their support for Palestine.

In this context, the momentum for normalization has diminished, leading to an increase in boycotts of Israeli and US goods.

Operation al-Aqsa Flood may represent a historic milestone in the Muslim world's united stance on the Palestine issue and its liberation project.

Endnotes

- ¹ OIC Condemns Incessant Israeli Attacks on the Palestinians in Al-Quds, site of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), 14/2/2022, <https://new.oic-oci.org/SitePages/NewsDetail.aspx?Item=881>
- ² OIC Welcomes Amnesty International Report on Israeli Apartheid against Palestinians, OIC, 3/2/2022, https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=30817&t_ref=19638&lan=en
- ³ OIC Welcomes AU Summit's Decision to Suspend Granting Israel AU Observer Status, OIC, 6/2/2022, https://oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=30822&t_ref=19640&lan=en
- ⁴ Islamabad Declaration 48th Session of OIC Council of Foreign Ministers "Partnering for Unity, Justice and Development" 23 March 2022, OIC, 23/3/2022, https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=33947&t_ref=22694&lan=en
- ⁵ Final Communiqué Adopted by the Open-ended Extraordinary Meeting Of the OIC Executive Committee at the Level of Permanent Representatives to Discuss the Ongoing Israeli Aggression against the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, OIC, 25/4/2022, https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=34972&t_ref=23692&lan=en
- ⁶ Algiers Declaration - The 17th PUIC Conference, site of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC), 29–30/1/2023, <https://en.puic.org/news/13363>
- ⁷ Final Communiqué Adopted by the Open-ended Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to Discuss the Ongoing Israeli Attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque 24 May 2023, OIC, 24/5/2023, https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=38993&t_ref=26432&lan=en
- ⁸ Joint Arab and Islamic Summit Concludes and Demands End to Israeli Aggression, Breaking of Israeli Siege on the Gaza Strip and Prosecution of Israel for its Crimes, OIC, 13/11/2023, https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=39923&t_ref=26755&lan=en
- ⁹ Turkey's Erdoğan calls Israel "terror state" over Palestinian clashes at Al-Aqsa, Reuters, 8/5/2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-accuses-israel-terror-over-palestinian-clashes-al-aqsa-2021-05-08/>
- ¹⁰ Israel must be taught a "lesson," Erdoğan tells Putin, Al Jazeera, 12/5/2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/12/israel-must-be-taught-a-lesson-Erdoğan-tells-putin>
- ¹¹ Anadolu Agency, 17/5/2021. (in Arabic)
- ¹² Turkey's Erdoğan: As we supported Azerbaijan in Karabakh so we will support Palestine, site of News.am, 14/5/2021, <https://news.am/eng/news/643739.html>
- ¹³ Anadolu Agency, 17/5/2021. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴ Circulating video of Yahya Sinwar with Anadolu Agency on social media. See Sinwar to Anadolu: The Truce is "Fragile," and We Appreciate Turkey's Support for Our People, Anadolu Agency, 27/5/2021. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵ Site of Deutsche Welle (DW), 21/5/2021, <https://www.dw.com/ar> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁶ Site of Turk Press, 25/5/2021, <http://www.turkpress.co/>
- ¹⁷ Anadolu Agency, 15/5/2018. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁸ Said El-Haj, Situation Assessment: The Return of Turkey-Israel Relations: What is New?, al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 30/11/2022, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2022/11/30/situation-assessment-the-return-of-turkey-israel-relations-what-is-new/>
- ¹⁹ Anadolu Agency, 21/9/2020. (in Arabic)

- ²⁰ Aljazeera.net, 25/3/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²¹ Arab 48, 20/1/2022.
- ²² Arab 48, 17/2/2022.
- ²³ Israel's Herzog visits Turkey, meets Erdoğan to "restart" ties, site of *Daily Sabah* newspaper, 9/3/2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/israels-herzog-visits-turkey-meets-erdogan-to-restart-ties>; and *Asharq al-Awsat*, 10/3/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁴ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 10/3/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁵ Burak Dağ and Ali Rezzakoğlu, Türkiye, Israel on same page regarding normalization of ties: Turkish foreign minister, Anadolu Agency, 25/5/2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/turkiye-israel-on-same-page-regarding-normalization-of-ties-turkish-foreign-minister/2597210>
- ²⁶ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 7/7/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁷ Aljazeera.net, 17/8/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁸ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 21/9/2022. (in Arabic)
- ²⁹ Anadolu Agency, 6/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³⁰ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 27/10/2022.
- ³¹ Arabi21, 17/11/2022.
- ³² Anadolu Agency, 14/2/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³³ Aljazeera.net, 20/9/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁴ Quds Press, 11/3/2022.
- ³⁵ Anadolu Agency, 20/4/2023. (in Arabic)
- ³⁶ Quds Press, 16/4/2023.
- ³⁷ TRT Arabi, 11/5/2022. (in Arabic)
- ³⁸ Tovah Lazaroff, Turkey's Erdoğan "strongly condemns" terror attacks in Israel, *The Jerusalem Post*, 1/4/2022, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-702980>
- ³⁹ Quds Press, 28/1/2023.
- ⁴⁰ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 24/6/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁴¹ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 3/7/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁴² Diyar Guldogan and Mahmoud Barakat, Türkiye vows to continue backing Palestinian cause, Anadolu Agency, 25/7/2023, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkiye-vows-to-continue-backing-palestinian-cause/2954286>
- ⁴³ CNN Arabic, 7/10/2023.
- ⁴⁴ No: 247, 7 October 2023, Press Release Regarding the Latest Developments in the Context of Israel-Palestine, site of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye, 7/10/2023, https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-247_-_israil-filistin-baglaminda-yasanan-son-gelistmeler-hk.en.mfa
- ⁴⁵ Site of Süperhaber, 4/11/2023, <https://www.superhaber.com>
- ⁴⁶ Aljazeera.net, 7/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁴⁷ Site of Al-Horia News, 11/10/2023, <https://alhorianews.com/>
- ⁴⁸ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 18/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁴⁹ *Alarab* newspaper, London, 9/10/2023.
- ⁵⁰ RT, 23/10/2023.
- ⁵¹ Anadolu Agency, 1/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵² Aljazeera.net, 25/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵³ Anadolu Agency, 8/12/2023. (in Arabic)

- ⁵⁴ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 4/11/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁵ Aljazeera.net, 4/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁶ Erdogan warns Israel of ‘very heavy price’ if Hamas members harmed on Turkish soil, *The Times of Israel*, 6/12/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/erdogan-warns-israel-of-very-heavy-price-if-hamas-members-harmed-on-turkish-soil/>
- ⁵⁷ Independent Arabia, 2/1/2024.
- ⁵⁸ Aljazeera.net, 28/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵⁹ Anadolu Agency, 21/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁶⁰ Dilara Aslan Özer, Türkiye proposes guarantorship model for Israel-Palestine conflict, *Daily Sabah*, 17/10/2023, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkiye-proposes-guarantorship-model-for-israel-palestine-conflict>
- ⁶¹ Anadolu Agency, 25/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁶² Aljazeera.net, 25/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁶³ Anadolu Agency, 4/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁶⁴ Basak Akbulut Yazar, Former Turkish lawmaker files criminal complaint against Israeli premier, Anadolu Agency, 16/11/2023, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkiye/former-turkish-lawmaker-files-criminal-complaint-against-israeli-premier/3055201>
- ⁶⁵ RT, 9/12/2023.
- ⁶⁶ Site of *Yeni Şafak* newspaper, 31/12/2023, <https://www.yenisafak.com/ar> (in Arabic)
- ⁶⁷ Arabi21, 23/11/2023.
- ⁶⁸ Al-Mayadeen Channel, 11/8/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁶⁹ Al-Mayadeen Channel, 8/8/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁷⁰ The Times of Israel, 7/9/2022.
- ⁷¹ Excerpt from National Security Adviser and National Security Council Director Dr. Eyal Hulata’s remarks on the Iranian nuclear issue and the regional opportunities, to the IDI National Security and Democracy Conference, Prime Minister’s Office, Israel, 29/11/2022, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/spoke-democracy291122>
- ⁷² Al-Mayadeen Channel, 7/11/2022. (in Arabic)
- ⁷³ Leaders of Palestinian and Lebanese groups meet with Iran FM, site of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran, 6/6/2022, <https://en.mfa.ir/portal/newsview/682604/Leaders-of-Palestinian-and-Lebanese-groups-meet-with-Iran-FM>
- ⁷⁴ Everything is signaling a new equation in Palestine’s future, site of Khamenei.ir, 29/4/2022, <https://english.khamenei.ir/news/8960/Everything-is-signaling-a-new-equation-in-Palestine-s-future>
- ⁷⁵ Aljazeera.net, 13/8/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁷⁶ Aljazeera.net, 10/3/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁷⁷ Israeli President Herzog: “Today we saw the true face of Hamas,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 7/10/2023, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-762109>
- ⁷⁸ Iranian security officials helped plan Hamas’s Saturday surprise attack on Israel, *The Wall Street Journal*, 8/10/2023, <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/iran-israel-hamas-strike-planning-bbe07b25>
- ⁷⁹ “Statement from President Joe Biden Condemning Terrorist Attacks in Israel,” The White House, 7/10/2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/10/07/statement-from-president-joe-biden-condemning-terrorist-attacks-in-israel/>

- ⁸⁰ Ibid.; and Israel-Gaza updates: Israeli forces preparing for “wide range of offensive plans,” ABC News, 8/10/2023, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/live-updates/israel-gaza-hamas/too-early-to-know-if-iran-involved-senior-wh-official-103812004?id=103804516>
- ⁸¹ Islamic world must not remain silent in the face of Zionists’ crimes, Khamenei.ir, 10/10/2023, <https://english.khamenei.ir/news/10169/Islamic-world-must-not-remain-silent-in-the-face-of-Zionists>
- ⁸² Ibid.
- ⁸³ Ultimate victory which is not too far away will be for Palestine, Khamenei.ir, 1/11/2023, <https://english.khamenei.ir/news/10278/Ultime-victory-which-is-not-too-far-away-will-be-for-Palestine>
- ⁸⁴ The usurper Zionist regime must be prosecuted, Khamenei.ir, 17/10/2023, <https://english.khamenei.ir/news/10210/The-usurper-Zionist-regime-must-be-prosecuted>
- ⁸⁵ The movement started in Palestine will lead to complete victory of Palestinians, Khamenei.ir, 14/10/2023, <https://english.khamenei.ir/news/10172/The-movement-started-in-Palestine-will-lead-to-complete-victory>
- ⁸⁶ The Position of the Islamic Republic of Iran Regarding the Ongoing Situation in the Occupied Palestine, site of Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, 9/10/2023, <https://newyork.mfa.ir/portal/NewsView/731039/The-Position-of-the-Islamic-Republic-of-Iran-Regarding-the-Ongoing-Situation-in-the-Occupied-Palestine>
- ⁸⁷ IRGC leader: US cannot save ‘Israel’ after Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, Al Mayadeen English, 9/10/2023, <https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/irgc-leader-us-cannot-save-israel-after-operation-al-aqsa-f>
- ⁸⁸ Al-Aqsa Flood operation; biggest victory for Gaza Resistance: IRGC Chief, site of Iran Press, 13/10/2023, <https://iranpress.com/al-aqsa-flood-operation-biggest-victory-for-gaza-resistance-irgc-chief>
- ⁸⁹ Iranian state media confirm meeting between Khamenei, Hamas’ Haniyeh in Tehran, Reuters, 5/11/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iranian-state-media-confirms-meeting-between-khamenei-hamas-haniyeh-tehran-2023-11-05/>
- ⁹⁰ Inside Iran’s Rhetoric On Hamas War On Israel, site of Iran International, 10/10/2023, <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202310108231>; and Seyyed Mohammad Khatami’s reaction to Al-Aqsa storm/force and occupation is not the source of legitimacy, site of Donya-e-eqtasad, 10/10/2023, <https://donya-e-eqtasad.com> (in Persian)
- ⁹¹ “Al-Aqsa Storm” opens new chapter in field of resistance against occupiers: Kanaani, site of Iranian Students’ News Agency, 7/10/2023, <https://en.isna.ir/news/1402071510005/Al-Aqsa-Storm-opens-new-chapter-in-field-of-resistance-against>
- ⁹² Iran president, resistance leaders discuss Palestine developments over phone, site of Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), 8/10/2023, <https://en.irna.ir/news/85251856/Iran-president-resistance-leaders-discuss-Palestine-developments>
- ⁹³ We have always declared our support for liberation of Holy Quds loudly, without stuttering/ Supporters of legitimising Zionist regime should answer whether continuation of occupation creates legitimacy for the occupier, site of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 23/12/2023, <https://president.ir/en/149006>
- ⁹⁴ IRGS Quds commander: Palestinian resistance operation on its own planning, decision, IRNA, 29/12/2023, <https://en.irna.ir/news/85337284/IRGS-Quds-commander-Palestinian-resistance-operation-on-its>
- ⁹⁵ Israeli Strikes on Gaza Could Spread War, Iran’s FM Warns, site of Tasnim News Agency, 9/10/2023, <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2023/10/09/2968698/israeli-strikes-on-gaza-could-spread-war-iran-s-fm-warns>

- ⁹⁶ Iranian FM meets Lebanese PM on Palestine, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran, 13/10/2023, <https://en.mfa.ir/portal/newsview/731402>
- ⁹⁷ Iranian FM, Hezbollah chief holds talks, IRNA, 13/10/2023, <https://en.irna.ir/news/85256875/Iranian-FM-Hezbollah-chief-holds-talks>
- ⁹⁸ Iran's Foreign Minister: Resistance In Strong Position to Confront Israel, NNA, 14/10/2023, [https://www.nna-leb.gov.lb/en/politics/646927/iran-s-foreign-minister-resistance-in-strong-posit; and Aljazeera.net, 14/10/2023. \(in Arabic\)](https://www.nna-leb.gov.lb/en/politics/646927/iran-s-foreign-minister-resistance-in-strong-posit; and Aljazeera.net, 14/10/2023. (in Arabic))
- ⁹⁹ Iran warns it won't stand idly by if Israel continues barbaric attacks on Gaza, site of Tehran Times, 16/10/2023, <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/490210/Iran-warns-it-won-t-stand-idly-by-if-Israel-continues-barbaric>
- ¹⁰⁰ Arezou Rezvani and Steve Inskeep, Iran's foreign minister: Armed groups are poised with 'their finger on the trigger', site of National Public Radio (NPR), 27/10/2023, <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/27/1208575570/irans-foreign-minister-armed-groups-are-poised-with-their-finger-on-the-trigger>
- ¹⁰¹ Amir-Abdollahian: Tomorrow is too late for reaching political solution on Palestine, Iran Press, 14/10/2023, <https://iranpress.com/amir-abdollahian-tomorrow-is-too-late-for-reaching-political-solution-on-palestine>
- ¹⁰² Amir-Abdollahian: Palestine belongs to the Palestinians, site of Nournews, 27/12/2023, <https://nournews.ir/en/news/159600/Amir-Abdollahian-Palestine-belongs-to-the-Palestinians>
- ¹⁰³ Israeli Foreign Ministry: Our strikes on Syria during Abdollahian's visit to Damascus sent a warning to Iran, site of Sputnik Arabic, 13/10/2023, <https://sarabic.ae/> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁰⁴ Tom O'Connor, U.S. Troops Are on Alert for Iran Allies Joining Israel-Hamas War, *Newsweek* magazine, 12/10/2023, <https://www.newsweek.com/us-troops-are-alert-iran-allies-joining-israel-hamas-war-1834295>
- ¹⁰⁵ US privately pushing Israel not to initiate war with Hezbollah — officials, *The Times of Israel*, 19/10/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-privately-pushing-israel-not-to-initiate-war-with-hezbollah-officials/>
- ¹⁰⁶ H.R.5961 - No Funds for Iranian Terrorism Act, site of Congress.gov, 30/11/2023, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/5961>
- ¹⁰⁷ UK and US sanction leading Iranian military figures and entities following the attack on Israel, site of Gov.uk, 18/4/2024, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-uk-and-us-sanction-leading-iranian-military-figures-and-entities-following-the-attack-on-israel; and Statement from President Joe Biden on Iran Sanctions, The White House, 18/4/2024, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/04/18/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-iran-sanctions/>
- ¹⁰⁸ Al-Umma Studies Center, A poll of Jordanian elites confirms the decline of Turkey's image in the Arab world as a result of its position on the aggression against Gaza, site of Amman Net, 16/4/2024, <https://ammannet.net>
- ¹⁰⁹ WAFA, 17/4/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁰ Aljazeera.net, 17/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹¹ PIC, 27/11/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹² Aljazeera.net, 19/5/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹³ Malaysia Strongly Condemns the Incursion into the al-Aqsa Mosque by the Israeli National Security Minister, site of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, 24/5/2024, <https://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/-/malaysia-strongly-condemns-the-incursion-into-the-al-aqsa-mosque-by-the-israeli-national-security-minister>

- ¹¹⁴ PM Anwar, Sultan of Brunei Stress the Need for Asean to Remain United, Relevant, site of Bernama, 4/8/2023, <https://www.bernama.com/en/news.php?id=2212968>
- ¹¹⁵ Malaysia does not agree with Western pressure to condemn Hamas – PM, Reuters, 16/10/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/malaysia-pm-anwar-disagree-with-western-pressure-condemn-hamas-2023-10-16/>
- ¹¹⁶ PIC, 19/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁷ Aljazeera.net, 29/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹¹⁸ *Addustour*, 7/11/2023.
- ¹¹⁹ Heather Chen, Malaysia bans Israeli owned and linked shipping citing “cruelty against the Palestinian people,” CNN, 20/12/2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/20/asia/malaysia-israel-shipping-ban-palestine-support-intl-hnk/index.html>
- ¹²⁰ Pakistan’s Khan urges Islamic nations to mediate in Ukraine war, Al Jazeera, 23/3/2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/23/pakistan-imran-khan-islamic-nations-oic-ukraine-war>
- ¹²¹ WAFA, 29/4/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹²² *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 20/5/2022.
- ¹²³ PIC, 22/5/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁴ PTV anchor part of delegation to Israel terminated: Marriyum, site of Dawn, 30/5/2022, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1692279>
- ¹²⁵ Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, during the United Nations Security Council Open Debate on “the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question”, site of Pakistan Mission to The United Nations, 18/1/2023, <https://pakun.org/official-statements/01182023-01>
- ¹²⁶ Pakistan will not recognize Israel unless Palestine does — Pakistan FM, Jordan News, 13/3/2023, <https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-20/Middle-East/Pakistan-will-not-recognize-Israel-unless-Palestine-does-Pakistan-FM-27504>
- ¹²⁷ Quds Press, 5/7/2023.
- ¹²⁸ WAFA, 18/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹²⁹ *Al-‘Arabi al-Jadid*, 3/11/2023.
- ¹³⁰ First permanent Holocaust exhibit comes to Muslim-majority Indonesia, JNS, 28/1/2022, <https://www.jns.org/first-permanent-holocaust-exhibit-comes-to-muslim-majority-indonesia/>
- ¹³¹ *Alquds*, 24/10/2022.
- ¹³² With 2022 Deadliest Year in Israel-Palestine Conflict, Reversing Violent Trends Must Be International Priority, Middle East Coordinator Tells Security Council, UN, Security Council, 9246th Meeting, SC/15179, 18/1/2023, <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15179.doc.htm>
- ¹³³ Aljazeera.net, 29/3/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹³⁴ Site of Palestine Breaking News, 7/9/2023, <https://palnews.online>
- ¹³⁵ Indonesia Condemns Attacks in Gaz, site of Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, 19/10/2023, <https://setkab.go.id/en/indonesia-condemns-attacks-in-gaza>
- ¹³⁶ Patsy Widakuswara, Gaza War Complicates Biden’s Meeting with Indonesia’s Widodo, site of Voice of America (VOA), 10/11/2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/gaza-war-complicates-biden-s-meeting-with-indonesia-s-widodo/7349395.html>
- ¹³⁷ Aljazeera.net, 29/4/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹³⁸ Quds Press, 8/7/2022.
- ¹³⁹ Aljazeera.net, 8/4/2023. (in Arabic)

- ¹⁴⁰ Aljazeera.net, 5/11/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴¹ Aljazeera.net, 14/10/2023 (in Arabic); A massive demonstration... thousands of Malaysians demand pressure on the West to stop arming Israel, Aljazeera.net, 3/3/2024 (in Arabic); and Malaysian leaders and politicians participate in a demonstration denouncing the war on Gaza, Aljazeera.net, 5/5/2024. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴² Aljazeera.net, 1/12/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴³ New demonstrations in solidarity with Gaza in Michigan and New Delhi, Aljazeera.net, 23/10/2023. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁴ KUNA, 27/10/2023, <https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=3120266#> (in Arabic); and see 'Informed solidarity': Why India's Kerala saw mass rallies for Palestinians, Al Jazeera, 15/11/2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/15/informed-solidarity-why-thousands-hit-kerala-streets-for-palestinians>
- ¹⁴⁵ Watch: Massive demonstrations in Kashmir to protest Israel's ongoing war on Gaza, Euronews, 5/4/2024, <https://arabic.euronews.com/2024/04/05/protests-in-indian-kashmir-against-israeli-military-operations-in-the-gaza-strip> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁶ Student activism in solidarity with Palestine expands in Asia A protest in South Korea and a mass demonstration in Bangladesh (video), site of Shafaqna, 9/5/2024, <https://ar.shafaqna.com/AR/424677/> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁴⁷ *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 28/10/2023.
- ¹⁴⁸ Hundreds of protesters in Bosnia stand in solidarity with Palestine, Anadolu Agency, 7/4/2024 (in Arabic); and Thousands take part in a pro-Palestinian demonstration in Bosnia, site of Sawt Beirut International, 22/10/2023.
- ¹⁴⁹ Police arrested some protesters. Gaza solidarity actions in Kenya, Euronews, 25/1/2024, <https://arabic.euronews.com/2024/01/25/kenya-protest-in-solidarity-with-palestinians-in-gaza> (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁰ Pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Niger's capital, Iran Press, 21/10/2023.
- ¹⁵¹ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 25/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵² Azerbaijan to open embassy in Israel, the first Muslim Shi'ite country to do so, The Times of Israel, 18/11/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/azerbaijan-to-open-embassy-in-israel-the-first-muslim-shiite-country-to-do-so/>
- ¹⁵³ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 5/10/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁴ Presidents of Azerbaijan and Israel made press statements, site of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, 30/5/2023, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/60054>
- ¹⁵⁵ Avi Scharf and Oded Yaron, 92 Flights From Israeli Base Reveal Arms Exports to Azerbaijan, *Haaretz*, 6/3/2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/security-aviation/2023-03-06/ty-article-magazine/-premium/92-flights-from-israeli-base-reveal-arms-exports-to-azerbaijan/00000185-fd3d-d96e-adeb-ff3dc38e0000>
- ¹⁵⁶ Ambassadors of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Israel to US meet, site of Report News Agency, 4/2/2022, <https://report.az/en/foreign-politics/ambassadors-of-azerbaijan-turkey-and-israel-to-us-meet/>; and *Alquds*, 9/2/2022.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Asharq al-Awsat*, 22/12/2022. (in Arabic)
- ¹⁵⁸ Oded Yaron and Zulkarnain Saer Khan, Israeli Spy Tech Sold to Bangladesh, Despite Dismal Human Rights Record, *Haaretz*, 10/1/2023, <https://archive.is/LJ1G0#selection-541.0-541.71>
- ¹⁵⁹ Pakistani investigators using 'old version' of Israeli UFED digital intelligence software — officials, Arab News, 7/8/2023, <https://arab.news/4z7sg>

¹⁶⁰ Dan Williams, Chad to open embassy in Israel five years after renewing ties, Reuters, 1/2/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/chad-open-embassy-israel-five-years-after-renewing-ties-2023-02-01/>

¹⁶¹ *Al-Ayyam*, Ramallah, 8/3/2021.

