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TURKISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES



TUBA REPORT ON THE PALESTINIAN - ISRAELI WAR

Ankara, 2023



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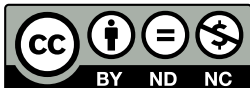
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Foreword

Israel has unlawfully invaded and annexed Palestinian territories throughout time, in violation of international law, and the armed wing of Hamas launched an unexpected assault on Israel on October 7, 2023. Following this attack, the military operation and occupation attempt organized by the Israeli forces in Gaza have been observed with great concern by the whole world. Tens of thousands of civilians, especially babies and women, have lost their lives as a result of the air strikes that started with intense Israeli bombardments. Hundreds of thousands of people, who are left without basic needs such as water, electricity, food, and health services, are forced to migrate due to the bombings of hospitals, schools, mosques, churches, and other civilian living spaces. During all of these attacks, which are being tried to be justified as self-defense, the fact that some countries' top executives and representatives of national science academies have backed Israel without any conditions, which goes against the principle of political and scientific neutrality, has made Türkiye and TUBA's peaceful efforts and responsibilities in this area even more important.

The world's science academies united in solidarity, conveying collective messages advocating for a peaceful resolution when Russia initiated its occupation of Ukrainian territory on February 24, 2022. On March 2, 2022, at the very beginning of the Ukrainian War, TUBA made a statement that called for the protection of civilians, the immediate establishment of peace and reconciliation, the signing of an immediate ceasefire and subsequent agreements, and the necessity of regional peace ([Annex - 1, p. 41](#)). With a similar sense of responsibility, in response to the humanitarian crises in Palestine at the hands of Israel, the massacre of civilians, the prevention of the delivery of humanitarian aid to the people of the region, and the occupation of

the lands of the people of Gaza, TUBA shared its statement emphasizing the observance of international law, the limits of self-defense and the law of war with the Turkish public and the world science academies on October 19, 2023 under the title "Statement on the Latest Situation in Palestine" ([Annex - 2, p.42](#)). We painfully observe the whole world science academies and political circles do not show the same solidarity and sensitivity for Palestinians that they showed during the occupation of Ukrainian territories.

In the wake of the Ukraine-Russia war, we observed that freedom of expression in some international scientific circles and academies has been suppressed and that a political and ideological stance has replaced neutrality and restraint. In international meetings where we came together with representatives of international scientific umbrella organizations, we also observed attitudes that were contrary to the ethics of science and that did not comply with the spirit of science academies. We expressed our concerns to our colleagues. We witnessed that many science academies, where common sense still prevails, also have similar concerns as us and stated that these biased attitudes that move away from impartiality do not proceed on the correct basis. For example, with the onset of the Russian-Ukrainian war, we began to receive complaints that the submissions of Russian scientists were being rejected by some journals on the basis of country address, regardless of the scientific discipline to which they belonged and even without initiating editorial and peer review processes. In the international academic meetings we have attended as TUBA, we have expressed that it is natural for politicians to follow their countries' political interests and strategies but that members of academia and scientists should stick to scientific objective evaluations in the context of basic human rights and express themselves within the framework of freedom of opinion without violence and insult.

We are currently witnessing undemocratic environments where university presidents, academics, diplomats, journalists, athletes, artists, and commercial organizations are suppressed, questioned, and even forced to resign when they make international statements of support for the Palestinian people who are struggling to survive in their occupied homeland and seeking peace and tranquility in their land. We would like to underline that this hypocritical attitude we see in the academia in the context of the Palestinian issue is wrong. We also would like to voice that the unfair, biased, baseless, misinformed criticisms made against our country in the past in the

international arena under the name of freedom of thought and human rights prove that they are political and artificial. As such, we particularly believe that the approaches of almost all European countries and the United States to the Israeli-Palestinian issue will go down in history as distorted, insincere, and hypocritical.