¹⁶² i24NEWS, 26/3/2023.

¹⁶³ See CBS, https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/doclib/2024/fr_trade12_2023/td1.pdf

Chapter Eight

The Palestine Issue and the International Situation

The Palestine Issue and the International Situation

Section One: The International Situation Post-Operation al-Aqsa Flood

Introduction

Most researchers in the international relations underscore that discerning shifts in the strategic choices of major powers is less straightforward compared to those occurring in smaller or mid-sized countries. This observation is rooted in the inherent complexities of political systems and the stability of governmental institutions. Turning points in polar countries unfold gradually, spanning extended periods due to the deeply entrenched factors of power, interests and stability. This underscores the need for vigilant monitoring of incremental shifts, their connection to historical trajectories, and the assessment of their cumulative impact to establish a foundation for predicting future implications.

Given the expansive scope of the international stage across political, economic and military realms, our attention will be directed towards the most influential international powers on one hand and the most impactful international organizations on the other. Simultaneously, we will scrutinize trends in international public opinion as a third dimension. The central focus of our inquiry revolves around the Palestine issue and its multifaceted dimensions.

Operation al-Aqsa Flood, occurring in the first weekend of October 2023, marked a pivotal turning point in the local, regional and global dynamics of the Palestine issue. These dynamics are interwoven within a framework of mutual influence, yet our primary focus will be on the international ramifications and the interactions of pivotal international powers with this issue in the first section of the international scene of the Palestine issue 2022–2023.

First: UN

Operation al-Aqsa Flood strategically represented an action to bring the Palestine issue back to the forefront of the international scene. It overshadowed crises such as Ukraine, Taiwan, the civil war in Sudan, and many others. This calls for keeping pace with it in our presentation of the international scene.

1. Security Council

Three attempts were made in the UN Security Council during Operation al-Aqsa Flood to reach an agreement on a specific resolution. Positions within the council varied on two fundamental points:

- a. Ceasefire or reaching an extendable truce.
- b. Condemnation of the Hamas movement for Operation al-Aqsa Flood.

The council held two meetings for discussion and consultation on 8 and 13/10/2023. On 16/10/2023, Russia proposed a Russian draft resolution calling for a ceasefire in GS to provide humanitarian assistance to civilians. However, it received five votes in favour (China, Russia, Gabon, Mozambique and UAE), and four against (US, France, UK and Japan), and six abstentions (Brazil, Ecuador, Ghana, Malta, Switzerland and Albania). As for the second resolution, submitted by Brazil 18/10/2023, it received the approval of 12 members, while Russia and UK abstained from voting. The US vetoed against the passage of the resolution, which stated:¹

Recalling that a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved by peaceful means, based on its relevant resolutions,

1. Firmly condemns all violence and hostilities against civilians...
2. Unequivocally rejects and condemns the heinous terrorist attacks by Hamas that took place in Israel starting 7 October 2023 and the taking of hostages;
3. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages....
4. Urges all parties to fully comply with their obligations under international law...including in relation to the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, as well as humanitarian workers....
5. Strongly urges the continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential goods and services to civilians, including electricity, water, fuel, food, and medical supplies.....

7. Calls for humanitarian pauses to allow full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for United Nations humanitarian agencies... and other impartial humanitarian organizations, and encourages the establishment of humanitarian corridors and other initiatives for the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians;....
10. Emphasizes the importance of preventing spillover in the region....

The third meeting, on 8/12/2023, called for an immediate ceasefire, and was vetoed by the US. Thirteen Security Council members voted in favour, while the UK abstained.²

In the fourth meeting, a Security Council resolution passed on 22/12/2023, with 13 votes in favor while the US and Russia abstained. After stressing that GS “constitutes an integral part of the territory occupied in 1967, and reiterating the vision of the two-State solution,” with GS as part of the Palestinian State, the Security Council stated that it:³

- a. “Calls for urgent and extended humanitarian pauses and corridors throughout the Gaza Strip for a sufficient number of days to enable full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access and to enable urgent rescue and recovery efforts.”
- b. “Recalls that civilian and humanitarian facilities, including hospitals, medical facilities, schools, places of worship, and facilities of the UN, as well as humanitarian personnel, and medical personnel, and their means of transport, must be respected and protected.”
- c. Demands that the parties to the conflict facilitate the use of all available routes “in order to ensure that humanitarian personnel and humanitarian assistance, including fuel, food, and medical supplies and emergency shelter assistance, reaches the civilian population,” and it “stresses the importance of respecting and protecting border crossings and maritime infrastructure.”
- d. “Deplores all attacks against civilians and civilian objects.”
- e. Requests the Secretary-General “to appoint a Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator with responsibility for facilitating, coordinating, monitoring, and verifying in Gaza, as appropriate, the humanitarian nature of all humanitarian relief consignments to Gaza,” with an initial reporting within 20 days and thereafter every 90 days through 30/9/2024.

- f. “Reaffirms that civilian objects, including places of refuge, including within United Nations facilities and their surroundings, are protected under international humanitarian law, and rejects forced displacement of the civilian population, including children.”

2. General Assembly

The UN General Assembly held two sessions to discuss the war on GS. The first one was on 26/10/2023 adopting a resolution that “calls for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce” and demands the facilitation of “humanitarian access for essential supplies and services to reach all civilians in need in the Gaza Strip.” The resolution was adopted with 121 votes⁴ (62.6% of the votes) in favor, opposed by 14 countries including US (7.2% of the votes), and 44 countries abstained from voting (22.7%). The total population of the countries that opposed the decision represents 5.2% of the world’s total population.⁵

As for the second meeting held on 12/12/2023, a vote was cast on a resolution that demanded “an immediate humanitarian ceasefire” in Gaza. passed with a large majority of 153 in favour and 10 against including US and Israel, with 23 abstentions.⁶

Upon comparing the two resolutions, it is evident that the support for a ceasefire increased by 32 countries. However, the US maintained its opposition despite 79.3% of the international community endorsing the resolution.

Second: The US

Operation al-Aqsa Flood was a surprise for both official and popular US institutions, especially in terms of planning, precision in execution and the scale of Israeli losses, all achieved in record time. Consequently, US reactions unfolded in three stages: the emotional reaction phase dominated the initial days of the operation, followed by the strategic calculation phase, actively supporting Israel. The third phase aimed at leveraging the course of the battle to prevent its escalation to a regional level, undermining the role of the resistance movement in shaping future Palestinian strategic options, while reinforcing the PA’s role to keep the political settlement option a top priority. This was accomplished as follows:

First Stage: Emotional and Surprise Stage: A report by CRS indicated that the US was shocked by the “apparent [Israeli] intelligence and operational failures” to detect the preparations of the resistance for an operation of this magnitude. President Joe Biden affirmed that “there is no evidence” that Iran helped plan the attack, and “pledged unwavering U.S. support for Israel.” The US administration emphasized the rescue of American citizens believed to be among the captives in GS. There were many US statements regarding the dispatch of US naval forces to the region, as well as various forms of US military assistance to Israel. Additionally, they aim to assert control over GS, while offering reassurances to the Israeli government through warnings directed at Hizbullah and Iran, cautioning them about the repercussions of their engagement in the battle alongside Palestinian resistance. Subsequently, there were reports of Biden “requesting that Congress appropriate up to an additional \$14 billion in U.S. security assistance for Israel.”⁷

Second Stage: Strategic Calculation: It unfolded as follows:

First Dimension: The US position in this stage adhered to its traditional stances, particularly regarding the liquidation of armed Palestinian resistance, its continued commitment to Israeli security and the provision of assistance to Israel, while its call to pave the way for a two-state solution persisted. On the ninth day of the conflict, President Biden said in an interview when asked if he believes that “ Hamas must be eliminated entirely?” Biden responded, “Yes, I do. But there needs to be a Palestinian authority. There needs to be a path to a Palestinian state.” However, Biden cautioned that it “would be a mistake to...for Israel to occupy... Gaza again. We...but going in but taking out the extremists the Hezbollah is up north but Hamas down south. Is a necessary requirement.”⁸ It appears that this was an implicit reference to the Israeli ground war that later occurred and the effective resistance that prevented Israel from achieving strategic security objectives. Subsequently, this war entered phases of de-escalation tied to captives and prisoner exchanges between Palestinian resistance and Israel, with US participation in negotiations to extend these ceasefires, alongside Egypt and Qatar. Israel resumed its military operations on 1/12/2023, despite the US desire to extend the ceasefire. The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, at the end of his fourth visit to the Middle East since the confrontation erupted on October 7th, indicated the Israeli government agreed with the imperative that “the massive loss of civilian life and displacement of the scale we saw in northern Gaza not be repeated in the south,”⁹



a claim contradicted by media reports, notably continuous reports declared by the UN Secretary-General.¹⁰

Second Dimension: The US strategic calculations include concerns of shifts in war from the local level to the regional. Biden stated that his message to Iran is not to escalate the conflict, a demand reiterated by several US officials. On 14/10/2023, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin announced the deployment of a second aircraft Carrier Strike Group (CSG), stating “The increases to U.S. force posture signal the United States’ ironclad commitment to Israel’s security and our resolve to deter any state or non-state actor seeking to escalate this war.” The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower CSG joined the USS Gerald R. Ford CSG in the eastern Mediterranean, explaining that this move is “to deter hostile actions against Israel or any efforts toward widening this war.”¹¹

It seems that the US concerns about dragging the Gaza war into a regional one was driven by the following:

1. The US concern grows as the conflict in the region widens, with supporting parties entering the war alongside the resistance, raising the prospects of unrest and internal instability due to the prevailing anger and frustration among the peoples and opposition forces.
2. US concerns revolve around the potential repercussions of the escalating conflict in the Middle East, particularly regarding its impact on international focus and the ongoing US involvement in the Ukrainian war. This conflict in Ukraine remained largely overlooked by the majority of news outlets, while the Middle East crisis drew widespread international attention. This divergence prompted the US to perceive a potential alleviation of pressure on Russia, possibly creating an opportunity for the latter to strengthen its position in the Ukrainian theater. The consideration arose, particularly if there were a redirection of military aid from Ukraine to Israel, as hinted at by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.¹²
3. US concerns center around the potential for the conflict to exacerbate the energy crisis, especially in Europe. The widening conflict is expected to impact the flow of oil through the strategic chokepoints of the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab al-Mandab, whether through Iranian involvement or strikes by the Houthi Ansar Allah movement in Yemen, who control over 400 kilometers of the Red Sea coastline. This situation could lead to a significant spike in oil prices during a critical period for the European economy, already grappling with the

repercussions of the Ukrainian war and a decrease in energy purchases from Russia.¹³

Actually, the growing US apprehension was further fueled by the possibility of an escalation towards regional war. This concern intensified as Hizbullah launched attacks from southern Lebanon on Israeli targets, followed by increased assaults on US forces in Iraq and Syria. Furthermore, Ansar Allah in Yemen seized an Israeli cargo ship on 19/11/2023, threatening to target Israeli interests in the Red Sea. Subsequent Yemeni attacks on commercial vessels related to Israel in December, alongside missile launches and drone threats towards the port of Eilat, prompted major commercial companies to suspend their ships' navigation in the Red Sea. This situation led the US to explore the formation of a military alliance to ensure the security of maritime trade in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea.¹⁴

Third Dimension for the US is the attempt is to manage the repercussions of the Israeli GS siege, along with its humanitarian effects of power cuts, water shortages, and the closure of roads hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid. The US found itself in a dilemma on this front due to the frequent reports from various international bodies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), World Health Organization (WHO), Médecins Sans Frontières/ Doctors Without Borders (MSF), human rights committees, as well as warnings from intellectuals and journalists about the consequences if Israel continues its blockade and aggression policies on civilians.¹⁵ The US appointed its former ambassador to Türkiye, David Satterfield, as a Special Envoy for Middle East Humanitarian Issues to oversee the arrangements for opening the crossing between Gaza and Egypt for the entry of humanitarian aid, which has been accumulating in Egypt awaiting access. Biden spoke with Netanyahu and 'Abbas urging them to allow humanitarian aid to the region, leading to discussions on successive temporary humanitarian ceasefires to facilitate this process.¹⁶ Nevertheless, all reports suggest that the humanitarian aid delivered during the seven-day ceasefire only addressed an exceedingly small portion of the population's needs.¹⁷

Fourth Dimension encompasses concerns regarding the impact of events in Gaza on US security, viewed through two lenses highlighted by Biden. One pertains to the aspect of "terrorism," while the other relates to the US commitments in the Ukrainian war, stating, "the threat of terrorism in the U.S. has increased due to growing unrest in the Middle East. He said, however, the U.S. can take care of wars in Israel and Ukraine and still maintain its 'international defense.'"¹⁸



Fifth Dimension: Since Operation al-Aqsa Flood, the US reaffirmed its “ironclad support for Israel’s security and right to self-defense,” the urgent need to release both non-Israeli and Israeli captives, and then establishing humanitarian corridor for aid to reach people in GS. Diplomatically, the US position evolved beyond rejecting a “ceasefire” in the Security Council and the General Assembly, it now promotes the concept of a “temporary humanitarian ceasefire.” This includes affirming Gaza as Palestinian territory while restricting resistance forces from remaining in it.¹⁹ However, despite its policy of confusion and double standards, the US continued to refuse endorsing a ceasefire, as evidenced by its veto of a UN Security Council resolution on 8/12/2023, despite two considerations:²⁰

1. The meeting of the Security Council was convened upon the request of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, to activate Article 99 of the UN Charter. This provision grants him the right to “bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.”
2. Thirteen security council members voted in favour of the resolution, while the UK abstained.

As for the general framework “theoretically” adopted by the US for conflict resolution, it includes:²¹

1. Considering the two-state solution as the basis for resolving the conflict between Palestinians and Israel (however, this aspect lacks a clear definition of the borders of the Palestinian state, the refugee issue and the status of Jerusalem).
2. Considering unilateral actions by any party unacceptable, and despite viewing settlement activity in WB and Jerusalem as a form of unilateral action, the US position on this matter is shrouded in some mystery.
3. The US labeling all forms of armed resistance as “terrorist acts” and regarding the axis of resistance as “part of Iranian expansion in the region.”
4. Considering that Israeli security represents the highest value in the priorities of US strategy in the region, and any policies or actions must be adapted to serve this high value.
5. Continuing the gradual expansion of normalization of Israeli-Arab relations to transform the conflict from a zero-sum game to a non-zero-sum game.

Most studies and reports agree that the current conditions are not conducive to the two-state solution, the basis of the US-proposed peace settlement, making it no longer feasible. For the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks have been halted since 2014, while the ongoing expansion of settlements, the increase in settlement areas and populations, Israel's refusal to declare its borders, and the rise of the far-right to power in Israel make this solution impossible, especially since the US does not take any practical measures to force Israel in a specific direction. This is in contrast to what it does with Arab countries or others by imposing blockades and political or military pressure when adopting policies the US does not approve of. Additionally, the continued Arab normalization with Israel under pressure on the one hand and political temptation on the other have made the Arab stance more relaxed and passive towards the Palestine issue, leading to a reduction in pressure below the minimum required level.²² This means that the US is not exerting any pressure on Israel to achieve a two-state solution while pressuring Arab countries and the PA to expand the base of Arab recognition and normalization with Israel.

However, there are notable trends in the US government that deserve attention:²³

1. "Angst, unease and outrage" have spread through corners of the US administration due to the strong bias towards Israel, leading to disagreements and protests in official institutions like the State Department, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and within the two main political parties, Republican and Democratic.
2. Differences in priorities between Israel and the US, especially for the post-war period, where Israel plans to stay in GS or organize affairs regardless of any international considerations. This seems to be less understood by Washington, such as the issue of occupying Gaza or the displacement of Gazans outside the Strip. However, both agree on sidelining the resistance and establishing a "pliant" entity like the PA.
3. There's inconsistency in the US stance. While President Biden "described Netanyahu's coalition as 'the most conservative government in Israel's history... [that] doesn't want a two-state solution,'" and warned it about the loss of global support due to violence against civilians,²⁴ the US voted against a ceasefire three times in the UN Security Council and General Assembly.



Third: The Russian Federation

The Russian position in this round of the Arab-Israeli conflict can be identified as follows:

1. Russia, as previously mentioned, benefited from easing media, political, and to some extent military pressure on it by diverting international attention and effort towards Gaza instead of Ukraine.
2. Due to Russia's "somewhat balanced" relationship with the conflict parties, Russia attempts to present itself as a mediator for crisis resolution. It distributed a draft resolution to the UN Security Council that:²⁵
 - Calls for an immediate, durable and fully respected humanitarian ceasefire;
 - Strongly condemns all violence and hostilities directed against civilians and all acts of terrorism (while the US had requested the Council to condemn only Hamas' actions).
 - Calls for the secure release of all "hostages";
 - Calls for the unimpeded provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance...

While the Russian ambassador to the UN stressed, "We're convinced that the Security Council must act to put an end to the bloodshed and restart peace negotiations with a view to establishing a Palestinian state..."²⁶

However, the Russian Security Council efforts did not result in any ceasefire resolution due to disagreements among its 15 members, and the US attempt to hold Hamas responsible for what happened, supported by some European and a few Latin American countries

Nevertheless, Russian-Israeli relations have become increasingly complicated due to several unfolding events, as Israel rejects Russian positions on multiple fronts:²⁷

1. Russia's urge for a ceasefire.
2. Hosting a Hamas delegation on 26/10/2023, after Operation al-Aqsa Flood.
3. Continuous criticism of Israel's targeting of civilians in GS.
4. Russia's justifications for Operation al-Aqsa Flood, based on:

- President Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's belief that Operation al-Aqsa Flood "did not happen in vacuum," implying it was a result of Israeli policies towards the Palestine issue, echoing the stance expressed by UN Secretary-General Guterres.
 - The assertion that Operation al-Aqsa Flood resulted from the US paralysis of the peace process and that it has "sidelined other members of the Middle East Quartet."
 - Following the voting on Security Council resolution, on 22/12/2023, regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance and the protection of civilian, the Russian Permanent Representative to the UN Vasily Nebenzya said, "Had not this document been supported by several Arab countries, we would have undoubtedly vetoed it." He further explained, "We invariably proceed from the fact that the Arab world is capable of making its own decisions and taking full responsibility for them. This is the only reason why we did not block this document." Nebenzya then added, "Anyone who votes in favour of the text as it is currently worded would bear responsibility for that, essentially becoming complicit in the destruction of Gaza."²⁸
5. The enhancement of Russian relations with Iran is perceived negatively by the United States, Israel and certain European countries, particularly due to its implications for Israeli security.

Fourth: The EU

Excluding Britain, which consistently supports Israel, the EU initially showed significant sympathy towards Israel in the conflict. However, European positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict lack consistency among EU members, categorized as follows:

1. Fully supportive nations of Israel, notably Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary.
2. Nations with lesser support, like Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland, Malta and Portugal.
3. Countries with fluctuating positions, including France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Sweden.



The EU approach to the aftermath of Operation al-Aqsa Flood crisis is delineated by the following indicators:²⁹

1. Initially, there was full solidarity with Israel and condemnation of Hamas. However, later stages saw expressions of discontent towards Israeli policies of displacement and blockade in GS.
2. Following a decision to suspend aid, the EU agreed to triple its humanitarian assistance to GS on the condition that none of it would benefit Hamas. Consequently, the EU increased its humanitarian funding to Gaza from €25 million (about \$27 million) to €75 million (about \$81 million).
3. Concern was voiced regarding the burgeoning of fascist sentiments in Europe (Particularly with a significant Arab population) attributable to the repercussions of Operation al-Aqsa Flood.
4. There is apprehension about the potential surge in migration to Europe, particularly if the conflict escalates to a regional level.

However, the European position gradually shifted as the scale of destruction and civilian casualties widened, prompting EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, to compare widespread destruction in GS to the devastation of German cities during World War II, saying it could be even “higher.” He warned that the recent surge in violence in those areas has allowed an expansion of the Israeli occupation, now “four times greater than it was 30 years ago when the Oslo Accords were signed,” adding that the current situation was making a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict “much more difficult.”³⁰

However, the overarching characteristic of European policy on the Palestinian matter is the “challenge of consensus among the 27 members on how to navigate the conflict in Gaza.” Each nation voiced its position independently, exposing disparities, such as Belgium’s notably critical stance towards Israeli policy, in contrast to the positions taken by Germany or France.

It could be argued that Israel’s brutal aggression and unprecedented war crimes against civilians and humanitarian infrastructure reverberated throughout European streets (as we will delve into later). This has placed European governments in a delicate position regarding their previous stances, particularly at the onset of the crisis. Consequently, Britain, known for its staunch support of Israel, opted to

“abstain from voting” on the resolution presented to the Security Council at the behest of the Secretary-General, urging for a ceasefire.

However, the prevailing characteristic of European policy regarding the Palestinian matter is that “the 27 EU member states have been unable to reach a unanimous position condemning war crime.” Instead, each country has articulated its stance independently, highlighting disparities such as the Belgian stance, which is the most critical of Israeli policy, for instance, compared to the German or French position.³¹

It could be argued that the unprecedented level of violence against civilians and humanitarian facilities carried out by Israel has had a profound impact on public opinion across Europe (as we will elaborate later). This has left European governments feeling uneasy about upholding their previous stances, particularly at the outset of the crisis. Consequently, this prompted Britain, known for its steadfast support of Israel, to abstain from voting on the resolution brought before the Security Council at the request of the Secretary-General, calling for a ceasefire.³²

Fifth: China

China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi reportedly told his Saudi Arabia counterpart Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud in a call, “Israel’s actions have gone beyond self-defense and it should heed the call of the international community and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to stop its collective punishment of the people in Gaza.” Also, Wang was reported to have said, in a separate call with his Turkish counterpart, Hakan Fidan, “The exercise of the right of self-defense should abide by international humanitarian law and should not be at the expense of innocent civilian casualties.”³³

Wang Yi said in a phone call with US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken that:³⁴

1. The most pressing task is to stop fighting and end hostilities immediately.
2. Major countries, in particular, should stick to fairness and justice, and prevent a larger humanitarian disaster.
3. Any arrangement concerning the future of Palestine must “reflect the will of the Palestinian people.”

4. The core of the solution is to respect Palestine’s right to statehood and self-determination.

Blinken reiterated “the imperative of all parties working to prevent the conflict from spreading.” Notably, the ministerial discussion occurred amid escalating military actions by Yemeni Houthis against ships bound for Israel via the Red Sea.

The Chinese stances during the crisis included:

1. Exercising veto power against a US resolution in the Security Council due to its lack of a call for a ceasefire.
2. Deeming Israeli military operations in GS as exceeding the bounds of “self-defense.”
3. Drawing upon the Global Security Initiative, announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in April 2022, China, as articulated by Chinese Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Nong Rong, “has actively communicated and coordinated with relevant parties, sent its special envoy to visit regional countries, and provided humanitarian assistance to Palestine immediately. We are working for de-escalation of the situation, and to prevent the expansion of the fighting and a humanitarian disaster, in a bid to create conditions for a political settlement.”³⁵

Sixth: India

Perhaps India’s stance, in general, appears to align with that of the US in supporting Israel during Operation al-Aqsa Flood. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, speaking on the third day of the conflict with Netanyahu, stated, “India stands firmly with Israel... strongly and unequivocally condemns terrorism.” However, in response to criticism from the Indian opposition regarding Modi’s remarks, the Indian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi, clarified that India had “always advocated... direct negotiations towards establishing... a sovereign, independent, and viable state of Palestine,” adding that India is aware of a universal obligation to observe international humanitarian law. Describing India’s position on the Palestine issue as “longstanding and consistent,” Bagchi had said the government would like to see negotiations leading to a Palestine state “living within secure and recognised borders, side-by-side (and) at peace with Israel. That

position remains the same.”³⁶ However, India abstained from voting for the UN General Assembly resolution in October 2023, as previously mentioned, which called for a ceasefire.³⁷

It’s commonly known that India is the leading global buyer of Israeli military exports. The governing Hindu party’s policies differ from those of the historically dominant Indian National Congress. India’s position on Indo-Pakistani relations is shaped by the perspective of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), particularly on matters involving Islamic aspects, such as the Palestine issue. Notably, BJP is known for its firm Hindu ideology, especially when addressing issues influenced by Islamic factors.³⁸

Seventh: The African Union

The Chairperson of the African Union Moussa Faki Mahamat has highlighted the denial of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people as the main cause of the current tensions, urging an end to military hostilities and a return to the negotiating table.³⁹

When considering African countries and their stances on Operation al-Aqsa Flood, we find that they have split into three broad camps:⁴⁰

1. A camp expressed support for Palestine led by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Chad.
2. One that openly backed Israel led by Kenya, Ghana, Zambia, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
3. A neutral camp supporting neither side while calling for de-escalation led by Nigeria and Uganda.

Nevertheless, the comparison of the stances of African countries on the ongoing conflict reveals a clear inclination towards supporting Palestinian demands. The resolution proposal for a ceasefire, voted upon in the United Nations General Assembly at the end of October 2023, garnered support from 35 African countries (excluding African Arab countries). Moreover, certain African countries with historically strong ties to Israel, such as Kenya and Rwanda, have opted to adopt policies opposing Israeli actions.⁴¹

Eighth: International Public Opinion⁴²

International public opinion polls reveal various findings regarding the practical impacts of Operation al-Aqsa Flood:

1. US Public Opinion:

- a. Support for Israel fluctuates between 38% and 47%, while backing for the Palestinian stance ranges from 11% to 24%.
- b. Following Israel's response to Operation al-Aqsa Flood between 11/10–9/11/2023, support for Israel saw a decline. Initially, on 11/10/2023, 26% deemed the response "Too much," 44% found it "About right," and 27% considered it "Too little." However, approximately a month later (9/11/2023), the proportion of those viewing the Israeli response as "Too much" increased to 38%, while the percentage perceiving it as "About right" dropped to 38%, with 17% deeming it "Too little." This indicates a waning sympathy towards the Israeli stance, with a 12% increase in those seeing it "Too much," a 6% decrease in those finding it "About right," and a 10% decrease in those advocating for its escalation.
- c. 68% of people agreed that "Israel should call a cease-fire and try to negotiate," a trend contradicting the US government policy.
- d. Surveys indicate that support for the Palestinian stance among youth (aged 18–35) is increasing, with higher levels of support among those who are younger.

2. UK Public Opinion: Surveys conducted before Operation al-Aqsa Flood indicate the following:

- a. The level of sympathy among the British public for both the Palestinian and Israeli sides is equal, with 19% support for each.
- b. Among youth in both the Labour and Conservative parties, sympathy for Palestine is significantly higher. Those aged between 18 and 50 show a 58% sympathy rate for Palestine, compared to only 28% for Israel.

3. EU: It's notable that there's a disconnect between the sentiments of the European public and the policies of the European governments regarding the Palestine issue. A survey conducted before Operation al-Aqsa Flood revealed that this

gap between government and societal views in Europe explains the widespread public reaction to Israeli atrocities against Palestinians.

Table 1/8: Discrepancy Between European Public Opinion and European Governments on the Palestine Issue (%)

Country	Public Sympathy Towards Palestine	Public view/ perception of Government Sympathy Towards Palestine	Public Sympathy Towards Israel	Public view/ perception of Government Sympathy Towards Israel
Germany	15	7	17	38
UK	23	5	10	32
France	22	13	13	25
Spain	31	19	12	20
Italy	19	7	11	27
Denmark	20	8	14	34
Sweden	23	15	16	21
Total Average	21.8	10.5	13.2	28.1

The above table indicates that the European public favors Palestine over Israel by a margin of about 8%, and they perceive their respective governments to exhibit a greater inclination towards supporting Israel, with a margin of approximately 18%. This suggests that the alignment with the general public sentiment in Europe is not distinctly mirrored when dealing with the Palestine issue.

In advocating for a ceasefire, a European survey revealed a persistent gap between official European stances and public sentiment. While 61.4% of Europeans supported a cessation of hostilities and 19.1% opposed it,⁴³ European governments voted on a ceasefire resolution in December, resulting in 17 votes in favor, 2 against and 8 abstentions, in addition to the British abstention.⁴⁴ This marked a significant advancement from the vote on Resolution 27/10/2023, with the number of supporters more than doubling since October.⁴⁵ However, it still falls short of reflecting the level of public support, as illustrated in table 2/8.

**Table 2/8: European Public Opinion Regarding the Ceasefire
(Selected Countries) 10/11/2023–6/12/2023⁴⁶**

Country	Stop and call a ceasefire (%)	Continue to take military action (%)	Don't know (%)
Italy	73	8	19
Spain	70	16	14
UK	59	19	22
France	59	22	19
Germany	57	23	20
Denmark	57	22	21
Sweden	55	24	21

Popular movements, media coverage and social media activity worldwide indicate a palpable shift in international public opinion following Operation al-Aqsa Flood, the Israeli response to it, and the substantial focus of Israeli forces on military attacks targeting civilian and humanitarian sites. The following indicators underscore this transformation:⁴⁷

1. During the period 7–27/10/2023, there were 3,761 demonstrations supporting the Palestinians compared to 529 supporting Israel, meaning that around 86% of the support was in favor of the Palestinians
2. The author conducted a content analysis of newspapers and websites (non-Arabic and non-Islamic), examining 1,080 headlines from Western, Asian, African or Latin American newspapers and websites. These headlines were categorized based on their implications regarding support for either Israel or Palestine. The sample was randomly selected, and upon sorting, it was observed that:
 - 726 headlines supported the Palestinians, accounting for 67.2%.
 - 317 headlines supported Israel, accounting for 29.3%.
 - 37 headlines either supported both parties or opposed them, accounting for 3.5%.

Ninth: The Future Scene

Undoubtedly, the outcomes of the military confrontation will significantly shape future developments. On the Palestinian side, the objectives encompass repelling Israeli forces and securing the release of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails. Should these goals be accomplished, efforts will shift towards the GS reconstruction. Initially estimated at \$20 billion⁴⁸ during the first month of the confrontation, the cost of reconstruction surged to around \$50 billion⁴⁹ by the end of the second month. This financial burden will pose a considerable challenge for any administration in the region for an extended duration.

The Israeli-US objectives of the war are as follows:⁵⁰

1. Neutralizing armed resistance capabilities in GS, an issue that Israel and the US have declared several times.
2. Replacing Hamas with a revitalized PA and implementing its WB security coordination policies and measures to deter armed resistance in GS.
3. Continuing the joint management of the Rafah crossing between the “revitalized” Gaza Authority, Israel and Egypt, due to its material and security benefits for both Egypt and Israel.
4. Any peace settlement must explicitly and unequivocally mandate the complete renunciation of armed resistance and the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state, regardless of its characteristics.
5. Working to gradually diminish the role of the resistance axis, while concurrently dismantling this axis.
6. Working to broaden the foundation of Israeli normalization with other Arab countries.

Section Two: The International Situation Pre-Operation al-Aqsa Flood

First: UN

Global instability, alongside instability in the Middle East, has contributed to a diminishing prioritization of the Palestine issue. Local, regional and international concerns have overshadowed efforts to address it, as countries focus on organizing their own situations amidst broader geopolitical challenges.

Examining the Middle East Quartet’s activity, entrusted with overseeing the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, reveals a concerning trend. Since March 2021, the Quartet has not convened any meetings, rendering it inactive for over two years. This stands in stark contrast to the period between 2002 and 2021, during which it held 73 meetings, averaging 3.8 meetings per year. Recently, the Quartet’s engagement has dwindled, with its focus shifting primarily to issuing annual reports summarizing the general conditions of the Palestine issue, predominantly emphasizing the service sector.⁵¹

Russia has accused the US of “freezing” the Quartet’s work, alleging that the US seeks to dismantle international collaboration, particularly following the Ukrainian crisis. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Russian Special Representative of the Foreign Minister on the Middle East Peace Process Vladimir Safronkov have both voiced these concerns. Russia further contends that the EU has aligned with the US in paralyzing the Quartet’s activities post-Ukrainian crisis. According to Kirill Logvinov, Chargé d’Affaires a.i. of the Russian Mission to the EU Kirill Logvinov, Russia stated, “The Middle East Quartet of mediators is in fact blocked: long before the special military operation started, Washington began to obstruct its work, and now the European Union has actually joined the US in doing so.”⁵² However, the US State Department spokesperson denied “any formal decision regarding the Quartet.” He emphasized the importance of diplomatic efforts involving the parties involved in the conflict that would “help create the conditions for meaningful progress towards that ultimate end goal of a two-state solution.” The spokesperson admitted not recalling last time the Quartet met.⁵³ This confirms the long interruption, as we noted in the previous paragraphs.

The UN resolutions, especially those from the General Assembly, reflect the collective stance of member states, embodying the will of the international community, given the absence of a veto and equal voting rights among members.

Throughout the UN General Assembly’s 77th session from 2022 to 2023, clear support for the Palestinian people emerged, particularly evident in the Assembly’s voting on resolutions concerning Palestine, as shown in table 3/8:⁵⁴

**Table 3/8: Voting on UN General Assembly Resolutions
Regarding the Palestine Issue at the 77th Session**

Res.	Subject	In favor	Against	Abstentions	Notes
77/247	Criticizing Israel's practices in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem	87	26	53	Most EU countries either abstained or refused
77/208	The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination	167	6	9	High approval rating
77/126	Condemning settlement building	141	7	21	Opponents are a small percentage, and most of them are mini-states
77/124	Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues	153	6	6	Absenteeism is as high as 28 countries
77/123	Assistance to Palestine refugees	157	1	10	Israel was the only one voting against
77/187	Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,	159	8	10	Large support and very modest opposition
77/122	Providing aid to UNRWA	157	5	4	Broad support and very modest opposition
77/25	Rejecting all settlements in the 1967 occupied territories	153	9	10	4.7% opposition
77/24	Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	149	11	13	About 5.7% opposition
77/23	Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat	90	30	47	Note that the Secretariat's reports include statements condemning both sides of the conflict, which causes countries to hesitate in adopting the report
77/22	Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	101	17	53	Same observation as above, especially with EU countries

Analyzing the table, we can see that:

1. On average, 138 out of 193 member states support Palestine, representing 71% of countries.
2. Approximately 6% of countries, or less than 12 out of 193, oppose Palestinian rights on average.

3. 43 countries abstained or were absent, comprising approximately 22% of the total.
4. The combined population of the 12 countries consistently opposing Palestinian rights, including the US, Canada, UK, Guatemala, Honduras, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Vanuatu, Australia, Solomon Islands and Israel, does not surpass 16% of the global population.⁵⁵
5. Israel tops the list of condemned countries in UN resolutions, particularly in the General Assembly. US reports, particularly those of the State Department, tracking UN voting trends, highlight this trend.⁵⁶ In 2015–2022, the UN General Assembly passed 140 resolutions against Israel, including 15 in 2022 alone, and 68 on other countries. Additionally, the UN Human Rights Council adopted 99 resolutions against Israel from 2006 through 2022.⁵⁷

From December 2016 to July 2023, the Security Council primarily held consultations and received reports on the Palestine issue. The only action taken during this period was in February 2023, when on 20/2/2023, the Council adopted a presidential statement, stating, “The Security Council expresses deep concern and dismay with Israel... announcing further construction and expansion of settlements,” and that “The Security Council reiterates that continuing Israeli settlement activities are dangerously imperiling the viability of the two-State solution.”⁵⁸ Russia vetoed two resolutions on Syria in July 2022 and July 2023, while China was absent from both votes.⁵⁹

Second: The US

Key aspects of US Policy Toward the Palestine Issue

Despite significant global changes—particularly the involvement of major international powers such as the US in the Ukrainian-Russian crisis, tensions between the US and China regarding Taiwan, ongoing disputes between the US and Iran over its nuclear program, and conflicting policies in the region—alongside recognized signs of decline in the US’s economic, political and military prowess noted by experts and the public,⁶⁰ the US continues to assert its influential role in the Middle East, particularly concerning the Palestine issue.

During 2022–2023, US policy on the Palestine issue is characterized by:

1. Limiting criticism to mere “verbal criticism” of Israeli actions perceived as “inconsistent” with US positions, while refraining from applying any punitive measures to compel Israel to reconsider its stance. This stance persists despite efforts to portray disagreement with the right-wing Israeli government elected since December 2022, exemplified by statements from US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken during a conference held by the leftist J Street Association, saying, “We will also continue to unequivocally oppose any acts that undermine the prospects of a two-state solution including but not limited to settlement expansion, moves toward annexation of the West Bank, disruption to the historic status quo of holy sites, demolitions and evictions, and incitement to violence.”⁶¹ This criticism lacks accompanying punitive measures against Israel, a departure from the swift actions typically taken against other Middle Eastern countries deviating from US policy. For instance, a significant segment of the US legislative and executive branches endorse a strategy to encircle Iran, involving a pivotal role for the US Central Command (CENTCOM) alongside Israeli forces and those of Iran’s neighboring countries. The reassignment of Israel’s alignment from CENTCOM Europe to CENTCOM Middle East serves as a clear indication that the move aligns with punitive measures against Iran and endeavors to encircle it.⁶²

2. Persisting in supporting Israeli gains, even when they conflict with the explicit positions of the US administration. The administration has neither rescinded President Donald Trump’s decisions regarding Jerusalem, normalization, settlements, the annexation of the Golan Heights, or the Deal of the Century nor has it pursued any political initiatives to enhance its stance toward the Palestinians, such as opening a US diplomatic mission to Palestine. Regarding the issue of Palestinian statehood, while President George W. Bush initially expressed support for it in 2003, subsequent administrations have echoed this support verbally without taking concrete actions to realize it. President Trump acknowledged the concept of a Palestinian state but diluted it by excluding Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and other key details. The Biden administration has maintained this approach since 2021, merely reiterating commitment to statehood without engaging in substantive efforts towards its establishment. Furthermore, it has persisted in the Security Council in its opposition to granting Palestine full



membership in the UN. In 2021, Biden announced his intention to reopen the Palestinian mission in Washington and the US consulate in East Jerusalem, both of which Trump closed in 2019. But reopening them will be difficult, for a 1987 law circumvented by Trump's predecessors bans Palestinians from having a mission in the US, and the "Trump administration passed legislation to block future leaders from waiving the restriction. Reopening the consulate in East Jerusalem would require the Israeli government's approval, which is unlikely," in light of the consulate's integration into the US Embassy to Israel, which has been relocated to Jerusalem.⁶³ In June 2022, the US renamed the Palestinian Affairs Unit (PAU) to the US Office of Palestinian Affairs (OPA), considering it an independent body from the US Embassy in Jerusalem. It reports directly to the US State Department, bypassing the embassy, a departure from previous protocol, though this process is essentially a formality.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the US thwarted the adoption of a Security Council resolution denouncing the expansion and construction of new settlements in the 1967 occupied territories. Instead, it opted for a statement urging a six-month "freeze" on settlement construction. However, its endorsement of the freeze was contingent upon the UAE, the drafter of the resolution, condemning Russia for invading Ukraine.⁶⁵

3. Continuing to support and vote in favor of Israeli positions within international bodies, exerting pressure on organizations critical of Israel in various international forums, and issuing ambiguous statements regarding incidents where Israel faces direct accusations, such as the case of the murder of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. Also, the US opposed a resolution in the UN Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee) on 17/11/2022, on the "Right of Palestinian People to Self-determination." This occurred despite the resolution receiving approval from 167 countries, equivalent to 86.52% of UN member states.⁶⁶ The US also opposed a resolution passed by the UN General Assembly at the end of December 2022, calling on the ICJ to "give an advisory opinion on the consequences of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories."⁶⁷ An analysis of voting practices in the UN indicates that there is a 13–14% voting coincidence between the United States and other member states on matters concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict. This disparity underscores a significant gap between US diplomatic approaches to the Arab-Israeli conflict and those adopted by the broader international community.⁶⁸

4. Sustained efforts to either pressure or incentivize Arab states to further broaden their normalization with Israel, typically intensify during election years. As the US prepares for the 2024 presidential election, this trend is anticipated to intensify further.

5. The ongoing utilization of “financial aid” as leverage over the Palestinian side to compel political concessions, including the persistent marginalization of resistance movements within the Palestinian structure, ongoing security collaboration with Israel, and the discouragement of lodging complaints with international legal bodies against Israeli policies. Meanwhile, in March 2022, “the US Congress authorized \$1 billion in funding for Israel’s Iron Dome air defense system, supplementing the annual \$3.7 billion in security assistance the US provides the country.”⁶⁹

According to the World Bank, the donor aid to Palestine as a percentage of Palestinian GDP decreased from 27% in 2008 to less than 2% in 2022, aligning with the overall trend in US aid to Palestine. Since 2012, the amount of US aid to the Palestinians has been diminishing.⁷⁰ Additionally, a portion of this assistance is allocated to security-related services aimed at thwarting the expansion of resistance in WB, specifically by bolstering the Palestinian security forces and enhancing security coordination. This responsibility falls under the purview of the US Security Coordinator for Israel and the PA (USSC), established in 2005. It is a US-led multilateral mission of more than 75 security specialists from nine North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries based in Jerusalem, with a forward post in Ramallah.⁷¹ It is observed that specific conditions are imposed on US aid to Palestine, where the US law stipulates that:⁷²

1. None of the funds (appropriated in titles III through VI of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022) “may be obligated for salaries of personnel of the Palestinian Authority located in Gaza.”
2. None of the funds “may be obligated or expended for assistance to Hamas or any entity effectively controlled by Hamas.”
3. None of the funds may be obligated or expended for assistance to “any power-sharing government of which Hamas is a member.”