As TUBA, we would like to emphasize that it is a reality that it is not possible to solve a century-old conflict in a short period. As a priority, we would like to re-emphasize that putting out the fire in the region is mandatory as we repeat the calls for a ceasefire and providing basic needs as soon as possible. It is a necessity to bring the inhumane massacres in Palestine to the agenda as well as conducting academic studies on the long-term traumatic effects of the war, the historical roots of the issue, its development, the reasons for the deadlock, and suggestions out of which new approaches and methods can emerge to establish the peace in the region. This report is a concise study evaluating historical developments in the context of international relations and has been compiled based on scientific sources with the contributions of the TUBA International Working Group.

This report is important and valuable for recording the war crimes in the region and preventing such massacres from happening again by focusing our support on academic freedom, our care on the peace of the region and humanity, and our belief on the sanctity of life. As a matter of fact, in addition to the statement we published as TUBA in the first weeks of the attack, we have compiled this work in the face of international inaction, putting this picture in front of the administrators and the academic communities of the countries that have targeted the infrastructure of the places where Palestinians live, making the region uninhabitable and watching the massacres bordering on genocide. Thus, with the facts we have objectively revealed in this report, we would like to make a note in history so that it will not be repeated.

It is necessary to be aware that this problem can lead to other conflicts and wars and that the growing conflict poses risks to peace in the far-reaching region and the world. Humanity must examine the issue from an academic perspective. In the 21st century, the occupation, exile, and massacres taking place under the international spotlight will go down in history as a picture of shame. We are deeply saddened that we have to state that standing against this massacre is a requirement and duty of academic dignity.

As Türkiye, we are the children of a country that helped the Jews who were persecuted in Spain and Hitler's Germany as a humanitarian duty in their difficult times and opened the doors of its country with the motto that the religion of the oppressed is not asked. In this sense, it is known to the whole world that we have always keen to protect sacred values against antisemitic attitudes. On the other hand, international law has been violated in the Palestinian territories for a long time, ignoring even the United Nations resolutions. The Israeli government sees every means justified to carry out its policy of increasing violence step by step. In the Gaza Strip, disproportionate force is used in violation of the laws of war. The loss of life, which has reached twenty thousand, in which civilians, women, and children are targeted, is a clear attempt of occupation. We call on all international political circles to be a party to a solution-oriented peace against this genocide against the Palestinian people. As scientists, we hope that demands to protect basic human rights will be met.

I would like to express my gratitude to the members of TUBA International Relations Working Group who contributed to the preparation of the study, our experts and researchers who compiled and contributed. I wish mercy from Allah to the Palestinians who lost their lives and express my heartfelt sympathy for the oppressed Palestinians who struggle to live in their occupied ancestral homeland.

Prof. Dr. Muzaffer ŞEKER
TUBA President

TUBA Report on the Palestinian - Israeli War

Abstract

This report, compiled with the initiatives of TUBA International Relations Working Group, analyses the historical, current and future dimensions of the Israeli-Palestinian War in the light of theoretical literature and recent data. On October 7, 2023, the armed attacks by the military wing of Hamas targeting Israeli settlers and the 'Operation Iron Swords' launched by Israel in response to the attacks caused serious concerns in the international community in the context of humanitarian crisis and global chaos. The multi-actor nature, impact and historical origins of the Palestinian-Israeli War have made it necessary to examine this issue once again by focusing on historical ruptures. Israel's disproportionate reprisals, violations of established international norms and laws of war / conflict, and attacks on civilians, including hospitals, have had / are having severe repercussions on international relations and the Middle East region in particular. The report's findings indicate that the events in the region have led to an awareness of the humanitarian crises in the Palestinian territories. This has resulted in a shift away from the traditional power-oriented pro-Israel stance, following domestic protests by countries that rejected the humanitarian tragedy in the Gaza Strip. However, due to the unfair structural and institutional bias of national and international policy, individual, academic and freedom of expression are still under extreme pressure to protect Israel.

Keywords: International Relations, Palestine, Israel, Gaza Strip, Aqsa Flood, Operation Iron Swords.