4. None of the funds may be obligated or expended for assistance to any government “that results from an agreement with Hamas and over which Hamas exercises undue influence.”
5. US funds to UNRWA may not benefit any Palestinian refugee who has received military training or participated in armed resistance operations.

The Biden administration has occasionally expressed its intention to reopen the US Consulate-General in Jerusalem, which was integrated into the US Embassy to Israel by the Trump administration in 2019. However, it did not specify the timing of this decision, partly due to opposition from Israeli officials and certain members of Congress. In 2022, the Biden administration appointed the chief of the OPA, which operates under the auspices of the US Embassy in Jerusalem, and reports on substantive matters directly to the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau in the State Department in Washington (as previously mentioned). Additionally, the administration aims to enhance the capacity of Palestinian Authority security forces to address what it perceives as increasing militancy in key areas of the WB through the US assistance program.⁷³

A segment of US assistance is allocated to UNRWA. The average annual US aid to the organization from 1950 to 1999 stood at approximately \$45.2 million, which escalated to \$214.3 million from 2000 to 2022. Notably, the contribution in 2022 surged to \$364 million.⁷⁴

In his September 2022 address to the UN General Assembly, President Biden said that the US “is committed to Israel’s security, full stop.” Prior to that, and during his visit to WB in July 2022, Biden stated that “he envisioned a two-state solution being organized along the 1967 lines...with ‘mutually agreed-to swaps.’” As for Jerusalem, he said, “Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Palestinians and Israelis.... Jerusalem must be a city for all its people—its holy sites preserving the status quo, with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan continuing to serve as custodian.”⁷⁵

In May 2022, Israeli forces fatally shot Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. Despite substantial evidence implicating Israel in the incident, the US response was limited to the State Department’s call for an independent investigation.⁷⁶

Third: The Russian Federation

Russia, one of the Quartet's parties for the Arab-Israeli conflict settlement, deems the Quartet largely inactive, blaming the US and EU who "decided to unilaterally suspend the activities of the Middle East quartet of international mediators." Amid this stagnation, Russia, holding the UN Security Council presidency in 2023, "advanced an initiative to hold a consultation between Russia, the Arab League and a group of regional states actively involved in the Middle East peace process dossier." It stated that this initiative "proposal is not intended to establish any new formats or bodies. Its goal is to reaffirm and give a fresh impetus to the implementation of... relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and the General Assembly, the Arab Peace Initiative... and the two-state solution—a framework for Palestine and Israel to coexist in peace and security. Russia is committed to the creation of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital." Additionally, Russia is engaged in diplomatic efforts to reconcile the Palestinian factions.⁷⁷

In 2022–2023, despite Israeli efforts to position itself as a "mediator between the two sides," the Russian-Ukrainian conflict became a nexus influencing both Russian and Israeli policies. A sequence of events unfolded, challenging this diplomatic stance:⁷⁸

1. Israel voted in favor of a UN resolution in March 2022 which condemned Russia's military operation in Ukraine.
2. Moscow issued its sternest warning to "all countries supplying weapons [to Ukraine] should understand that we will consider these [weapons] as legitimate targets for Russia's armed forces." This warning was widely interpreted as directed towards Israel, especially after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu mentioned that Israel was considering providing "other kinds of aid" to Ukraine beyond humanitarian assistance.
3. In July 2022, "Russia's Justice Ministry declared a legal war on the 'Jewish Agency for Israel,' whose mission... has been to facilitate Jewish immigration... [from Russia] to Israel."
4. "Israel responded by bombing Syria at a higher frequency than before," following Russia's decision to tighten control over the Jewish Agency.



5. Due to the decrease in global arms sales by Russia, driven by its deep involvement in the Ukrainian conflict, a surge in demand among Russian customers for Israeli-made weapons was noted. India stands out as one of the leading purchasers, experiencing a notable rise in its military acquisitions from Israel amidst the Ukrainian conflict.⁷⁹

It's important to highlight the recent developments in the relationship between Palestinian armed resistance movements and Russia. Evidence of this includes Russia hosting delegations from Hamas in May and September 2022, as well as a renewed push for a meeting between the two sides in 2023. These developments are particularly notable given the strains in the Israeli-Russian relationship for two main reasons: Israel's stance on the Ukrainian conflict, including its support for condemning Russia and providing aid to Ukraine, and its ongoing attacks on Syria despite Russian warnings about the risks of this policy.⁸⁰

The statement made by Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov at the UN Security Council in April 2023 outlines the Russian position as follows:⁸¹

1. The two-state solution is the most appropriate solution for both parties to the conflict.
2. East Jerusalem should be the capital of an independent Palestinian state.
3. "The right of Israelis to safe and peaceful coexistence with their neighbours and the region as a whole."
4. Rejection of Israeli policies, especially "construction of Israeli settlements..., expropriation of lands, demolition of houses and arbitrary detention."
5. Criticism of "the growing radicalisation of the Palestinian street and a deepening split between the main Palestinian parties, which poses a risk of a military confrontation."
6. The aforementioned objectives can only be attained through direct dialogue between the involved parties, revitalizing the crucial role of the Quartet established by the UN Security Council, and implementing the Arab Peace Initiative.⁸²

However, it's important to note that Russia's financial aid to the Palestinian people is limited. When compared to Western countries, a significant disparity emerges: European countries and the US lead in the percentage of aid provided, whereas Russia ranks 35th in total aid to UNRWA, from the Oslo Accords until 2023.⁸³

Fourth: The EU

The European Parliament can be regarded as the institution representing the official and popular European stances. In its recommendations to the rest of the EU organs, the European position was delineated in a statement on 12/7/2023 as follows:⁸⁴

1. Endorse the two-state solution and recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of both states. The Parliament expresses regret “about the unilateral decisions of some states to recognise Jerusalem as Israel’s undivided capital.”
2. “Work in partnership with Israel, the PA, the United States and Arab partners in the region with a view to preventing the rearming of terrorist groups.”
3. “Reiterate the need for the PA to take charge of the Gaza Strip” and “call on the PA to condemn and sever all links with... terrorist groups active in the region.”
4. “EU financial support for the PA in the area of education should only be provided on the condition that textbook content be aligned with UNESCO standards, and that examples that incite hatred and violence be removed.”
5. Consider the Abraham Accords between Arab countries and Israel as “conducive to the two-state solution.”
6. Continue “to underline that Israeli settlements in the oPt are illegal under international law,” advocating for a boycott of their products, calling for an immediate end to “the eviction of Palestinian families and the demolition of their homes,” and demanding that Israel, as the occupying power, stop “illegally exploiting water and land resources in the [occupied Palestinian territories] oPt.”
7. Highlight the necessity for Palestinian presidential and legislative elections, and urge Israel to respect Palestinian civil society organizations.
8. Advocate for the reopening of Palestinian educational institutions in East Jerusalem that were closed by Israel.
9. Call for an end to all Israeli restrictions on the Palestinian healthcare, education and trade sectors.
10. Maintain support for UNRWA.
11. Commit to helping the ICC to move forward with investigations into war crimes in oPt.



It’s important to mention that the EU stance on the two-state solution didn’t materialize into concrete actions but rather served as a means to urge Palestinians to pursue the peace process. Unfortunately, it lacked corresponding pressure on the Israeli side, which hindered progress. An academic examination of European policy positions (EU countries) concerning the Palestine issue revealed that:⁸⁵

1. The quantitative and comparative measurement of EU statements on the Palestine issue lacks consistency with voting behavior of EU countries at the UN, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and other UN bodies. It appears to be based on the lowest common denominator.
2. The most notable feature of European voting on important issues on the Palestine issue is the predominance of “abstentions or absenteeism” when voting.
3. When the world is divided into political regions, the highest levels of congruence with the US in UN voting on issues related to the Arab-Israeli conflict are as follows:

Table 4/8: Voting Coincidence with the US on the Palestine Issue⁸⁶

Region	Percentage (%)
Africa	8
Asia-Pacific	15
Eastern European	16
Latin American and Caribbean	11
Western European and Others	25

Fifth: China

The political transformation in China since 1978 marked a profound shift in Chinese strategy on both domestic and international levels. China became less ideological and revolutionary, with a growing pragmatism in its foreign policy. This paved the way for the establishment of diplomatic relations and recognition of Israel in 1992. Since then, Sino-Israeli relations have steadily developed across various sectors.

Sino-Israeli relations and China's stance on the Palestine issue in 2022 and 2023 can be understood within the context of broader shifts in Chinese foreign policy. Analysts have observed that China's success in fostering closer ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran, as well as restoring diplomatic relations between them, suggests a growing Chinese interest in expanding its diplomatic engagement in the Middle East. This interest extends particularly to the Palestine issue, given China's increasing strategic interests in the region, which now surpass those of traditional major powers like the US. However, this proactive Chinese diplomacy is accompanied by a notable decline in China's positive image among the Israeli public from 2019 to 2022, dropping by 18%.⁸⁷ This decline in public opinion poses challenges to China's role in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

During PA President Mahmud 'Abbas's visit to Beijing in 2023, and prior to that, the PA Foreign Minister met with his Chinese counterpart in 2022, China expressed a willingness to revive stalled peace process efforts for several reasons:⁸⁸

1. China seeks to achieve stability in the region, recognizing the impact of instability on the accelerated implementation of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
2. It desires to stabilize the region to ensure the continuous flow of crude oil from the Middle East, which covers 40% of China's needs.
3. China aims to bolster its positive image among Muslim communities, which have often raised concerns about discrimination against the Muslim minority in China.
4. China intends to expand its commercial activities in the region. "At the 10th Arab-China business conference in mid-June 2023, China made over 30 investment agreements worth \$10 billion," in addition in 2022, the volume of Arab-Chinese trade reached \$430 billion.
5. Chinese exports to Palestine increased from \$6.15 million in 2000 to \$248 million in 2021.

Sixth: India

Most scholars in the field of international relations tend to view India as one of the emerging powers in the global system. Its recent collaboration with Saudi Arabia to establish the India-Middle East-Europe Economics Corridor, connecting

India to Europe via the Arab region serves as a testament to India's expanding influence.

However, it is worth noting that the Indian government, led by the Hindu nationalist BJP since 2014, has significantly bolstered its ties with Israel. Moreover, its political stances diverge from those of the Indian National Congress, aligning more closely with the prevailing international trend, “supporting all efforts to resume direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine to achieve a two-State solution.”⁸⁹

The 2022–2023 period saw a significant increase in mutual visits between Indian and Israeli officials at high levels. The India-Israel bilateral trade progressed rapidly from \$200 million in 1992—when full diplomatic relations were established between the two countries—to \$10.7 billion.⁹⁰ Additionally, there was a notable uptick in India's imports from Israel of arms, climbing from under \$60 million in the 2018–2020 period to approximately \$162 million in the 2021–2023 period.⁹¹

The Indian government has taken a stringent stance against fostering solidarity between Kashmiri Muslims and Palestinians. This is particularly evident as the ruling Hindu party BJP exhibits anti-Islamic religious inclinations, further complicating relations between Palestine and India.⁹²

During the fiscal year 2022/2023, the Indian government presented \$2.5 million in aid to UNRWA, accounting for 50% of India's total aid to Palestine during that period.⁹³

Seventh: Japan

Japanese foreign policy adopts the two-state solution, rejects Israeli settlement policies and the practice of excessive violence against the Palestinian people,⁹⁴ and seeks, within its mercantilist tendency, not to get involved in the circumstances of the Palestine issue except to the extent that it reflects the general direction of the international will on the one hand, and in a way that does not affect its keenness to access energy resources and penetrate the Arab markets on the other hand. The volume of diplomatic activity between Palestine and Japan confirms this trend. During the years 2022 and 2023, three official visits took place between the two parties (the visit of Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs to Ramallah, the visit of former Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah to

Japan, and the visit of the Palestinian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities to Japan).

Japan participates in providing aid to the Palestinian people, but the scale of this assistance does not match Japan's economic capacity. Interestingly, it's comparable to Chinese aid in this aspect, despite China's lower ranking in aid volume relative to its economic strength. Japan holds the fifth position globally in terms of financial assistance to the Palestinians.⁹⁵ In 2022, Japan allocated \$3.35 million to GS to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2023, \$1 million was allocated to repair damages in the Jenin refugee camp caused by an Israeli incursion.⁹⁶ Since the Oslo Accord in 1993, Japan's total aid to Palestinians amounts to \$2.3 billion, averaging around \$77 million annually. A key project in Japan's engagement with the conflict parties is the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity Initiative, involving Palestine, Jordan, Israel and Japan. By 2023, 15 factories in the Palestinian Jordan Valley were operational, with eight more preparing to launch under the initiative.⁹⁷

The Israeli-Japanese relations are characterized by the following observations:⁹⁸

1. Military sphere: Israel and Japan signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to continue strengthening "bilateral defense cooperation, including defense equipment and technology cooperation."
2. Japan's share of foreign investments in Israel rose to a record 17% by mid-2023, up from 12.8% in 2022.
3. Israel exports to Japan totaled \$906 million in 2022, while Israel imports from Japan amounted to \$1.4 billion.
4. The US-Japan voting coincidence on the Palestine issue is 18%, which is 7% lower than the 25% US-European voting coincidence. This indicates that Japan's position is less aligned with US policy compared to European countries.

Eighth: International Public Opinion

If we consider the UN as the public expression of international will, only 28% of countries in 2023 view the UN negatively. In contrast, 62% of people in Israel have an unfavorable opinion of the UN, a 4% increase since 2007, making Israel the most dissatisfied country with the UN in the world.⁹⁹



If we consider that the primary support for Israel comes from Western powers, public opinion polls in these countries during 2022–2023 indicate a decline in support for Israel, as shown in the following table:

Table 5/8: Percentage of Sympathizers with Israel and the Palestinians in the US and Western European Countries 2023¹⁰⁰

Country	% Sympathizers with Israel	% Sympathizers with the Palestinians	Notes
US (2022)	55	41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The younger the age, the higher the opposition. • Democrats exhibit twice the level of opposition compared to Republicans.
Germany	17	15	A significant portion of European society tends to harbor pessimism regarding the prospects of peace between Arabs and Israel, with only 13.7% expressing optimism.
Sweden	16	23	7% difference in favor of the Palestinians.
Denmark	14	20	6% difference
France	13	22	9% difference
Spain	12	31	19% difference
Italy	11	19	8% difference
UK	10	23	13% difference

Ninth: Future Impact of Global Stances on Palestine

To define the future possibilities of the international and regional environment of the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is necessary to define this environment in the current period. At the international level, six central powers shape the global system, each guided by a strategic framework influencing its policies and direction in the short term. This framework will also be reflected in its policies regarding the Palestine issue and the utilization of this conflict to serve these orientations, as follows:

1. **US:** The US is an empire in decline, and its current strategic goal is to halt or slow down this decline. This entails relaxing its international commitments, something that worries Israeli decision-makers in the foreseeable future.
2. **Russian Federation:** The disintegration of the Soviet Union constituted a security concern for the current Russian administration. They feared that the disintegration would spread into Russia and affect the republics inhabited by significant proportions of ethnic minorities, which total about 22% of Russia's total population. Therefore, its strategy is based on internal societal cohesion and ensuring a geographical environment adjacent to its borders that does not include hostile forces in the foreseeable future. This makes Russian diplomacy wary of Western policies, creating a dilemma for Israeli diplomacy in reconciling its historical association with colonial powers and Russia's restoration of its international status, along with all the circumstances that this implies for Israeli policy.
3. **China:** China is often characterized as a "nationalist" state with aspirations to transition into an empire, albeit through peaceful means, despite significant increases in its military capabilities. This ambition is articulated in the "peaceful rise" theory. Perhaps its strategic projects in the Middle East clearly indicate a potential push for a greater diplomatic role in fostering a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is especially notable following its success in easing tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia. However, such endeavors may unsettle Israel, as they could entail regional concessions or lead to it bearing the consequences of the failure of the Chinese endeavor.
4. **EU:** The EU grapples with two contrasting trends. On one hand, there's a resurgence of nostalgia for the nation-state, particularly evident in the rise of right-wing movements across Europe. On the other hand, there's a push towards federalism, advocating for the development of the EU into a United States of Europe. Interestingly, Israel appears to garner stronger support from the latter trend, despite certain contextual challenges.
5. **Japan:** Japan embodies a contemporary model of the Mercantilist state, with its advocacy for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict motivated by the aim to reallocate military spending in the Middle East, where it lacks competitive edge against other global powers, towards civilian investments. Leveraging its advanced technology and economic prowess, Japan can effectively compete



internationally in civilian sectors. Such Mercantilist principles could offer Israel a strategic advantage by fostering a shift in the Arab-Israeli conflict dynamics from a zero-sum game to one of mutual benefit.

6. **India:** The BJP ascension signifies a notable departure in India's foreign policy stance, transitioning from "positive non-alignment" to a more assertive international posture. The proposed "India-Middle East-Europe Economics Corridor" project embodies this shift, potentially aligning India with global ambitions. While Israel may welcome this development, contingent upon the BJP's continued governance, it also harbors concerns. The project's realization could inadvertently escalate Sino-Indian tensions, particularly in the Arab East and Gulf region, which could force Israel to choose between these two Asian powers.

It is evident that the preceding landscape is intertwined with a set of indicators warranting attention:

1. The gradual evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict from state-led confrontations to those spearheaded by revolutionary movements. Presently, most Arab countries are not directly engaged in conflicts with Israel, as management of the conflict has transitioned to entities such as Palestinian resistance groups within Palestine, Hizbullah in Lebanon, Ansar Allah in Yemen, and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) in Iraq. The Israeli actions during Operation al-Aqsa Flood may have contributed to a growing acceptance within international public opinion of these forces confronting Israel.
2. There appears to be a disconnect between political backing and economic aid among major powers. Russia and China, despite offering significant political backing for Palestinian rights, provide relatively minimal economic assistance to Palestine, especially to the PA in Ramallah. Conversely, Western powers and Japan, while less politically supportive of Palestine, contribute significantly more in economic aid to the region. This misalignment suggests a disconnect between political stances and actual financial support for Palestine.
3. Operation al-Aqsa Flood heightened global awareness of Palestinian suffering and underscored the extent of Israeli indifference to the human dimension. These events are expected to have lasting effects, particularly among younger demographics who represent the future leaders and elites of society.