Introduction

In the “Final Report of the Workshop on Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine and International Relations” (2022) published by the TUBA International Relations Working Group on March 28, 2022, the importance of international norms, which gained a ‘deeper’ rather than a ‘profound’ meaning after the invasion of Ukrainian territory, was emphasized. The report also emphasized that after World War II, the way for annexation was strictly closed. However, one of the most significant political issues of the last century that challenged this norm was the occupation of Palestinian territories. Israel, the first Jewish state established in 2000 years, has occupied and attempted to annex Palestinian territories through political and military actions. This issue has once again brought the painful dimensions of the conflict to the attention of world public opinion since October 2023. Israeli forces occupied the Gaza Strip in 1967. Following the 1993 Oslo Accords, Israel recognized its occupation and agreed to withdraw. However, after the withdrawal in 2005, Israel encircled the Gaza Strip by air, land, and sea. In the words of United Nations (UN) officials, millions of people in Gaza have been living in an ‘open-air prison’ since then (OHCHR, 2022). In response to the situation and periodic attacks on Gaza, the military wing of Hamas, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, which is part of the political administration of Gaza, launched armed attacks on October 7, 2023, named ‘Aqsa Flood’, against Israeli people on lands occupied by force from Palestinians, referred to as ‘settlers’ by Israel. The Kassam Brigades’ targeting civilians as a method of attack is an extreme form of resistance. However, the Israeli forces launched

‘Operation Iron Swords’ as a counter-attack, resulting in millions of people living in the Gaza Strip becoming the target of disproportionate Israeli attacks. These attacks are in complete violation of international laws of war and conflict, as they have been in the past. Israeli soldiers have carried out attacks on civilian targets, including hospitals, resulting in the loss of tens of thousands of lives, including women and babies. In this ongoing war and attack, on November 7, 2023, the International Relations Working Group of TUBA held a meeting with the agenda of the Palestinian-Israeli war. At the meeting, it was decided to compile a brief report supported by scientific evaluation that will include the past, present, and future of the occupation of Palestine. This study analyses the historical processes of the occupation of Palestine and the Palestinian-Israeli war, its current developments, its effects on the region, the international system, and relations, focus on theoretical and conceptual evaluations.

Historical Background

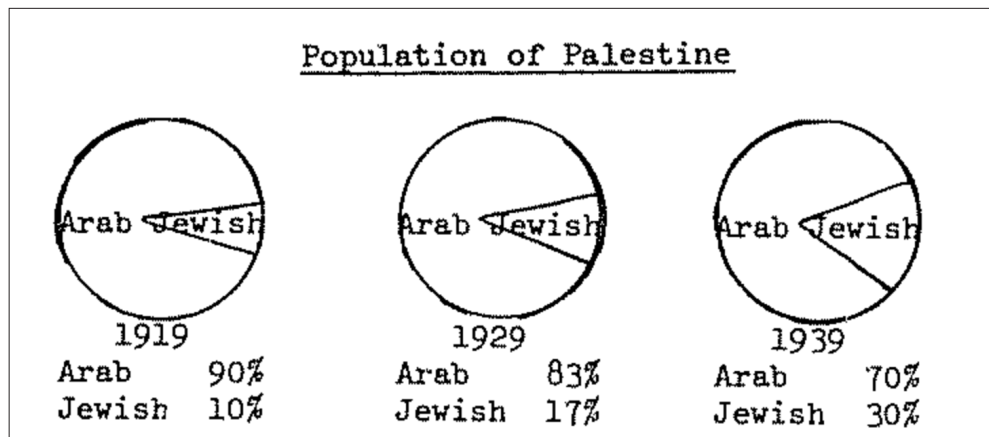
The events that cause ruptures in political history have been able to turn into actions and outcomes through the preferences of “actors” (decision-makers or political authorities) following the interaction between the “system” and “phenomena”. While the nationalist groups of the twentieth century are thought to have fought for independence with the support of the system, the expansionist powers of the same period used nationalist ideology as a phenomenon/instrument for the disintegration/decline of powers greater than themselves. This transformation was a significant political event in the Middle East’s last 200 years, and its effects continue today. Under the influence of rising nationalist movements and technological advances, the Ottoman State was compelled to withdraw from the regions it had dominated (Cleveland, 2019). Following the Sykes-Picot secret treaty signed on May 16, 1916 between the British Empire and France with the participation of Russia, which planned the partition of the Ottoman territories in the Middle East, artificial nation-states, which had no natural borders, were created.