Endnotes

- ¹ Israel-Gaza crisis: US vetoes Security Council resolution, UN News, 18/10/2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142507>; Statement by the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations on the Draft Resolution S/2023/773, site of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil, 18/10/2023 & updated on 31/10/2023, <https://www.gov.br/mre/en/contact-us/press-area/press-releases/statement-by-the-permanent-representative-of-brazil-to-the-united-nations-on-the-draft-resolution-s-2023-773>; and UN, Security Council, S/2023/773, 18/10/2023, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/311/26/pdf/n2331126.pdf?token=n44SJ8D8KHdUCDM0Od&fe=true>
- ² US vetoes UN resolution calling for Gaza ceasefire, Al Jazeera, 8/12/2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/8/antonio-guterres-urges-un-security-council-to-push-for-gaza-ceasefire>
- ³ Full text of UN Security Council resolution calling for Gaza pauses, boost in aid, The Times of Israel, 22/12/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-un-security-council-resolution-calling-for-gaza-pause-boost-in-aid/>; and UN, Security Council, SRES/2720 (2023), 22/12/2023, [https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F2720\(2023\)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F2720(2023)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False)
- ⁴ After it was adopted with 120 votes, one UN member country, citing technical difficulties, changed its vote after the vote was recorded, so the final tally was 121 in favour to 14 against, with 44 abstentions. See UN General Assembly adopts Gaza resolution calling for immediate and sustained 'humanitarian truce,' UN News, 26/10/2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142847>; and UN, General Assembly, A/ES-10/L.25, 26/10/2023, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltid/n23/319/20/pdf/n2331920.pdf?token=3j8aA12Vg0sNeUTmAE&fe=true>
- ⁵ UN News (@UN_News_Centre), X (Twitter), 27/10/2023, 10:51 p.m., https://x.com/UN_News_Centre/status/1717992371906839005?s=20
- ⁶ Michelle Nichols, United Nations demands humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, Reuters, 13/12/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-general-assembly-set-demand-gaza-ceasefire-2023-12-12/>; and UN, General Assembly, A/ES-10/L.27, 10/12/2023, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N23/397/09/PDF/N2339709.pdf?OpenElement>
- ⁷ "Israel and Hamas October 2023 Conflict: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)," CRS, 20/10/2023, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47754>
- ⁸ Scott Pelley, President Joe Biden: The 2023 60 Minutes interview transcript, CBS News, 15/10/2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/president-joe-biden-2023-60-minutes-transcript/>
- ⁹ Secretary Antony J. Blinken at a Press Availability, U.S. Department of State, 30/11/2023, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-a-press-availability-43/>
- ¹⁰ U.N. Chief Condemns Israel's "Unparalleled and Unprecedented" Attacks on Civilians, site of Democracy Now, 21/11/2023, https://www.democracynow.org/2023/11/21/headlines/un_chief_condemns_israels_unparalleled_and_unprecedented_attacks_on_civilians
- ¹¹ Statement from Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III on Deployment of USS Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group to the Eastern Mediterranean, U.S. Department of Defense, 14/10/2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3557560/statement-from-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-on-deployment-of-uss-eis/>
- ¹² Samuel Ramani, Russia Asks: How to Benefit From the Gaza War?, site of Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), 12/10/2023, <https://cepa.org/article/russia-asks-how-to-benefit-from-the-gaza-war/>; and War in Ukraine: How Russia could use the Israel-Hamas war for its benefit, Euronews, 11/10/2023, <https://www.euronews.com/2023/10/11/war-in-ukraine-how-russia-could-use-the-israel-hamas-war-for-its-benefit>



- ¹³ Cameron Abadi and Adam Tooze, “Means for the World Economy,” *Foreign Policy*, 15/10/2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/10/15/israel-hamas-war-gaza-economy-oil-prices/>
- ¹⁴ Tanker Hijacked Off Coast of Yemen in Third Attack on Israeli-linked Ships Since Gaza War Began, *Haaretz*, 26/11/2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-11-26/ty-article/israeli-linked-tanker-hijacked-off-coast-of-yemen/0000018c-0be4-d679-abdc-9ffc65b10000>; Houthi Ansar Allah Movement Claims Drone Attack On Container Ship In Red Sea, Repeats Threats To Stop Any Ship Sailing To Israel Through Red Sea And Arabian Sea, site of MEMRI, 15/12/2023, <https://www.memri.org/jttm/houthi-ansar-allah-movement-claims-drone-attack-container-ship-red-sea-repeats-threats-stop-any>; and Tom O’Connor, Iran-Backed Houthis Cut Israel Off From Critical Lifeline Amid War in Gaza, *Newsweek*, 15/12/2023, <https://www.newsweek.com/houthis-cut-israel-off-red-sea-gaza-war-1852969>
- ¹⁵ Michael Birnbaum, U.S. is warned about its global standing as Gaza suffering persists, *The Washington Post* newspaper, 11/11/2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/11/11/us-israel-gaza-civilian-deaths/>; and Jeremy Scahill, This Is Not a War Against Hamas, *The Intercept*, 11/12/2023, <https://theintercept.com/2023/12/11/israel-hamas-war-civilians-biden/>
- ¹⁶ Matthew Lee and Lolita Baldor, In first call with Palestinian president Abbas, Biden discusses support for humanitarian aid to Gaza, AP, 15/10/2023, <https://apnews.com/article/israel-us-hamas-blinken-saudi-487f746b102a82f4c345a058584e2518>
- ¹⁷ The delivery of humanitarian aid in Gaza has stopped, ReliefWeb, 12/12/2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/delivery-humanitarian-aid-gaza-has-stopped>
- ¹⁸ Nandita Bose and Katharine Jackson, Biden says Hamas must be eliminated, US officials warn of escalation, Reuters, 16/10/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/conflict-middle-east-could-escalate-us-national-security-adviser-warns-2023-10-15/>
- ¹⁹ “Israel and Hamas October 2023 Conflict: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs),” CRS, 20/10/2023; and Remarks by President Biden on the Release of Hostages from Gaza, The White House, 24/11/2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/11/24/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-release-of-hostages-from-gaza/>
- ²⁰ Felicia Schwartz, US vetoes UN resolution calling for immediate ceasefire in Gaza, *Financial Times*, 8/12/2023, <https://www.ft.com/content/4afa7aa0-4b0c-4111-876d-e83049d53162>; and Charter of the United Nations, Chapter XV — The Secretariat, Article 99, site of the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs, last updated 12/7/2023, <https://legal.un.org/reptory/art99.shtml>
- ²¹ Dalia Dassa Kaye et al., *Reimagining U.S. Strategy in the Middle East Sustainable Partnerships, Strategic Investments* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2021), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RRA900/RRA958-1/RAND_RBA958-1.pdf
See also Brian Katulis and Peter Juul, Strategic Reengagement in the Middle East, site of Center for American Progress, 16/12/2021, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/strategic-reengagement-in-the-middle-east/>; and Kelsey Norman et al., Key Challenges for U.S. Policy in the Middle East, site of Baker Institute, 7/7/2022, <https://www.bakerinstitute.org/research/key-challenges-for-us-policy-in-the-middle-east>
- ²² Kelsey Norman et al., Key Challenges for U.S. Policy in the Middle East, Baker Institute, 7/7/2022.
- ²³ Kevin Liptak et al., Emotions are running high at the White House as some aides’ frustration with Israel is growing, CNN, 8/11/2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/11/08/politics/biden-administration-israel-hamas-war/index.html>
- ²⁴ Felicia Schwartz, James Politi and James Shotter, Joe Biden warns Benjamin Netanyahu to change tack or risk losing global support, *Financial Times*, 13/12/2023, <https://www.ft.com/content/aa0bffa-cd5b7-4221-a715-b7d02fd377d4>

- ²⁵ UN, Security Council, S/2023/772, 16/10/2023, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/308/81/pdf/n2330881.pdf?token=M5jWQ4hucLayIjUhjy&fe=true>
- ²⁶ Carrie Nooten, Israel-Hamas war: Confusion and powerlessness at UN Security Council, *Le Monde* newspaper, 15/10/2023, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/10/15/israel-hamas-war-confusion-and-powerlessness-at-un-security-council_6175477_4.html; and Russia asks UN Security Council to vote Monday on Israel, Gaza, Reuters, 15/10/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-asks-un-security-council-vote-monday-israel-gaza-2023-10-14/>
- ²⁷ About these points, see In call, Netanyahu flogs Putin over Gaza war stance and blossoming Iran ties, *The Times of Israel*, 10/12/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-call-netanyahu-flogs-putin-over-gaza-war-stance-and-blossoming-iran-ties/>; Patrick Wintour, US has wrecked chances of peace in Middle East, Putin tells Brics summit, *The Guardian*, 21/12/2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/21/us-has-wrecked-chances-of-peace-in-middle-east-putin-tells-brics-summit>; Guy Faulconbridge, Russia calls for international monitoring mission in Gaza, Reuters, 10/12/2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/russias-lavrov-hamas-attacks-do-not-justify-israels-punishment-palestinians-2023-12-10/>; and UN secretary general condemns Hamas attacks, but says they ‘did not happen in a vacuum,’ site of TASS News Agency, 24/10/2023, <https://tass.com/world/1696203>
- ²⁸ No Russian veto on UNSC resolution out of solidarity with Arab countries — envoy, TASS News Agency, 22/12/2023, <https://tass.com/politics/1725667>; and UN security council backs resolution on large-scale aid to Gaza but not ceasefire, *The Guardian*, 22/12/2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/22/un-security-council-backs-resolution-on-large-scale-aid-to-gaza-but-not-ceasefire>
- ²⁹ A week into the Israel-Hamas war, the EU continues to struggle with its messaging, Euronews, 14/10/2023, <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/10/14/a-week-into-the-israel-hamas-war-the-eu-continues-to-struggle-with-its-messaging>; EU calls Gaza-war summit, triples aid to Palestinians, site of euobserver, 15/10/2023, <https://euobserver.com/world/157552>; and EU triples funding to Gaza after a week of mixed messages on Israel crisis, POLITICO, 15/10/2023, <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-triple-funding-humanitarian-aid-gaza-israel-hamas-conflict-crisis/>
- ³⁰ Destruction in Gaza ‘comparable, if not higher,’ to WWII Germany, says EU foreign policy chief, Anadolu Agency, 8/12/2023, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/destruction-in-gaza-comparable-if-not-higher-to-wwii-germany-says-eu-foreign-policy-chief/3077510>
- ³¹ Belgium Overcomes EU Struggles to Send Strong Message on Gaza, site of Human Rights Watch (HRW), 16/11/2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/16/belgium-overcomes-eu-struggles-send-strong-message-gaza>
- ³² US vetoes resolution on Gaza which called for ‘immediate humanitarian ceasefire’, UN News, 8/12/2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1144562#:~:text=%E2%80%9CCalling%20for%20a%20ceasefire%20ignores,abides%20by%20international%20humanitarian%20law>
- ³³ Clement Tan, China says Israel’s actions in Gaza are ‘beyond self defense’ as U.S. races to avert wider conflict, CNBC, 15/10/2023, <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/10/16/china-says-israels-actions-in-gaza-have-gone-beyond-self-defense.html>
- ³⁴ Wang Yi Has a Phone Call with U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The People’s Republic of China, 6/12/2023, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202312/t20231211_11199379.html; and Secretary Blinken’s Call with People’s Republic of China (PRC) Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, U.S. Department of State, 6/12/2023, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-blinkens-call-with-peoples-republic-of-china-prc-director-of-the-office-of-the-foreign-affairs-commission-and-foreign-minister-wang-yi-2/>

- ³⁵ Jointly Implementing the Global Security Initiative For Lasting Peace and Security of the World, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The People's Republic of China, 31/10/2023, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/wjbxw/202311/t20231102_11172214.html
- ³⁶ In India's Second Statement On Israel-Gaza War, A Balancing Act, site of New Delhi Television (NDTV) World, 13/10/2023, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-latest-news-ndtv-explains-indias-viable-palestine-message-after-support-for-israel-4478662>
- ³⁷ See the list of votes on the resolution at: UN News (@UN_News_Centre), X (Twitter), 27/10/2023, 10:51 p.m., https://x.com/UN_News_Centre/status/1717992371906839005?s=20
- ³⁸ Audrey Truschke, How India's Hindu Nationalists Are Weaponizing History Against Muslims, *Time* magazine, 6/10/2023, <https://time.com/6320003/india-weaponizing-history-against-muslims/>
- ³⁹ Which countries have criticised Israeli attacks on Gaza?, Al Jazeera, 15/10/2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/15/which-countries-have-criticised-israeli-attacks-on-gaza>
- ⁴⁰ Israel's War in Gaza Also Impacts African Geopolitics, site of Inkstick, 7/12/2023, <https://inkstickmedia.com/israels-war-in-gaza-also-impacts-african-geopolitics/>
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² See the following polls: David Leonhardt, What the Polls Say About Gaza, *The New York Times*, 30/11/2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/30/briefing/polling-gaza.html>; Reuters/Ipsos Poll: Israel-Hamas War and 2024 Election, site of Ipsos, 15/11/2023, https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2023-11/Reuters%20Ipsos%20Israel%20Gaza%20Hamas%20War%20Topline%2011%2015%202023_0.pdf; American Public Attitudes on Israel/Palestine During the Israel-Gaza War: Part 2, site of University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll, 5/11/2023, https://criticalissues.umd.edu/sites/criticalissues.umd.edu/files/UMCIP_11.3-5.2023_Israel-Gaza_Results.pdf; Janina Conboye and Alan Smith, How public opinion on the Israel-Hamas war has shifted, *Financial Times*, 21/11/2023, <https://www.ft.com/content/6bf4f6ed-b705-4e66-ac6f-59b5ef6c0c77>; and Matthew Smith, Attitudes to the Israel-Palestine conflict in Western Europe and the USA in 2023, site of YouGov, 3/7/2023, <https://today.yougov.com/international/articles/45869-attitudes-israel-palestine-conflict-western-europe>
- ⁴³ Matthew Smith, Israel-Palestine: fundamental attitudes to the conflict among Western Europeans, YouGov, 20/12/2023, <https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/48218-israel-palestine-fundamental-attitudes-to-the-conflict-among-western-europeans>
- ⁴⁴ EU Overwhelmingly Votes at UN for Humanitarian Ceasefire in Gaza, site of United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe (UNRIC), 13/12/2023, <https://unric.org/en/eu-overwhelmingly-votes-at-un-for-humanitarian-ceasefire-in-gaza/>; and UN General Assembly votes overwhelmingly in favour of Gaza ceasefire, Al Jazeera, 12/12/2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/12/un-general-assembly-votes-overwhelmingly-in-favour-of-gaza-ceasefire>
- ⁴⁵ EU Overwhelmingly Votes at UN for Humanitarian Ceasefire in Gaza, UNRIC, 13/12/2023.
- ⁴⁶ Matthew Smith, Israel-Palestine: fundamental attitudes to the conflict among Western Europeans, YouGov, 20/12/2023.
- ⁴⁷ Walid 'Abd al-Hay, Transformations in International Public Opinion and Operation al-Aqsa Flood, al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 4/12/2023, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2023/12/04/academic-paper-transformations-in-international-public-opinion-and-operation-al-aqsa-flood/>
- ⁴⁸ Adam Taylor, Gaza's economy, crumbling for years, is being pounded to dust, *The Washington Post*, 16/11/2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/16/gaza-economy-war-rebuilding-israel/>

- ⁴⁹ Adnan Abdul Razzaq, Rebuilding Gaza: The huge cost of Israel's devastating war, *The New Arab*, 27/11/2023, <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/rebuilding-gaza-huge-cost-israels-devastating-war>; and David Shortell, UN report warns war has already set Gaza and West Bank economy back more than a decade, *CNN*, 9/11/2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/11/09/middleeast/un-report-gaza-economic-impact-poverty/index.html>
- ⁵⁰ Ofir Winter, Morri Link and Adam Sharon, "Navigating Post-War Realities: The Road Ahead for Israel and Egypt," *Insight No. 1794*, *INSS*, 6/12/2023, <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/israel-egypt-war>
- ⁵¹ Annual Report, site of Office of the Quartet, <https://www.quartetoffice.org/page.php?id=5eba80y6208128Y5eba80>
- ⁵² Russia is ready to return to the Middle East Quartet, *RT*, 4/1/2023, <https://ar.rt.com/uhw7> (in Arabic); Interview by Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Russian Mission to the EU Kirill Logvinov for RIA Novosti News Agency, 7 March 2023, site of Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union, 7/3/2023, <https://russiaeu.ru/en/news/interview-charge-daffaires-ai-russian-mission-eu-kirill-logvinov-ria-novosti-news-agency-7>; and *Asharq al-Awsat*, 8/4/2023. (in Arabic)
- ⁵³ Department Press Briefing – January 4, 2023, U.S. Department of State, 4/1/2023, <https://www.state.gov/briefings/departement-press-briefing-january-4-2023/#post-408486-RUSSIAISPAL>
- ⁵⁴ UN General Assembly Resolutions Tables, site of Dag Hammarskjöld Library, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/77>
- ⁵⁵ Jessica Durando and Oren Dorell, Here are the 7 small nations that sided with U.S. and Israel on U.N.'s Jerusalem vote, *USA Today* newspaper, 21/12/2017, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/12/21/here-7-nations-sided-u-s-and-israel-u-n-vote-over-jerusalem/974098001/>
- ⁵⁶ 2021–2022 UNGA Resolutions on Israel vs. Rest of the World, site of UN Watch, 29/11/2021, <https://unwatch.org/2021-2022-unga-resolutions-on-israel-vs-rest-of-the-world/>; Voting Practices in the United Nations, 2018, U.S. Department of State, 31/3/2019, pp. 65–74, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Voting-Practices-in-the-United-Nations_2018.pdf; and 2022 UNGA Resolutions on Israel vs. Rest of the World, UN Watch, 14/11/2022, <https://unwatch.org/2022-2023-unga-resolutions-on-israel-vs-rest-of-the-world/>
- ⁵⁷ 2022 UNGA Resolutions on Israel vs. Rest of the World, UN Watch, 14/11/2022.
- ⁵⁸ Middle East, including the Palestinian Question, site of Security Council Report, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/chronology/middle-east-including-the-palestinian-question.php>; Statement by the President of the Security Council, UN, Security Council, S/PRST/2023/1, 20/2/2023, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S.PRST.2023.1.pdf>; and Resolutions, UN, Security Council, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/resolutions-0>
- ⁵⁹ UN Security Council Meetings & Outcomes Tables, Dag Hammarskjöld Library, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick>
- ⁶⁰ Brian Michael Jenkins, 10 Reasons U.S. Influence Has Fallen in the Middle East, site of Slate, 16/9/2013, <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2013/09/americas-influence-in-the-middle-east-has-fallen-top-10-reasons.html>; Mohammad al-Kassim, US Influence in the Middle East on the Decline, *The Media Line*, 31/7/2022, <https://themedialine.org/top-stories/us-influence-in-the-middle-east-on-the-decline/>; and Aidan Connaughton, Prevailing view among Americans is that U.S. influence in the world is weakening – and China's is growing, *Pew Research Center*, 23/6/2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/06/23/prevailing-view-among-americans-is-that-u-s-influence-in-the-world-is-weakening-and-chinas-is-growing/>
See also academic paper on the US Declinism in the US political literature: Walid 'Abd al-Hay, American Declinism and the Dilemma of Arab and Israeli Strategic Options, *al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations*, 11/11/2020, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2020/11/11/academic-paper-american-declinism-and-the-dilemma-of-arab-and-israeli-strategic-options/>

- ⁶¹ Blinken warns incoming Netanyahu govt against settlements, annexation, France 24, 4/12/2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20221204-blinken-warns-incoming-netanyahu-govt-against-settlements-annexation>
- ⁶² Jonathan Lord, “America Is Pushing Its Security Ideas on a Lukewarm Middle East,” *Foreign Policy*, 11/7/2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/07/11/middle-east-security-military-defense-us-congress-israel-saudi-arabia-uae-gcc-iran-biden-salman-zayed/>
- ⁶³ Kali Robinson, What Is U.S. Policy on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?, site of Council on Foreign Relations, 12/7/2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-us-policy-israeli-palestinian-conflict>
- ⁶⁴ Dan Williams, U.S. signals a boost in ties with Palestinians ahead of Biden visit, Reuters, 9/6/2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-mission-palestinians-renamed-twitter-signaling-possible-upgrade-2022-06-09/>
- ⁶⁵ Edith Lederer and Matthew Lee, US averts UN diplomatic crisis over Israeli settlements, AP, 20/2/2023, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-politics-united-states-government-nations-israel-fef36aa8fba74decccb055bffa60a53d>
- ⁶⁶ Third Committee Approves Draft Resolution on the Right of Palestinian People to Self-determination – Press Release (GA/SHC/4370) (Excerpts), UN, 17/11/2022, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/third-committee-approves-draft-resolution-on-the-right-of-palestinian-people-to-self-determination-press-release-ga-shc-4370-excerpts/>
- ⁶⁷ Khalil Al-Anani et. al., The Biden Administration and the Middle East in 2023, site of Arab Center Washington DC, 4/1/2023, <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-biden-administration-and-the-middle-east-in-2023/>; and UN votes overwhelmingly in favor of a resolution calling on ICJ to give an advisory opinion on Israeli occupation, Wafa, 31/12/2022, <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/132575>
- ⁶⁸ Voting Practices in the United Nations, 2018, U.S. Department of State, 31/3/2019, p. 75; and Report to Congress on Voting Practices in the United Nations for 2020 Section 406 of Public Law 101-246 (22 U.S.C. §2414a), U.S. Department of State, 2020, p. 60, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Report-Voting-Practices-in-the-United-Nations-2020.pdf>
- ⁶⁹ Israel and Palestine: Events of 2022, HRW, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/israel-and-palestine-0>
- ⁷⁰ World Bank Group, *West Bank and Gaza - Country Climate and Development Report* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, September 2023), <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099112823094030933/pdf/P179452029863f0e80a902031b18e72860c.pdf>; and see details and numbers in U.S. Bilateral Assistance to the Palestinians (2012–), Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/u-s-bilateral-assistance-to-the-palestinians>; and The Palestinians: Overview, Aid, and U.S. Policy Issues, CRS, 24/1/2024, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10644>
- ⁷¹ Jim Zanotti, The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations, CRS, 27/10/2022, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/RL34074.pdf>
- ⁷² PUBLIC LAW 117–103—MAR. 15, 2022, Congress.gov, 15/3/2022, <https://www.congress.gov/117/plaws/publ103/PLAW-117publ103.pdf>; and see Gaza Factions Increase Calls to Revoke US-UNRWA Agreement, Al-Monitor, 23/9/2021, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/09/gaza-factions-increase-calls-revoke-us-unrwa-agreement>
- ⁷³ The Palestinians: Overview, Aid, and U.S. Policy Issues, CRS, 24/1/2024.
- ⁷⁴ Jim Zanotti, The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations, CRS, 27/10/2022.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid.; and see National Security Strategy: October 2022, The White House, 12/10/2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf>