Similarly, the process of shaping and institutionalizing the state of Israel in the Middle East was initiated with the Balfour Declaration of 1917. The declaration was a result of the global decision-making role of the dominant international actors of the time. This declaration promised the Zionists a homeland in Palestine and consists of a letter written in 1917 by British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour (1848-1930) to Lord Rothschild, one of the Zionist leaders.

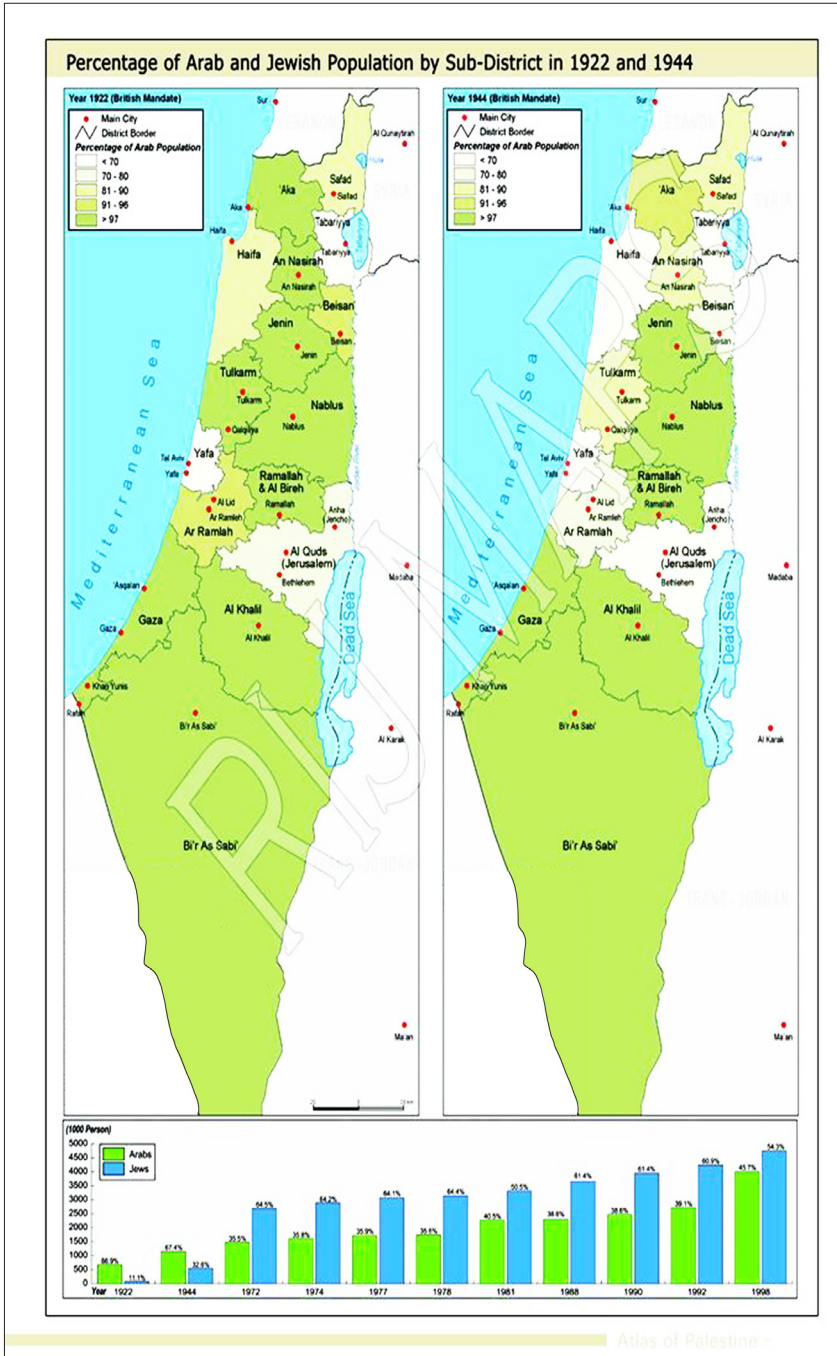
Zionist organizations emerged as a response to the oppression and persecution of Jews in various parts of the world, particularly in Europe. The First Zionist Congress, held in Basel, Switzerland on August 29-31, 1897, marked the establishment of the first Zionist Organization (Öke, 2018). Through the congresses they organised at periodic intervals, the Zionists implemented the political and economic tools necessary for establishing Jewish colonies in Palestine. Their goal was to establish a homeland in Palestine, under Ottoman sovereignty (Herzl, 1970). Palestine was mentioned in their holy books and they had lived there in ancient times. This dream was realised upon the occupation of Syria by the British. In 1902, Theodore Herzl wrote a letter to Cecil Rhodes, the former President of the Cape Colony (South Africa), urging him to support Zionism. Herzl argued that Zionism had a colonialist logic (Halbrook, 1972). In his 1923 article, 'The Iron Wall', Ze'ev Jabotinsky (1880-1940) referred to himself as a 'Jewish Coloniser' (Jabotinsky, 1923). With the 'return', which is referred to as Aliyah in Hebrew but is considered occupation in international law, Jews began to migrate to Palestine in a planned manner. In terms of the population of Palestine, the Jewish population increased from approximately 10% in 1919 to 17% in 1929, and to around 30% in 1939 (UN, 1980) (figure 1). In 1929, the British Mandate Forces killed 110 Palestinians during clashes that occurred after the Palestinians revolted against the rapid influx of Jews into the region (UN, n.d.) (map 1).