- ⁷⁶ Department Press Briefing – May 11, 2022, U.S. Department of State, 11/5/2022, <https://www.state.gov/briefings/departement-press-briefing-may-11-2022/>; Also on Israel's responsibility, see Josef Federman, Bellingcat probe suggests Israeli fire most likely killed journalist; but not 100%, *The Times of Israel*, 16/5/2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/bellingcat-probe-suggests-israeli-fire-most-likely-killed-journalist-but-not-100/>
- ⁷⁷ Press release on Russia's efforts in the Middle East peace process, site of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 22/6/2023, https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1890611/; and Press release on the need to consolidate international efforts to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 5/7/2023, https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1895388/
- ⁷⁸ Ramzy Baroud, Friend or foe? Russia's West Jerusalem consulate is very worrying, *The Jordan Times*, 23/8/2023, <https://jordantimes.com/opinion/ramzy-baroud/friend-or-foe-russias-west-jerusalem-consulate-very-worrying>
- ⁷⁹ Emanuel Fabian, Israeli arms sales doubled in a decade, hit new record of \$12.5 billion in 2022, *The Times of Israel*, 14/6/2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-arms-sales-doubled-in-a-decade-hit-new-record-of-12-5-billion-in-2022/>
- ⁸⁰ Ivana Stradner and John Hardie, Moscow Cozies Up with Hamas to Pressure Israel, site of the *algemeiner*, 28/9/2022, <https://www.algemeiner.com/2022/09/28/moscow-cozies-up-with-hamas-to-pressure-israel/>
- ⁸¹ Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks at the UN Security Council open debate on the Situation in the Middle East, Including the Palestinian Question, New York, April 25, 2023, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 25/4/2023, <https://www.mid.ru/en/maps/ps/1865491/>
- ⁸² Russia accuses the US and Europe of being behind the disruption of the Quartet's work to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. Further details can be found: Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova's comment on the West's reckless approach to the Middle East settlement process, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 20/2/2023, <https://www.mid.ru/en/maps/ps/1854911/>
- ⁸³ 2021 Pledges to UNRWA's Programmes (Cash and In-kind) - Overall Donor Ranking as 31 December 2021, UNRWA, 31/12/2021, https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/overall_donor_ranking_2021_0.pdf
- ⁸⁴ European Parliament recommendation of 12 July 2023 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission/ High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on relations with the Palestinian Authority (2021/2207(INI)), site of European Parliament, 12/7/2023, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0283_EN.html
- ⁸⁵ Ioannis Galariotis and Maria Gianniou, "EU foreign policy incoherence in the United Nations: the case of the Middle East," in Dimitris Bouris, Daniela Huber and Michelle Pace (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2022), pp. 169–177; and EU divided in UN vote on Palestine's status, site of Euractiv, 30/11/2012, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/eu-divided-in-un-vote-on-palestine-s-status/>
- ⁸⁶ Voting Practices in the United Nations, 2018, U.S. Department of State, 31/3/2019, p. 75.
- ⁸⁷ Beijing's Global Media Influence 2022: Israel, site of Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/israel/beijings-global-media-influence/2022>
- ⁸⁸ Adam Gallagher, Is China Preparing to Make a Run at Israeli-Palestinian Peace?, site of United States Institute of Peace, 22/6/2023, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/06/china-preparing-make-run-israeli-palestinian-peace>; and China is largest trading partner of Arab countries, Saudi FM says, site of Saudi Gazette, 11/6/2023, <https://saudigazette.com.sa/article/633250/SAUDI-ARABIA/China-is-largest-trading-partner-of-Arab-countries-Saudi-FM-says>



- ⁸⁹ India Statement delivered by Secretary (West) at the Ministerial Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement on Palestine on the side lines of the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, site of the Ministry of External Affairs, India, 6/7/2023, https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/36759/India_Statement_delivered_by_Secretary_West_at_the_Ministerial_Committee_of_the_Non
- ⁹⁰ India-Israel Bilateral Relations, site of Embassy of India - Tel Aviv, <https://www.indembassyisrael.gov.in/pages?id=mbk5e&subid=lejRe>
- ⁹¹ India Imports from Israel of Arms and ammunition, parts and accessories: 2024 Data 2025 Forecast 2001-2022 Historical, site of Trading Economics, <https://tradingeconomics.com/india/imports/israel/arms-ammunition-parts-accessories>
- ⁹² Abdulla Moaswes, India, Israel and the Coordination of Control, site of Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), 9/6/2023, <https://merip.org/2023/09/india-israel-and-the-coordination-of-control/>
- ⁹³ India Presents \$2.5 Million Aid To UN Agency For Palestinian Refugees, NDTV, 31/10/2022, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-presents-2-5-million-aid-to-un-agency-for-palestinian-refugees-3477459>
- ⁹⁴ See Japan's series of statements on clashes in the West Bank between Palestinian resistance and the Israeli forces: Japan-Palestine Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/palestine/index.html; and Recent developments in Israel and Palestine (Statement by Press Secretary ONO Hikariko), Press Releases, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 21/6/2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press7e_000014.html
- ⁹⁵ 2021 Pledges to UNRWA's Programmes (Cash and In-kind) - Overall Donor Ranking as 31 December 2021, UNRWA, 31/12/2021.
- ⁹⁶ Japan-Palestine Relations (Basic Data), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 17/11/2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/palestine/data.html; and Emergency Grant Aid in response to deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1/4/2022, https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press3e_000357.html
- ⁹⁷ Japan's assistance to the Palestinians, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, June 2023, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000042388.pdf>
- ⁹⁸ See details in: Japan-Israel Defense Ministers' Meeting, site of Ministry of Defense, Japan, 30/8/2022, <https://www.mod.go.jp/en/article/2022/08/c61885c2b09e52e25bf32a1ce45ea1ec8346ff7c.html>; Meir Orbach, Japanese investment in Israel fell by 20% in first half of 2023, Calcalistech, 4/9/2023, <https://www.calcalistech.com/technews/article/hjp4q7qc3>; Israel Imports from Japan: 2024 Data 2025 Forecast 1995–2022 Historical, Trading Economics, <https://tradingeconomics.com/israel/imports/japan>; Israel Exports to Japan: 2024 Data 2025 Forecast 1995–2022 Historical, Trading Economics, <https://tradingeconomics.com/israel/exports/japan>; and Voting Practices in the United Nations, 2018, U.S. Department of State, 12/9/2019, p. 71.
- ⁹⁹ Moira Fagan, People across 24 countries continue to view UN favorably, Pew Research Center, 31/8/2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/08/31/people-across-24-countries-continue-to-view-un-favorably/>
- ¹⁰⁰ See details in the following polls: Shradha Dinesh and Laura Silver, How Americans view Israel, Netanyahu and U.S.-Israel relations in 5 charts, Pew Research Center, 21/8/2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/08/21/how-americans-view-israel-netanyahu-and-u-s-israel-relations-in-5-charts/>; Matthew Smith, Attitudes to the Israel-Palestine conflict in Western Europe and the USA in 2023, YouGov, 3/7/2023; and Lydia Saad, Democrats' Sympathies in Middle East Shift to Palestinians, site of Gallup, 16/3/2023, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/472070/democrats-sympathies-middle-east-shift-palestinians.aspx>

Index

A

- Abadie, Elie, 387
- ‘Abbas, Mahmud (Abu Mazen), 30, 33, 38–42, 46–47, 49–50, 52–57, 61–67, 69, 73–75, 77, 79, 82, 225–226, 265–266, 268–269, 332–333, 354, 365, 376, 384, 443, 446, 495, 519
- ‘Abdelfatah ‘Abdelaziz, Maged, 350
- ‘Abdul Jawad, Salameh, 228
- Abdul Kadir, Zambry, 464–465
- ‘Abdul Karim, Qais, 72–73
- Abdullah II (King of Jordan), 362, 364–365
- Abdullah, Saifuddin, 463
- ‘Abdul Razzaq, Yahya, 251
- Abdul Salam, Mohammed, 396
- ‘Abed Rabbo, Yasser, 40
- Abraham Accords, 63, 271, 375, 377, 379, 383, 386, 390, 402, 475, 517
- Abraham Accords Peace Institute, 404, 413
- Abu Akleh, Shireen, 446, 466, 512, 514
- Abu al-Ghait, Ahmad, 348, 350–352
- Abu al-Wafa, Samih, 228
- Abu ‘Asab, Amjad, 191
- Abu Dhabi, 386, 388–389, 395, 444
- Abu Diab, Fakhri, 196
- Abu Gharbiyeh, Mansour, 192
- Abu Khadijah, Amir, 229
- Abu Labdeh, Saif, 229
- Abu Marzuq, Musa, 64, 378, 394
- Abu Mu‘ammar, Zakaria, 243
- Abu Rashed, Amin, 59–60
- Abu Rudeineh, Nabil, 53, 69
- Abu Rumman, Muhammad, 362
- Abu Shamala, Jawad, 243
- Abu Sharif, Bassam, 40
- Abu Shehadeh, Sami, 290
- Abu Tair, Muhammad, 191
- Abu ‘Ubaidah (Al-Qassam spokesperson), 237–238, 241–242
- Action Group for Palestinians of Syria (AGPS), 105–106, 115
- Abuja, 475
- Addis Ababa, 406
- Aden, 395, 415
- Adjissa, Youcef, 406
- ‘Adnan, Khader, 259, 261
- Africa, 72, 102, 144, 226, 252, 327–328, 405, 475, 503, 518
- African Summit (2022), 440
- African Union (AU), 406, 440, 503
- Afrin, 106
- ‘Ain al-Hilweh RC, 68
- Ain Sokhna Port, 383
- aka Abu Ahmad Fuad (Muragha, Daud), 71
- Akhannouch, Aziz, 405
- Akram, Munir, 467–468
- Al-‘Abbas, Murad Ghazi, 192
- Al-Ahmad, ‘Azzam, 62, 64
- Al-‘Ajouri, Akram, 70, 227
- Al-‘Aloul, Mahmud, 64, 66
- Al al-Sheikh, Turki, 380



- Al-‘Amer, Ahmad, 228
- Al-Amoudi, Nidal, 74
- Al-‘Amuri, Jamil, 227–228
- Al-Aqra‘, ‘Azzam, 251
- Al-Aqsa Mosque, 47, 54, 75, 82, 159–176, 187, 191–192, 194, 199, 207–208, 222, 233, 235, 238–239, 248, 251, 351–355, 357, 362–364, 368, 375–377, 380–381, 387, 411, 413–415, 441, 446, 463–464, 466–467, 470
- Chain Gate, 163
 - Cotton Merchants’ Gate, 163
 - Damascus Gate, 189, 378
 - Gate of Mercy, 171
 - Lion’s Gate, 159, 163, 172
 - Moroccan Gate, 165, 171–175, 189, 207
 - New Gate, 165
 - Western Wall, 163–164, 166, 173–175, 207, 387
- Al-‘Aruri, Saleh, 69, 229, 239, 245, 249, 251, 374
- Al-Assad, Bashar, 367
- ‘Alawneh, Muhammad, 228
- Al-‘Azizi, Muhammad, 229
- Al-Bahtini, Khalil, 232
- Albania, 473, 490
- Albanian Government, 473
- Al-Bashir, Omar, 400
- Al-Bireh, 42, 99, 178, 208
- Al-Bureij RC, 242
- Al-Burhan, ‘Abdel Fattah, 399–401
- Al-Dakhil, Muhammad, 229
- Al-Dulaimi, Kamel, 416
- Aleppo, 106, 367
- Alexandria, 357
- Al-Falih, Khalid, 349
- Al-Farij, Muhammad, 251
- Al-Fasfous, Kayed, 261
- Al-Fayez, Trad, 362
- Algeria, 32, 61, 62–64, 347, 350–351, 398, 406–408, 414, 417
- Algerian Council of the Nation, 407
 - Algerian National People’s Assembly, 406
 - Algerian Parliamentary, 408
- Algerian Red Crescent, 408
- Al-Ghandour, Ahmad, 243
- Al-Ghannam, Jihad, 232
- Al-Ghoul, ‘Ali, 228
- Algiers, 62, 72, 347, 351, 441
- Algiers Declaration (2022), 62, 351, 407
- Al-Habbash, Mahmud, 69
- Al-Hajraf, Nayef, 375
- Al-Hasayneh, Yusuf, 70
- Al Hashimy, Reem, 381
- Al-Hayya, Khalil, 367, 378
- Al-Hidmi, Naser, 169
- Al-Hindi, Muhammad, 51, 70
- Al-Houthi, ‘Abdul Malik, 252, 396–397
- Alian, Ghassan, 74, 334
- Al-Issawiyah, 177, 195
- Aliyev, Ilham, 473
- Al-Jabari, Taysir, 230–231
- Al-Jalahma, Khalid, 383
- Al-Jama‘ah al-Islamiyyah (Lebanon), 250, 372–374
- Al-Fajr Forces, 250, 372–373
- Al-Kadhimi, Mustafa, 394
- Al-Karamah Crossing, 264
- Al-Ketbi, Ebtesam, 376
- Al-Khaldi, Majdi, 67, 376

- Al Khalifa, Abdullah bin Ahmad, 390
- Al Khalifa, Hamad bin Isa, 387
- Al Khalifa, Salman bin Hamad, 382, 387
- Al-Khatib, Kamal, 191
- Al-Khudari, Hani, 379
- Al-Khudari, Muhammad, 379
- Al-Kiswani, 'Umar, 191
- Al-Madani, Muhammad, 66
- Al-Maghazi RC, 242
- Al-Mahdi, Sadiq, 400
- Al-Maliki, Riyad, 37, 53, 463
- Al-Masry, Majida, 73
- Al Mubarak, Mohamed Khalifa, 387
- Al-Mudallal, Ahmad, 70
- Al-Nabit, Salem bin Hamad, 388
- Al-Nabulsi, Ibrahim, 228–229
- Al Nahyan, Abdullah bin Zayed, 378, 382, 386, 391
- Al Nahyan, Mohammed bin Zayed, 353, 386–388, 444
- Al Nuaimi, Ali Rashid, 383, 390
- Al-Nuseirat RC, 242
- Aloni, Nimrod, 323
- Al-Qassam Cemetery, 179–180
- Al-Qassam, Izz al-Din, 179–180
- Al-Qutati, Walid, 70
- Al-Rahman Mosque, 177
- Al-Ra'i, Mar Bechara Boutros, 369, 372
- Al-Rayyis, Muhammad, 251
- Al-Ruwaili, Fayyadh bin Hamed, 388
- Al-Saadi, Bassam, 70, 230
- Al-Sabah, Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber, 381
- Al-Sabah, Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad, 381
- Al-Sa'di, Muhammad, 228
- Al-Sadiq, Ali, 399
- Al Saud, Faisal bin Farhan, 380, 384, 501
- Al Saud, Muhammed bin Salman, 378, 380, 384–385, 444
- Al Saud, Salman bin 'Abdul 'Aziz, 376, 378, 380
- Al-Shaer, Nasser al-Din, 45
- Al-Shati' Agreement (2014), 33
- Al-Sheikh, Hussein, 41, 52, 55–56, 58, 66–67, 69, 74, 78, 226, 332–334
- Al-Sisi, 'Abdul Fattah, 353–355, 357–359, 365
- Al-Sudairi, Nayef bin Bandar, 376
- Al-Sudani, Mohammed Shia', 394
- Al Thani, Mohammed bin 'Abdulrahman, 377
- Al Thani, Tamim bin Hamad, 380
- Al-Thawabta, Isma'il, 243–244
- Al-Tirawi, Tawfiq, 41, 66
- Al-Yarmouk RC, 106
- Al-Za'arir, Fahmi, 53
- Al-Zayani, Abdullatif bin Rashid, 388
- Al-Zubaidi, 'Aidarous, 395, 398
- Al-Zubaidi, Na'im, 228
- Amal Movement (Lebanon), 371
- American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), 383
- Amini, Mahsa, 452
- Amirabdollahian, Hossein, 453–454, 459–461
- Amman, 364–365
- Ammar, Nabil, 410
- Amnesty International, 440
- Ankara, 64, 443–446, 448–450
- Ansar Allah Movement (Yemen), 252, 361, 396–397, 417, 462, 478, 494–495, 524
- Aoun, Michel, 368, 369, 372
- Applied Research Institute–Jerusalem (ARIJ), 199–201, 205, 305

Arab Center for Safe Society—AMAN, 307
 Arab League, 267, 515
 Arab Movement for Renewal (Ta'al), 292
 Arab Parliament, 348, 352
 Arab Peace Initiative, 266, 268, 270, 348, 350, 374–376, 515–516
 Arabian Sea, 389, 396–397, 462, 495
 'Arafat, Yasir, 40, 43–45, 52, 66
 'Ar'arawi, Khalid, 228
 'Ar'arawi, Majdi, 228
 Arbel, Moshe, 403
 Argaman, Nadav, 74
 Argentina, 310
 Ariel, Yisrael, 167
 Armenia, 451
 Ashdod Port, 357
 Ashkelon, 237
 Asia, 72, 102
 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), 465
 'Assaf, 'Umar, 59–60
 'Ataya, Ihsan, 70
 'Atoun, Ahmad, 191
 'Attaf, Ahmad, 407
 Aurangzeb, Marriyum, 467
 Austin, Lloyd, 494
 Australia, 105, 310, 478, 510
 Austria, 499
 Ayalon, Danny, 359
 Azerbaijan, 442, 451, 473–474, 476
 – Azerbaijani Parliament, 473
 'Azzam, Nafeth, 70

B

Bab al-Mandab, 361, 396, 494
 Badr, Liana, 40

Bagchi, Arindam, 502
 Baghdad, 394
 Bahr, Ahmad, 243
 Bahrain, 327–328, 347, 353, 375, 381–383, 385, 387–392, 397, 404, 406, 416
 – Council of Representatives, 383
 Bangladesh, 472, 474–475
 – Bangladeshi government, 474
 Bank of Palestine, 34
 Bar, Ronen, 75, 226, 231, 334
 Barahmeh, Muhammad, 228
 Baraka, 'Ali, 250
 Barbivai, Orna, 392
 Barbhouti, Fadwa, 65
 Barghouthi, Fakhri, 229
 Barghouthi, Marwan, 49, 65, 69, 82
 Barghouti, Mustafa, 73
 Bar-Joseph, Uri, 298
 Barlev, Omer, 74
 Barranquilla, 116
 Baruch, David Oren, 246
 Barzani, Nechirvan, 394
 Bashasha, Muhammad, 251, 374
 Bassil, Gebran, 373
 Ba'um, Hasan, 395
 Bayram, Mustafa, 368
 Beersheba, 247, 259
 Begin, Menachem, 299
 Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA), 326
 Beijing, 519
 Beirut, 50, 58, 67, 251, 371, 374
 Beit Hanoun (Erez) Crossing, 237, 255, 263, 264
 Beit Safafa, 177–178, 208

Belgium, 318–319, 328, 499–500
 Belgrade, 472
 Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), 519
 Ben Gurion Airport, 356, 399, 475
 Ben-Gvir, Itamar, 161, 164, 166, 168, 173, 187, 259–260, 300–301, 333, 355, 363, 464
 Ben Khelifa, Ghassan, 411
 Benali, Leila, 403
 Benghazi, 415
 Benkirane, ‘Abdelilah, 405–406
 Bennett, Naftali, 32, 73, 74–76, 78, 177, 290, 334, 353, 356, 386–388
 Bergman, Ronen, 254–255
 Bermeister, Kevin, 169
 Bethlehem, 46, 99, 178, 202–203, 264
 Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), 503, 520, 524
 Biden, Joe, 77, 240–241, 264, 266, 270–271, 273, 322, 365, 443, 452, 455–456, 461, 472, 493–495, 497, 511–512, 514
 Bishkek, 472
 Bkeirat, ‘Abdul Rahman, 171
 Bkeirat, Najeh, 170–171
 Blinken, Antony, 38, 77, 226, 365, 472, 493, 501–502, 511
 Bloomberg New Economy Forum (2023), 349
 Blue and White Party, 290, 292
 Bolivia, 116
 Bolkih, Hassanal, 464
 Borrell, Josep, 264, 271, 359, 500
 Bosnia, 472
 Bou Habib, Abdullah, 373
 Bou Saab, Elias, 370
 Bouden, Monder, 406
 Bouden, Najla, 411
 Bouderbala, Ibrahim, 410

Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS), 116
 Brazil, 116, 318–319, 490
 Brunei, 464–465
 Buamim, Hamad, 391
 Burj al-Shamali RC, 68
 Burns, William, 409
 Bush, George W., 511

C

Cairo, 50, 63, 350, 352, 359–361
 Cairo Agreement (2014), 33
 Cairo Agreement (2017), 33
 Cameroon, 476, 503
 Camp David Accords, 355, 358
 Canada, 96, 306, 309–310, 319, 328, 397, 510
 Cape of Good Hope, 396–397
 Caucasus, 451
 Çavuşoğlu, Mevlüt, 445
 Central Elections Commission (CEC) (PA), 42
 Chad, 475, 503
 Chile, 96, 116
 China, 318–319, 461, 490, 501–502, 510, 518–519, 521, 523–524
 China-Arab Summit (2022), 266
 Church of the Holy Sepulcher, 54, 182–183, 369
 Cohen, Eli, 168, 300, 385, 399–401, 405, 408, 412, 446
 Cohen, Reem, 226
 Colombia, 116
 Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission (CWRC), 199–202, 205
 Comoros, 415
 Congressional Research Service (CRS), 322, 493

Conservative Party (Britain), 351, 504
 Cooper, Brad, 252
 Corridor for Peace and Prosperity Initiative, 521
 COVID-19/ Corona virus, 58, 127, 137, 311, 353, 521
 Cyprus, 451, 475
 Czech Republic, 499

D

Dabbar, Zied, 415
 Dagalo, ‘Abdul Rahim, 401
 Dagalo, Mohamed Hamdan (Hemedti), 400–401
 Dahlan, Muhammad, 46
 Daif, Muhammad, 229, 233, 237–238
 Dakar, 472
 Damascus, 70, 106, 366–367, 461
 Damietta Port, 356
 Dashefsky, Arnold, 309
 Dayan, Dani, 468
 Dayr al-Balah, 99
 Dbeibah, ‘Abdul Hamid, 408–409
 Deal of the Century/ Trump’s Deal, 50, 272, 274, 511
 Déby, Mahamat, 475
 Deir al-Balah, 242
 DellaPergola, Sergio, 184, 309
 Del Toro, Carlos, 397
 Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash), 292
 Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), 32, 43, 51–52, 62, 67, 72–73
 – Central Committee, 72–73
 – Political Bureau, 52, 72–73

Democratic Party (US), 497
 Democratic Republic of Congo, 503
 Denmark, 505–506, 522
 Dera’a RC, 106
 Dermer, Ron, 299
 Dilian, Tal, 475
 Djerba (city), 411
 Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières—MSF), 495
 Dubai, 383, 386, 391
 Dubai Port, 366, 383