Figure 1.

Distribution of the Arab and Jewish population of Palestine in 1919-1939 (UN, 1980).



Map 1. Percentages of Arab and Jewish Population by Sub-District in the British Mandate in 1922 and 1944 (Issac, 2013a).



Following the conflicts that arose due to population and occupation policies, the idea of partitioning the Palestinian territories was first proposed in 1937 by Lord Peel, the British official in charge of India (Sinanoglou, 2009). In 1938, the Palestinians rejected this proposal, demanding the cessation of immigration to their lands and the establishment of a unitary state under their sovereignty that would also favour minorities, rejecting the idea of two separate independent states. During this period, the British pursued a relatively pro-Arab policy due to increasing Palestinian revolts and the threat of World War II. In 1939, the British government published the White Paper, which declared that the creation of a Jewish state was not a British policy (UN, 1979). The devastating impact of World War II took a toll on the British Empire and weakened their capacity to maintain the mandate in Palestine (1922-1948). In 1947, the British handed over the Palestine issue to the UN, which established the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). The committee proposed a two-state solution (map 2) and recommended prompt independence for Palestine. However, its members were divided on the form of independence. The minority favored a united federal state with a significant level of autonomy for both communities, whereas the majority advocated for partitioning into two states -one Jewish and one Arab- with Jerusalem designated as an international territory under the administration of the UN (figure 2-3).

The immigration of Jews to Palestine resulted in them comprising one-third of the Palestinian population and occupying 6% of the land. On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel declared independence, which was immediately recognized by many countries. As of November 2023, 163 UN member states recognize Israel and 138 countries recognize Palestine. Due to the psychology of collective guilt and indebtedness resulting from the Holocaust committed against Jews in Europe before and during World War II, the state promised to the Jewish people was rapidly established on Palestinian land from the 1940s onwards. In their struggle for survival, defense of their homeland, and self-determination, Palestinians began to refer to May 15, the day after Israel declared independence, as the 'The Catastrophe' (Al-Nakba). After declaring their independence, the Israelis initiated ethnic cleansing operations against the Palestinians, engaging in acts that could be deemed genocidal (Balci, 2010; Pappé, 2006). Meanwhile, as British troops stood by, observing the Palestinian massacres in the region, the Arab countries of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan took a stand against Israel.

Map 2.

Map of Palestine according to the 1947 Partition Plan (the two-state solution proposed by many countries at the UN is based on this map) (UN, 1979).