E

Ecuador, 490
 Egypt, 32, 63–64, 78–80, 96, 226, 267, 327, 334, 347, 352–361, 377, 383, 388–389, 391, 393, 406–407, 416, 443, 445, 448, 450, 493, 495, 507
 – Egyptian General Intelligence Service (EGIS), 355
 – Egyptian government, 358, 417
 Eilat, 253, 383, 495
 Eisenkot, Gadi, 299–300
 Elad, Moshe, 225
 El Ayi, ‘Abdelnasser, 107
 Elboim, Shimshon, 167–168
 El Fadjr El Djadid Party (Algeria), 408
 El-Farouk, Belkhir, 402
 Elharrar, Karine, 356
 Elitzur, Yoel, 167
 El Molla, Tarek, 354
 El Otmani, Saad dine, 405
 El-Said, Hala, 397
 El Salvador, 116
 Ennahda Movement (Algeria), 408, 411

Entebbe, 399
 Erbil (city), 253, 394
 Erdan, Gilad, 387
 Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip, 442, 445–447, 449–451, 477
 Erekat, Saeb, 52, 55–56
 Eshkol, Levi, 299
 Ethiopia, 406
 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, 243, 258
 Europe, 58, 72, 96, 105, 115–116, 235, 265, 271, 304, 308, 328, 354, 356, 478, 494, 500–501, 505, 511, 520, 523
 European Conference for Jerusalem, 115
 European Palestinians Conference, 32, 58, 59–60, 114
 European-Palestinians Initiative for National Action, 115
 European Union (EU), 96, 143–144, 147, 264, 267–268, 271, 356, 359, 499–501, 504, 508–509, 515, 517–518, 523
 – European Commission, 147
 – European Parliament, 517
 Ezzat, Yusuf, 401
 ‘Ezzedeen, Tariq Muhammad, 232

F

Faisal, ‘Ali, 53
 Faisal Hussein Foundation, 197
 Faraj, Majid, 66–67, 226
 Fashafsseh, Mu’men, 228
 Fatah, 30–33, 37, 39–44, 46–49, 51–52, 54–58, 60–69, 75, 79–82, 226, 228, 333, 407
 – Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades, 74, 228
 – Central Committee, 33, 41, 52, 65, 66, 69, 82
 – Eighth Conference, 32, 65
 – Revolutionary Council, 65, 229

Fattouh, Rawhi, 53–54, 66
 Feiglin, Moshe, 163
 Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*) (Türkiye), 447
 Fendi, Samir, 251
 Fenzel, Michael, 67, 79
 Fez (city), 414
 Fidan, Hakan, 449, 501
 Finkelman, Yaron, 323
 Fox, Yehuda, 194
 France, 192, 240, 306, 309–310, 318–319, 370, 397, 490, 499–500, 505–506, 522
 Free Cause Party (*Hür Dava Partisi—Hüda-Par*) (Türkiye), 447
 Frej, Esawi, 363
 Frenkel, Jacob, 297
 Front for Justice and Development Party (Algeria), 408
 Future Party (Gelecek Partisi—GP) (Türkiye), 447

G

Gabon, 476, 490
 Galilee, 168, 239, 251, 374
 Gallant, Yoav, 79, 234, 236–237, 240, 263, 295, 299–300, 331–333, 361
 Gantz, Benny, 73–75, 77, 191, 225, 239, 254, 271, 273, 290, 299–300, 303, 332, 390, 446, 473
 Gargash, Anwar, 382
 Gaza War (2008/2009), 377
 Geagea, Samir, 372
 Gendelman, Ophir, 404
 Geneva, 115
 Geneva Conventions, 440
 Germany, 117, 240, 310, 318–319, 328, 499–500, 505–506, 522
 – German Government, 328

- Gesher Party, 292
- Ghaith, Adnan, 191
- Ghana, 490, 503
- Ghannoushi, Rached, 411
- Ghannoushi, Soumaya, 411
- Ghosheh, Lama, 191
- Gilboa Prison, 227
- Glick, Yehuda, 164–165, 168
- Golan, 97, 104, 253, 304–306, 511
- Golan, Abraham, 395
- Government Media Office (GS), 118, 184, 232, 243
- Govrin, David, 402
- Greece, 445, 451
- Green Line, 227
- Guatemala, 116, 510
- Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), 374–375, 378–379
- Guterres, António, 496
- ## H
- Habtour, ‘Abdul ‘Aziz bin, 252
- Hadid, Musa, 53
- Hafez, Ahmad, 353
- Hague, 349
- Haiat, Lior, 238, 400
- Haifa, 179, 253, 298
- Haifa Port, 357, 366, 383, 396
- Halevi, Herzi, 245, 323, 326
- Halwani, Hanadi, 171
- Hamamreh, ‘Eid, 228
- Hamas, 29, 31–34, 40, 41–44, 46–51, 53–54, 57–59, 61–64, 66–70, 74, 77, 79–82, 221–222, 226, 232–234, 235–241, 243–246, 249–251, 254–255, 263, 269, 272, 275, 298–304, 325, 331, 349, 357–359, 361–362, 365, 367, 368–370, 373–374, 377–379, 381–382, 394, 401, 405, 407, 416–417, 443, 446–449, 452–456, 458–459, 461–465, 470–471, 478, 490, 493, 498, 500, 507, 513–514, 516
- Ezzedeen al-Qassam Brigades, 48, 68, 71, 221–222, 225, 229, 232–233, 236–238, 240–243, 245–246, 250–251, 254, 325–326, 367, 373–374, 446
- Political Bureau, 64, 239, 243, 245, 249, 251, 271, 362, 369, 374, 378, 443, 458
- Hamdallah, Rami, 33, 44, 520
- Hamid, Muhammad, 70
- Hammouri, Salah, 192
- Hammud, Ahmad, 251
- Handarat RC, 106
- Hanegbi, Tzachi, 78, 226, 273, 334, 359, 403
- Haniyyah, Isma‘il, 45, 49, 63–64, 239, 251, 271, 378, 443, 449, 458–459, 464
- Hanun, Aws, 228
- Harel, Eyal, 323
- Harel, Yisrael, 167
- Har-Even, Yoav, 245
- Hawatmeh, Nayef, 72–73
- Hayman, Tamir, 296
- Hayut, Esther, 294
- Hebron, 42, 45, 98–99, 174, 177–179, 201–203, 208, 223–224
- Heimann, Ariel, 297
- Herzliya Conference, 325
- Herzog, Isaac, 236, 325, 386, 445, 455, 473
- Herzog, Michael, 474
- Hiroshima, 243
- Hirsch, Gal, 238
- Hizbullah, 249–250, 366, 368–372, 417, 452, 455, 461–462, 478, 493, 495, 524
- Hochstein, Amos, 370

Honduras, 116, 510
 Hong Kong, 318–319
 Hormuz Strait, 494
 Hulata, Eyal, 452
 Human Rights Watch, 240, 263
 Hungary, 298, 499
 Hussain, Mustafa, 251
 Hussein, Fuad, 395
 Hussein, Saddam, 66

I

Ibrahim, Anwar, 464–465, 471
 Ibrahimi Mosque, 177–178, 208
 Idlib, 106
 Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), 39, 60
 India, 318–319, 329, 478, 502, 503, 516, 519–520, 524
 – Indian Government, 520
 India-Middle East-Europe Economics Corridor, 519, 524
 Indian National Congress, 503, 520
 Indonesia, 412, 439, 465, 468, 469, 475–476, 478
 – Indonesian Government, 469
 Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), 226, 296, 325
 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 260, 495
 International Court of Justice (ICJ), 37, 268, 349, 377, 411, 450, 465, 512
 International Criminal Court (ICC), 268, 349, 361, 406–407, 449, 451, 517
 International Federation of Association Football (FIFA), 469
 International Labour Organization (ILO), 134, 137
 International Union of Muslim Scholars, 470
 Iran, 309, 323, 325, 327, 364, 366, 388, 390, 394, 404, 414, 439, 451–456, 458–463, 473–474, 478, 493–494, 499, 510–511, 519, 523
 – Iranian Government, 454
 – Iran's Armed Forces, 456
 – Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), 454, 458
 – Quds Force, 366, 459
 Iraq, 253, 347, 350, 368, 394–395, 413, 415, 417, 455, 478, 495, 524
 – Iraqi government, 394–395
 – Iraqi Parliament, 394
 Ir David Foundation (Elad), 175–176, 188–189, 208
 Ireland, 115, 318–319, 499
 Iron Dome, 322, 389, 513
 Islamabad, 440, 466
 Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (PIJ), 32, 40–43, 50–51, 62–64, 67–68, 70, 77, 79–80, 82, 222, 227, 230–233, 235, 238, 249–251, 269, 361, 374, 451, 459, 465
 – Al-Quds Brigades, 64, 222, 227, 230–232, 251
 – Political Bureau, 70
 Islamic Movement in the 1948 occupied territories, 162
 Islamic Movement (Nigeria), 472
 Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), 104, 112, 181, 185–186, 304, 306–307, 309, 311, 314, 330, 392
 Israel Democracy Institute, 452
 Israel Police, 161, 163, 165, 170, 179, 183, 187, 189, 199, 306, 380, 387
 Israel Security Agency—ISA (Shabak), 74–76, 222–223, 225–226, 231–232, 246, 256, 334
 Israeli, Maayan, 74

Israeli Army/ Israeli Military, 76–77, 79, 164, 184, 189, 194, 198, 205, 221, 225, 227–228, 230–232, 237, 239, 241–247, 249, 251, 253–255, 257–258, 261, 263, 314, 323–330, 332–333, 354, 368, 372, 374, 376, 380, 382, 388–390, 401–402, 409, 444, 448, 451, 461, 466, 468, 471, 474, 503, 506–507

Israeli Government, 29, 32, 50, 73–76, 78, 80, 82, 132, 148, 160, 162, 164, 173–174, 188, 194, 200, 203, 208–209, 221, 226, 235, 242, 245, 265–266, 271, 273, 290–291, 294, 299, 301–303, 306–307, 313–316, 324, 330, 333–334, 349, 355–356, 363, 368, 371, 376, 378, 384, 386, 390–391, 407, 409, 441, 449, 457, 493, 497, 511

– Cabinet, 79, 164, 239, 332

– Emergency Wartime Government, 239, 241, 274, 299–300, 303

Israeli High Court, 173, 183, 293

Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate (Aman), 76

Istanbul, 56, 61, 105, 470

Italy, 115, 117, 240, 306, 318–319, 328, 397, 499, 505–506, 522

Ivory Coast, 476

İYİ Party (Turkey), 447

J

Ja'ar, Jamil, 228

Jabalia RC, 326

Jabarin, Zaher, 69

Jaber, Muhammad (Abu Shuja'), 229

Jaffa Gate, 165, 182, 183

Jakarta, 468, 469, 471

Jamaat-e-Islami Party (Pakistan), 470

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) (Pakistan), 466, 471

Japan, 243, 319, 490, 520–521, 523–524

Jaradat, Ruba, 137

Jbara, Muhannad, 176

Jebel Ali Port, 383

Jeddah, 347, 351, 394, 441

Jenin, 42, 64, 67, 70, 79, 99, 178, 203, 223–225, 227–230, 248, 275, 332–333

Jenin RC, 64, 67, 70, 77, 79, 178, 225, 227, 468, 521

Jericho, 49, 98, 99, 227, 248

Jerusalem Anti-Judaization Committee, 169

Jerusalem Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Council, 164, 175

Jerusalem Awqaf Department, 161, 163, 165, 170–171, 196, 207

Jerusalem Conference on Resilience and Development (2023), 352

Jewish Power Party, 161, 168

Jewish Virtual Library, 306, 309, 322

Jibril, Ahmad, 251

Jil Jadid Party (Algeria), 408

Jinping, Xi, 266, 502

Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit (Riyadh, November 2023), 347, 349–350, 405, 442, 450

Jordan, 76, 78–79, 96, 97, 104–105, 108–112, 226, 267, 334, 347, 351–353, 355, 359, 362–365, 376–377, 383, 388–389, 392–393, 413, 416–417, 448, 514, 521

– Jordanian Government, 363

Jordanian Department of Statistics, 97, 104

Jordan River, 348

Jordan Valley, 511, 521

Justice and Construction Party (JCP) (Libya), 409

Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi—AKP), 449–451, 477

Justice and Development Party (JDP) (Morocco), 405–406, 414

K

Kadouch, Jacky, 402
 Kahana, Matan, 290
 Kamel, ‘Abbas, 355
 Kanani, Nasser, 458
 Karhi, Shlomo, 385
 Karish gas field, 369–370
 Karish Gas Rig, 253
 Karm Abu Salem Crossing, 354
 Kashmir, 466, 472
 Kataeb Party (Lebanon), 372
 Katz, Haim, 385
 Katz, Yisrael, 240, 263, 331
 Kayed, Suhaib, 251
 Kazakhstan, 474, 476
 Kenya, 389, 413, 472, 503
 Khalaf, Zaidan, 395
 Khaled, Taysir, 52
 Khaliliyyeh, ‘Imad, 228
 Khamenei, Ali, 453, 456–458
 Khan Eshieh RC, 106
 Khan, Imran, 466
 Khan Yunis, 99, 242
 Khartoum, 399, 401
 Khatami, Mohammad, 458
 Khazem, Ra‘d, 228
 Khoury, Ramzi, 52, 56
 Khoury, Simán, 57
 Khraze, Khalil Hamed, 251
 King, Aryeh, 187
 Kirby, John, 461
 Kisch, Yoav, 385
 Knesset, 34, 159–160, 169, 184, 207, 239, 289,
 290, 292–294, 316, 329, 386, 399, 403

Kochavi, Aviv, 225, 323, 325, 388, 402–403
 Kosovo, 404, 472
 Kroizer, Yitzhak, 168
 Kuala Lumpur, 463, 470
 Kurdistan (Iraq), 394
 Kuwait, 66, 347, 375–377, 380, 381, 413, 417
 – Kuwaiti Government, 381
 Kyrgyzstan, 472, 474

L

Labor Party, 289, 292, 299
 Labour Party (Britain), 504
 Lagos, 475
 Lapid, Yair, 74, 231, 266, 271, 300, 303, 331,
 334, 354, 363–364, 370, 378, 382, 384–385,
 388, 446, 452, 473
 Lappin, Yaakov, 326
 Larkana, 471
 Latet Organization, 313
 Latin America, 96, 115–116, 328
 Lavrov, Sergei, 499, 508, 516
 Lawyers for Justice, 45, 79
 League of Arab States (LAS), 347–352, 369,
 417
 – 31st Summit (Algiers, 2022), 347, 351,
 407
 – 32nd Summit (Jeddah, May 2023), 347,
 351
 Lebanese Forces Party, 372
 Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee
 (LPDC), 107
 Lebanon, 52, 68, 69, 72, 73, 96, 106–112,
 249–251, 347, 368–374, 413, 417, 452,
 455, 460, 478, 495, 524
 – Lebanese Army, 371
 – Lebanese Government, 372

– Lebanese Parliament, 369

– State Council, 368

Leviathan Field, 355

Levin, Yariv, 293, 300

Levy, Roi, 326

Levy, Ronen, 400

Libya, 96, 408–409, 415–417, 445

– Libyan Government, 408–409

Lieberman, Avigdor, 290–300

Likud Party, 160, 163, 168, 234, 289–292, 299

Lions' Den Group (Nablus), 77, 227, 228, 229

Lion's Gate Uprising, 170

Lod, 307, 356

Logvinov, Kirill, 508

London, 58

Lotan, Tomer, 307

Low, Shaina, 360

Luxembourg, 499

Luzon, Raphael, 408

M

Mabruka, Adham, 229

Macron, Emmanuel, 240

Madrid Peace Conference, 66

Mahamat, Moussa Faki, 503

Majdalani, Ahmad, 69

Malaisheh, Muhammad, 228

Malaisheh, Murad, 228

Malaysia, 439, 463–465, 470–471, 476, 478

– Malaysian Government, 463–465, 471

– Malaysian Intelligence, 463

Malmö, 58, 114

Malta, 490, 499

Mamo, Tzachi, 187

Manama, 387, 391–392

Manama Dialogue 2023, 382

Mangoush, Najla, 408–409

Mansur, Khalid, 231

Marches of Return (GS), 444

Marrakech, 402

Marshall Islands, 510

Masafer Yatta, 178, 202–203, 208

Mauritania, 347, 412–414, 475

– Mauritanian Government, 412

Mavi Marmara (Ship), 444

McGurk, Brett, 226

Mediterranean Sea, 348, 445–456, 494

Meloni, Giorgia, 241

Mercy Gate Cemetery, 168, 176

Mercy Gate Uprising, 171

Meretz Party, 290, 292

Merom, Kobi, 452

Mexico, 116

Mezher, Jamil, 71

Micronesia, 510

Mikati, Najib, 373–374

Milan, 115

Mish'al, Khalid, 362, 378

Modi, Narendra, 502

Mofaz, Shaul, 245

Mogadishu, 415

Mohammed VI (King of Morocco), 402

Mohamud, Hassan Sheikh, 413

Montenegro, 472

Moreno, Shmuel, 167

Morocco, 63, 182, 309, 327, 328, 347, 375, 388, 391, 393, 398, 402–406, 413, 414, 416

– Moroccan government, 404, 405

– Royal Armed Forces, 402, 403

Moscow, 515
 Mossad, 390, 401, 408, 446, 463, 475
 Movement of Society for Peace (Algeria),
 406, 408
 Mozambique, 490
 Mubasalat, Ashraf, 229
 Mughniyeh, Imad, 249
 Muhaisen, Ahmad, 57–58
 Muhaisen, Jamal, 66
 Munich Security Conference (2022), 390
 Musa, Hamzah, 251
 Musa, Muhammad, 251
 Mustafa, Mohammad, 52
 Mustafa, Muhannad, 246

N

Nablus, 42, 74, 77, 79, 99, 179, 201, 223–224,
 227–229, 248, 275
 Na'eh, Eitan, 383
 Nairobi, 413, 472
 Najjar, Mohammad, 392
 Nakhaleh, Ziad, 70, 230–231, 238, 249
 Nasir, Hanna, 42
 Nasrallah, Hassan, 249–250, 370–371
 Nasserist Social Justice Movement (Sudan),
 400
 National Coalition for Judicial Reform and
 Protection, 39
 National Congress Party (Sudan), 400
 National Democratic Assembly (Balad), 290,
 292
 National Federation of Workers' and Employees'
 Unions in Lebanon (FENASOL), 368
 National Security Council (Israel), 452
 National Umma Party (Sudan), 400
 National Unity Party, 239
 Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi
 Hareket Partisi—MHP) (Turkey), 450
 Nauru, 510
 Nazareth, 264, 307
 Nazari, Mohammad, 464
 Nebenzya, Vasily, 499
 Ne'eman, Shlomo, 167
 Negev, 168, 239, 360
 Negev Summit 2, 406
 Negev Summit (2022), 388
 Netanyahu, Benjamin, 29, 74, 78–79, 160, 162,
 164, 238–242, 269–270, 273, 290–291,
 293–295, 299–304, 324, 332–333, 335,
 357, 371, 384–385, 399, 402, 404, 406,
 413, 446, 448–450, 475, 495, 497, 502,
 515
 Netherlands, 60, 318–319, 329, 397, 499
 New Delhi, 471
 New Hope Party, 290, 292
 New Welfare Party (Yeniden Refah Partisi—RP)
 (Turkey), 447
 New York, 267, 298, 383, 446, 460
 Niamey, 472
 Niger, 412, 472, 475
 Nigeria, 472, 475–476, 503
 Nofal, Ayman, 71, 243
 North America, 96, 308, 328
 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO),
 362, 411, 513
 Norway, 34, 397
 – Norwegian government, 34
 Norwegian Refugee Council, 360
 Nouakchott, 414
 Nur Shams RC, 178, 227, 229
 Nusseibeh, Lana, 382, 387

O

October 1973 War, 298–299, 335
 Ohana, Amir, 403
 Olmert, Ehud, 303
 Oman, 347, 376–377, 389, 417
 Operation al-Aqsa Flood/ Swords of Iron (2023–), 29–30, 33, 38, 47–48, 53, 60–61, 65, 67–68, 70–71, 79, 81, 95, 114, 116–117, 128, 135, 140, 143, 147–148, 160, 165–166, 177–178, 184, 208–209, 221–223, 225–226, 229–230, 232–236, 238–240, 242, 245, 248–256, 261, 263–264, 270, 274–275, 289, 298, 299, 306, 307–308, 310–311, 313–315, 322, 324–331, 333–334, 335, 347, 349, 357–358, 361, 364–367, 371–374, 377–380, 382, 387, 394, 396, 398, 401, 407–411, 414, 416–417, 439, 441, 443, 446, 448, 451–452, 454–462, 465, 469, 471, 475, 477–478, 489–490, 492, 496, 498–500, 502, 503–504, 506–507, 524
 Operation “Break the wave”, 76, 225, 229
 Operation Decisive Storm (2015), 397
 Operation Defensive Shield (2002), 76
 Operation Eaten Straw/ Protective Edge (2014), 44, 48
 Operation Prosperity Guardian (2023), 253, 397
 Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), 348, 439–442, 460, 477
 ‘Osbat al-Ansar, 68
 Oslo, 50, 52, 56, 60, 66, 235, 265, 269, 273, 275, 302, 500, 516, 521

P

PA Security Forces/ General Intelligence Service (GIS) (WB), 38, 40, 45, 59–60, 66–67, 76, 77, 79, 221, 225–226, 228–333, 355, 513–514
 Pacheco, Duarte, 408