Figure 2.

Land and population distribution of the 1947 UNSCOP proposal for a two-state solution in Palestine (UN, 1980).

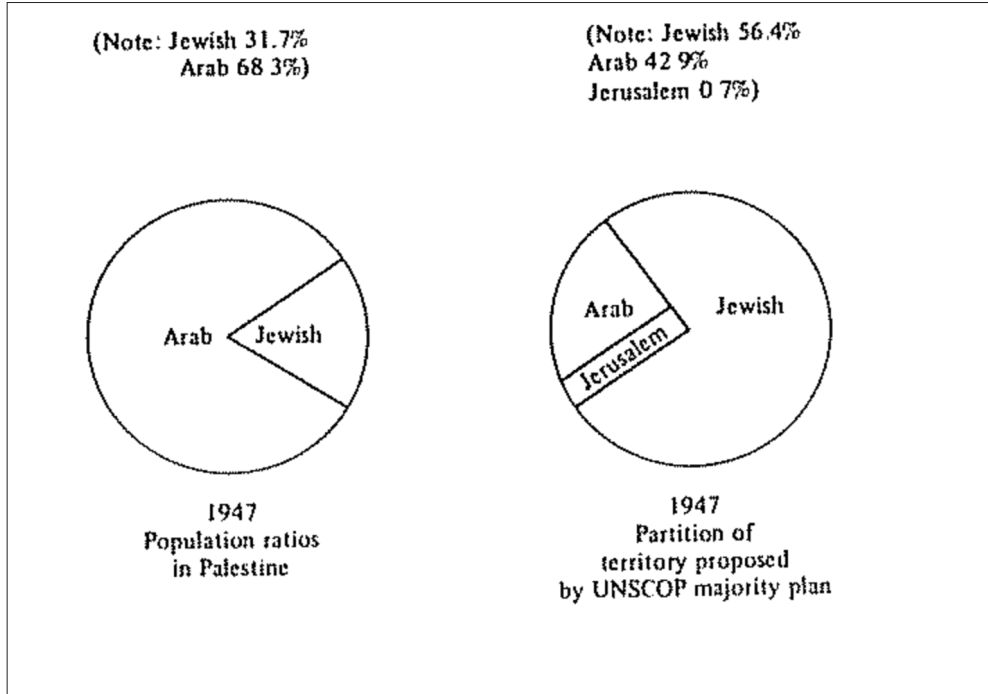
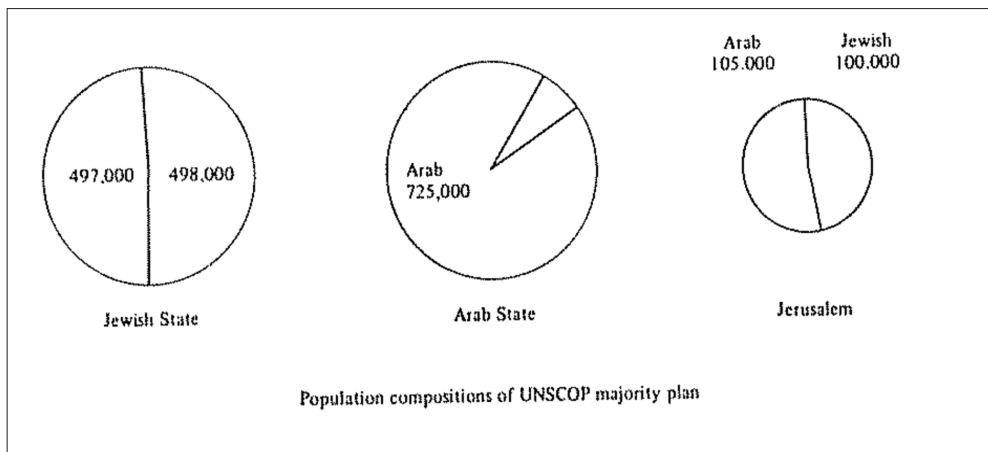


Figure 3.

Distribution of population in the states to be founded according to the 1947 UNSCOP Palestine two-state solution proposal (UN, 1980).