Pakistan, 389, 439, 466–468, 470, 471, 475, 478
 – Pakistani Government, 467
 Palau, 510
 Palestine Center for Prisoners Studies, 191
 Palestine Gas Company, 145
 Palestine Information Center—Mo3ta, 161, 189, 223, 246, 248
 Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), 29–32, 40–41, 49–51, 53–63, 66, 69, 73–74, 77, 80–82, 115, 196, 235, 265, 333, 351, 376, 407
 – Central Council (PCC), 31, 50–56, 60, 63, 73–74, 80, 225, 268, 269
 – Executive Committee, 40, 49–52, 54, 55–56, 66–67, 69, 78, 226, 332, 334
 – National Council (PNC), 31, 40–41, 49–55, 59–63, 66, 72–73, 268, 269
 – Negotiations Department, 56, 66
 Palestine National Fund (PNF), 52, 56
 Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness), 107
 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), 95, 96–98, 104, 109, 112, 118–120, 123, 136–137, 144, 196, 244, 355
 Palestinian Democratic Union (Fida), 67
 Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR), 35
 Palestinian Government (General), 128–129, 131–132, 376
 – National Consensus Government/ Hamdallah Government, 33
 – Shtayyeh Government, 30, 33–36, 38, 41, 82
 Palestinian Government (General) – Shtayyeh Government, 35
 Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council, 39, 59

- Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), 30–31, 33, 35–36, 39–41, 47, 51, 55, 60, 62–63, 73, 191, 243, 257, 261
- Palestinian National Initiative (PNI), 32, 51, 67, 73
- Palestinian NGOs Network, 39, 59
- Palestinian People's Party (PPP), 43, 52, 67
- Palestinian Popular Conference – 14 Million, 32, 56, 59–60
- Palestinian Return Center (PRC), 115
- Palestinian Territories Occupied in 1948, 34, 59, 96–97, 104, 108–109, 161–162, 179, 191, 205, 222–223, 233, 236, 238, 248, 257, 262, 304, 354, 447–448
- Palestinian Territories Occupied in 1967, 72, 96–97, 110, 137, 235, 374, 491, 509, 512
- Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), 117
- Paris, 147, 383
- Paris Protocol, 50
- Peace Now Movement, 200
- PEGASE- Mécansime Palestino-Européen de Gestion et d'Aide Socio-Economique, 63
- Pence, Yair, 355
- People's Voice Party (Algeria), 408
- Pew Research Center, 309
- Philadelphi Corridor, 361
- Pinto, Shirley, 290
- Podgorica, 472
- Poland, 297, 499
- Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad (PCPA), 32, 56–58, 60, 115, 415
- Popular Congress Party (Hasan al-Turabi's Party) (Sudan), 400
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), 32, 42–44, 46, 50–51, 62, 67, 69, 71–72, 82, 269
- General Central Committee, 71
- Political Bureau, 71
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command (PFLP-GC), 62, 67
- Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) (Iraq), 524
- Portnoy, Gabi, 389
- Port Said, 383
- Portugal, 499
- Prisoner Movement, 259
- Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association—Addameer, 258, 260
- Pristina, 472
- Progress and Socialism Party (Morocco), 406
- Putin, Vladimir, 187, 499
- Putrajaya (city), 464
- ## Q
- Qaani, Esmail, 459
- Qablawy, Riyad, 251
- Qaddum, 'Abdullah, 230
- Qalqilya, 42, 99
- Qarmash, Constantine, 53
- Qassem, Naim, 369, 371
- Qatar, 347, 352, 360, 376–377, 380, 388, 417, 444, 493
- Qatar's Gaza Re-Construction Committee, 377
- Qatawneh, Ahmad, 363
- Quartet on the Middle East, 267, 499, 508, 515–516
- ## R
- Rabah, Ramzi, 52
- Rabat, 402–404, 414
- Rabinovitch, Shmuel, 387
- Rafah, 99, 354, 360



Rafah Crossing, 262, 358, 360–361, 417, 507

Raisi, Ebrahim, 459

Raissouni, Ahmed, 470

Rajab, Wa'el, 243

Rajoub, Akram, 228

Rajoub, Jibril, 65–66

Ramallah, 42, 59–60, 75, 99, 201, 223–224, 416–417, 513, 520, 524

Rapid Support Forces (Sudan), 398, 400

Red Sea, 252–253, 327, 366, 389, 396–398, 417, 462, 494–495, 502

Regev, Miri, 403, 475

Rehman, Fazlur, 466, 471

Religious Zionism Party, 75, 160–161, 163, 168, 265, 289, 291–292, 301

Republican Party (GOP), 274, 497

Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi—CHP) (Türkiye), 447

Reunification Conference for Achieving Palestinian National Unity (2022), 32, 62, 80, 351

Revenge of the Free Battle/ Shield and Arrow (2023), 33, 48, 68, 70, 80, 119, 222–223, 230, 232, 264, 275

Rift Valley, 98–99

Riyadh, 266, 348, 349, 376, 379–380, 384–385, 405, 450

Rong, Nong, 502

Rosenfeld, Shlomo, 166

Rotman, Simcha, 168

Russia, 268, 304–305, 307, 310, 328, 451, 461, 490–491, 494–495, 498, 508, 510, 512, 515–516, 523–524

Russian-Ukrainian War (2022), 35, 307, 353–354, 447, 494–495, 515

Rwanda, 503

S

Sa'adat, Ahmad, 69, 71, 82

Sa'ar, Gideon, 290

Sabri, 'Ikrima, 191

Sabuh, Islam, 229

Safadi, Ayman, 366

Safieddine, Hashem, 249, 371

Safronkov, Vladimir, 508

Saidam, Sabri, 64

Saied, Kais, 410

Salah, Raed, 171, 191

Salama, Khitam, 396

Salameh, Faruq, 228

Salami, Hossein, 458

Salfit, 99, 178, 208

Salhiyeh, Mahmoud, 187

Salman, Ra'fat, 243

San Francisco, 465

Sanaa, 396, 398, 415

Sarajevo, 472

Sare'e, Yahya, 396

Satterfield, David, 495

Saudi Arabia (KSA), 266–267, 270, 327, 347, 349, 352–353, 374–376, 378–379, 383–385, 388–389, 416–417, 443–444, 448, 451, 454, 469, 501, 519, 523
– Saudi Government, 376

Schlein, Einat, 399

Scholz, Olaf, 240, 359

Second Intifadah 2000/ Al-Aqsa Intifadah, 275

Senegal, 472, 476, 478

Separation Wall, 162, 203–204, 209

Seychelles, 397

Shabtai, Yaakov, 402

- Shafiq, Munir, 57
- Shahin, 'Ali, 70
- Shahin, Hamza, 67–68
- Shahin, Mahmud, 251, 374
- Shallah, Ramadan Abdullah, 70
- Shankolevsky, Eliezer, 166
- Shanti, Jamila, 243
- Sharm El-Sheikh, 356
- Sharm El-Sheikh Summit (2023), 67, 79, 269–270, 411
- Sharon, Ariel, 76
- Shas Party, 289, 291–292
- Shebaa Farms (Lebanon), 249
- Sheikh Jarrah, 186–189, 193–194, 208, 439
- Sheskin, Ira, 309
- Shoukry, Sameh, 360, 444
- Shtayyeh, Mohammad, 35, 37–38, 42, 49, 407, 468
- Shtayyeh, Mus'ab, 77, 225, 229
- Silman, Idit, 403
- Silwan, 176, 183, 188–189, 193, 195, 208
- Sinai, 354, 359–360, 395
- Singapore, 319, 349, 356
- Sinwar, Yahya, 443
- Siyam, Ayman, 243
- Smotrich, Bezalel, 78, 161, 173, 198, 300–301, 333
- Sobaih, Mohammed, 53
- Solomon Islands, 510
- Somalia, 412–413, 415, 475
- South Africa, 406, 417, 450–451, 467, 503
- South America, 96, 116
- South Korea, 318–319, 454
- Soviet Union, 72, 304, 308, 523
- Spain, 115, 319, 329, 397, 499, 505–506, 522
- Srinagar, 472
- State Camp Party, 290, 292, 299–300, 303
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 328
- Sub Laban, Ahmed, 189
- Subuh, 'Abdul Rahman, 229
- Sudan, 375, 391, 398–401, 404, 413, 416, 490
- Sudanese Army, 398
 - Sudanese Sovereignty Council, 401
 - Sudanese Transitional Sovereign Council, 399
 - Transitional Government, 398, 400
- Suez, 354
- Suez Canal, 361, 395, 397
- Suleiman, Fahd, 72
- Sullivan, Jake, 38
- Sunak, Rishi, 241
- Supreme Administrative Court (PA), 37, 40
- Supreme Constitutional Court (PA), 39–40
- Supreme Court of Israel, 181, 197, 208, 293–294
- Supreme Judicial Council (PA), 39–40
- Sur Baher, 170, 188
- Sweden, 58, 499, 505–506, 522
- Switzerland, 318–319, 490
- Sword of Jerusalem Battle/ Guardian of the Walls (2021), 44, 47–48, 68, 70, 311, 353, 362, 369, 407, 442
- Syria, 52, 72, 96, 105–112, 253, 347, 366–368, 417, 451–452, 461, 495, 510, 515–516
- Syrian Social Nationalist Party, 371
- Szjjarto, Peter, 459

T

- Taha, Hussain, 229
- Tahri, Sami, 415
- Taiwan, 319, 490, 510



Taiz, 415

Tajani, Antonio, 408

Tajikistan, 474

Takkoush, Muhammad, 250, 372

Talaie el-Hourriyet Party (Algeria), 408

Tarqumiyah, 333

Tebboune, ‘Abdelmadjid, 61, 406–407

Tehran, 231, 458–459

Tel Aviv, 47, 74, 226, 230–232, 246, 270, 332, 334, 353, 360, 364, 376, 383, 385, 387, 391, 399, 401–403, 405–406, 417, 443–444, 446, 449, 452, 469, 473, 475

Temple groups, 159–166, 168, 172, 174, 207

Temple Mount Administration, 167–168

The Federation of Palestinian Institutions in Brazil (VIBAL), 116

Toledano, Eliezer, 323

Torunlar, Şakir Özkan, 446

Tripoli, 409, 415

Trump, Donald, 50, 74, 272–274, 443, 511–512, 514

Truss, Liz, 351

Tubas, 99

Tufakji, Khalil, 176, 194

Tulkarm, 42, 99, 178, 203, 224, 227, 229–230, 248, 275

Tulkarm RC, 227

Tunis, 410–411

Tunisia, 406, 409–413, 415

– Tunisian Parliament, 411

Turgeman, Sami, 245

Türkiye, 105–106, 298, 309, 318–319, 327, 394, 414, 439, 442–451, 476–477, 495

– Turkish Government, 444, 447, 449, 451, 477

– Turkish Intelligence, 449

Turkmenistan, 474, 476

Tyre, 68

U

Uganda, 399, 503

UK Abraham Accords Group, 386

Ukraine, 136–137, 305, 307, 328, 407, 490, 494–495, 498, 512, 515–516

Ul Haq, Siraj, 470

Union of Palestinian Communities of Latin America (UPAL), 116

United Arab Emirates (UAE), 327–328, 347, 352–353, 363, 366, 375, 377, 381–383, 386–393, 395, 402, 404, 406, 413, 416, 417, 443–444, 448, 490, 512

– Federal National Council, 383, 386

United Arab List (UAL—Ra’am), 292

United Kingdom (UK)/ Britain, 96, 117, 240, 253, 309–310, 318–319, 328, 386, 397, 451, 490–491, 496, 499–501, 504–506, 510, 522

United Nations (UN), 118, 147, 242, 249, 265–268, 270, 272, 348, 350, 369, 374, 380, 382, 387, 392, 440–442, 458, 460–461, 467–468, 490–491, 494, 496, 498, 499, 501, 507–508, 510, 512, 515, 518, 521

– General Assembly, 37, 136, 265–268, 350, 446, 460, 492, 496–497, 503, 508–510, 512, 514–515, 518

– Security Council, 67, 78, 267, 270, 272, 348, 352, 373, 381, 397, 442, 464, 467, 468, 490–491, 496–498, 501–502, 510–512, 515–516, 518

– Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (Third Committee), 512

– UN Charter, 496

– UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), 377

– UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 118, 147

– UN Peacekeeping Forces, 373

– United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 119, 123, 205

- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 102, 385, 517
 - United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR), 115, 510
 - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA-oPt), 193
 - United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 105–112, 147, 196, 244, 348, 408–509, 514, 516–517, 520
 - World Tourism Organization, 385
 - United States of America (US), 38, 50, 63, 67, 69, 74, 76–79, 82, 96, 116–117, 146, 226, 234–236, 240–241, 252–253, 264–268, 270–274, 276, 294, 298, 303, 306, 309–310, 317, 319, 321–322, 325, 327–328, 334, 357, 361, 365, 368–370, 375, 377, 382–385, 388, 394, 397–400, 404–406, 414, 417, 443–445, 448, 450, 452–457, 460–463, 465, 469–470, 472, 478, 490–499, 501–502, 504, 507–508, 510–519, 521–523
 - Central Command (CENTCOM), 461, 511
 - Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 409
 - Congress, 322, 493, 513–514
 - House of Representatives, 322, 462
 - Naval Forces Central Command, 389
 - Pentagon, 368
 - Senate, 322
 - US Agency for International Development (USAID), 497
 - US Forces, 364, 368, 389
 - US Government, 241, 504
 - US Navy, 397
 - White House, 226, 241, 271, 322, 456, 461
 - United Torah Judaism (Yahadut HaTorah) Party, 289, 291–292
 - Unity of the Arenas Battle/ Breaking Dawn (2022), 33, 68, 70, 80, 118, 222–223, 230, 232, 264, 275, 451
 - US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN), 117
 - ‘Uthman, Ahmad, 251
 - ‘Uthman, Ibrahim, 251
 - Uzbekistan, 474, 476
- V**
- Vanuatu, 510
 - Vaturi, Nissim, 163, 168
 - Venezuela, 116
 - Vienna, 117
 - Vogel, Zvika, 163, 168
 - Von der Leyen, Ursula, 356
- W**
- Wadi Araba Treaty, 365
 - Wadi Hilweh Information Center—Silwanic, 171, 190, 192
 - War of 1948 (Nakbah), 179, 193, 236, 441, 464
 - War of 1967 (Naksah), 29, 110, 299
 - Washington, 50, 270, 458, 470, 474, 497, 508, 512, 514
 - Wasserlauf, Yitzhak, 168
 - Wennesland, Tor, 461
 - Western Sahara, 63, 402
 - Wheba, Najwa, 409
 - Widodo, Joko, 468–469
 - Winter, Ofer, 323
 - World Bank, 63, 513

World Economic Forum (Davos), 384
World Health Organization (WHO), 495
World Trade Organization (WTO), 142
World War II, 468, 500
World Zionist Organization, 114

Y

Yaron, Amir, 311
Yemen, 252, 347, 361, 389, 394–398, 414–415,
417, 455, 478, 494–495, 524
– Caretaker Government, 252
– House of Representatives, 398
– Southern Transitional Council (STC),
395, 398
– Yemeni Forces, 252, 366
Yemeni Islah Party, 395
Yemina Party, 290, 292
Yesh Atid Party, 290, 292, 300
Yi, Wang, 501
Yisrael Beiteinu Party, 290, 292, 300
Yusufiyah Cemetery, 176

Z

Zambia, 503
Zandberg, Tamar, 182
Za‘nun, Salim, 53
Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto, 466–467
Ze’evi-Farkash, Aharon, 245
Zelensky, Volodymyr, 187, 494
Zimbabwe, 503
Zini, David, 323
Zisser, Eyal, 364

List of Publications of Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations

First: English Publications

The Palestine Strategic Report Series

1. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh and Basheer M. Nafi', editors, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2005*, 2007.
2. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2006*, 2010.
3. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2007*, 2010.
4. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2008*, 2010.
5. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2009/10*, 2011.
6. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2010/11*, 2012.
7. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2011/12*, 2013.
8. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2012–2013*, 2015.
9. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2014–2015*, 2016.
10. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestine Strategic Report 2016–2017*, 2018.
11. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestine Strategic Report 2018–2019*, 2021.
12. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestine Strategic Report 2020–2021*, 2022.
13. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestine Strategic Report 2022–2023*, 2024.

Am I Not a Human? Series

14. 'Abbas Ismail, *The Israeli Racism: Palestinians in Israel: A Case Study*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (1), translated by Aladdin Assaiqeli, 2009.
15. Hasan Ibhaïs, Mariam Itani and Sami al-Salahat, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Woman Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (2), translated by Iman Itani, 2010.
16. Ahmed el-Helah and Mariam Itani, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Child Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (3), translated by Iman Itani, 2010.

17. Firas Abu Hilal, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Prisoners & Detainees Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (4), translated by Baraah Darazi, 2011.
18. Mariam Itani and Mo'in Manna', *The Suffering of the Palestinian Refugee*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (6), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2010.
19. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Suffering of Jerusalem and the Holy Sites Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (7), translated by Salma al-Houry (published in collaboration with al-Quds International Institution (QII)), 2012.
20. Hasan Ibhais and Khaled 'Ayed, *The Separation Wall in the West Bank*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (8), translated by Baraah Darazi, 2013.
21. Hayat Dada, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Student Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (9), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2017.
22. Mariam Itani, Amin Abu Wardeh and Waddah Eid, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Worker Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (10), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2014.
23. Fatima Itani and Atef Daghlis, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Patient Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (11), translated by Mohammed Ibrahim El-Jadili and Saja Abed Rabo El-Shami, 2012.
24. Fatima Itani and Nitham 'Ataya, *The Suffering of Palestinian Environment and Farmer Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (12), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2016.
25. Fatima Itani and Mohammed Dawood, *The Suffering of Palestinians From Israeli Roadblocks in the West Bank*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (13), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2018.

Non-Serial Publications

26. Muhammad Arif Zakaullah, *Religion and Politics in America: The Rise of Christian Evangelists and their Impact*, 2007.
27. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh and Ziad al-Hasan, *The Political Views of the Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon as Reflected in May 2006*, 2009.
28. Ishtiaq Hossain and Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editors, *American Foreign Policy & the Muslim World*, 2009.



29. Ibrahim Ghusheh, *The Red Minaret: Memoirs of Ibrahim Ghusheh (Ex-Spokesman of Hamas)*, 2013.
30. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *Gaza Strip: Development and Construction in the Face of Siege and Destruction*, 2014. (electronic book)
31. Muslim Imran Abu Umar, *Egypt, Syria and the War on Gaza: A Study on the Egyptian and Syrian Foreign Policy Responses to the 2008/2009 Gaza War*, 2015.
32. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas): Studies of Thought & Experience*, 2017.
33. Karim El-Gendy, *The Process of Israeli Decision Making: Mechanisms, Forces and Influences*, 2nd edition, 2019.
34. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Introduction to the Issue of Palestinian Refugees*, 2019.
35. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian National Authority: Studies of the Experience and Performance 1994–2013*, 2019.
36. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Basic Facts on the Palestine Issue*, updated and illustrated version, 2021.
37. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Muslim Brothers: Al-Tanzim al-Filastini – Gaza Strip 1949–1967*, 2021.
38. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestine Issue: Historical Background & Contemporary Developments*, 2014, revised and updated version, 2022.
39. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Illusions in the Palestinian Politics*, 2022.
40. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Road to Jerusalem: A Historical Study of the Islamic Experience in the Land of Palestine From the Time of the Prophets to the 21st Century*, 2023.

Second: Arabic Publications

- *Al-Taqrir al-Istratiji al-Filastini* (The Palestine Strategic Report) series, 13 volumes, covering the period 2005–2023.
- *Al-Watha'iq al-Filastiniyyah* (Selected Palestinian Documents) series, 7 volumes, covering the period 2005–2011.

- *Al-Yawmiyyat al-Filastiniyyah* (The Palestine Daily Chronicle) series, 10 volumes, covering the period 2014–2023.
- *Aw Alastu Insana?* (Am I Not a Human?) series, 13 books.
- *Taqrir Ma'lumat* (Information Report) series, 30 books.
- *Malaf Ma'lumat* (Information File) series, 11 books.
- *Dirasat 'Ilmiyyah Muhakkamah* (Refereed Academic Studies) series, 16 books.
- Non-Serial Publications (105 books).

This Report

Al-Zaytouna Centre is pleased to present The Palestine Strategic Report (PSR) 2022–2023, now in its 13th consecutive edition. This report provides an academic, objective and comprehensive analyses of the developments related to the Palestine issue across various dimensions. It offers up-to-date and accurate information and statistics through the end of 2023, complemented by analytical insights and forecasts.

This PSR, prepared by 12 specialized professors and researchers, consists of eight chapters that explore various aspects of the Palestinian situation. It examines the internal Palestinian scene, demographic and economic indicators, and the status of Jerusalem and its holy sites. The report also analyzes the courses of aggression, resistance and the peace process, while providing insights into the Israeli political, demographic, economic and military landscape. Furthermore, it discusses Palestinian, Arab, Islamic and international relations. Notably, Operation al-Aqsa Flood has significantly influenced the report's findings and perspectives.

The PSR has consolidated its position as an essential reference in Palestinian studies, serving as an indispensable resource that provides invaluable insights for those interested in Palestinian affairs. Al-Zaytouna Centre aspires for this PSR to make a significant qualitative contribution to the field of Palestinian studies.

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

The Palestine Strategic Report 2022 – 2023



Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

مركز الزيتونة للدراسات والاستشارات

P.O. Box: 14-5034 Beirut - Lebanon

Tel: +961 21 803 644 | Tel-Fax: +961 21 803 643

info@alzaytouna.net | www.alzaytouna.net



ISBN 978-614-494-057-0



9 786144 940570



Al-Zaytouna Centre For Studies & Consultations