By 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), established as the political representative of Palestinians, emerged in Jerusalem. Concurrently, within the framework of the PLO, the clandestine organization called Fatah, under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, commenced its struggle for the independence of Palestine. A pivotal event in the annals of history known as the “Six-Day War” unfolded in 1967, marked by the Arab-Israeli conflict. During this war, Israel occupied the Golan Heights of Syria and the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. However, the United Nations Resolution 242 explicitly declared the inadmissibility of Israel’s territorial acquisitions and demanded its withdrawal (UN, 1971). Throughout these attacks, half a million Palestinians were dispossessed of their homes, their homeland was occupied, and they were compelled to seek refuge in neighboring countries. The Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967 and the attempted arson at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969 prompted the establishment of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) during a meeting in Rabat in 1969, spearheaded by King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. Hence, the occupation of Jerusalem and the harassment of Al-Aqsa emerged as a significant turning point directly leading to the formation of the OIC. Seeking to compensate for the losses incurred during the Six-Day War, Egyptian and Syrian forces launched an attack in 1973 to reclaim their occupied territories. However, Israel’s counterattacks resulted in further exacerbation of their losses. During this period, Egypt and Syria lost a combined total of 8,500 soldiers, while Israel lost 6,000 soldiers as the occupying force.

King Faisal of Saudi Arabia initiated the oil embargo in response to the aid provided by Western countries, particularly the US, to Israel before and during the 1973 War. This event had significant and lasting effects (Campbell, 1977; Langlois-Bertrand, 2010; Stork, 1975). The oil embargo was initiated by King Faisal of Saudi Arabia in response to the aid provided by Western countries, particularly the US, to Israel before and during the 1973 War. Some believed this aid to have changed the outcome of the war. The embargo resulted in a four-fold increase in oil prices, leading to one of the last century’s most significant international wealth transfers. It provided additional income to Arab countries, almost all of which were underdeveloped and relied on raw materials, such as oil. This continued for decades. The oil embargo stands out as a successful example of political solidarity among underdeveloped countries, which were able to

obtain much higher prices for their raw materials. In this period, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, who played a leading role in the establishment of the OIC (1969) and the OPEC embargo (1973), was assassinated in 1975.

The left-wing Labour Party primarily led the Israeli government until the 1977 elections, when the Likud came to power and adopted the 'Greater Israel' project. This project, which aimed to establish a promised homeland, resulted in the loss of thousands of Palestinian lives. The former Minister of Agriculture, Ariel Sharon (1928-2014), quickly constructed housing estates intending to use the Jewish population's presence in the West Bank and Gaza, which were occupied by Israel in 1967, as leverage in the future. It is worth noting that the 3.5 million Palestinians who were forcibly displaced between 1948 and 1967 have been largely overlooked. However, the status of Jewish occupants in Israeli-occupied territories has been a topic of discussion in peace treaties, and their situation has hindered peace negotiations. The consistent support of hegemonic powers for the State of Israel has played a crucial role in maintaining its advantageous position in international diplomatic negotiations. Since the 1970s, the United States of America (USA) has been the primary guarantor of the State of Israel, which was established with the help of the British. Although the British Empire and the US have provided crucial support to Israel at different times, France has emerged as the state that directly supported Israel's acquisition of nuclear reactors and nuclear weapons by backing Israel's secret nuclear programme.

The Camp David Peace Treaty signed in 1979 between Egypt and Israel, under the auspices of the US President Jimmy Carter (1977-1981) on US initiative, is considered one of the most significant moments of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Camp David process led to Menahem Begin (1913-1992) and Anwar Sadat (1918-1981) receiving the Nobel Peace Prize together. As a result of the process, Israel agreed to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula on the condition that it would remain demilitarised and be returned to Egypt. The process also resulted in the establishment of diplomatic and commercial relations between Egypt and Israel, as well as the commencement of Egyptian oil sales to Israel. Although the Camp David Accords initially gave rise to hope, Israel continued its occupation and periodic military actions while attempting to maintain its position in the region. Israel's continued aggression in the region resulted in the

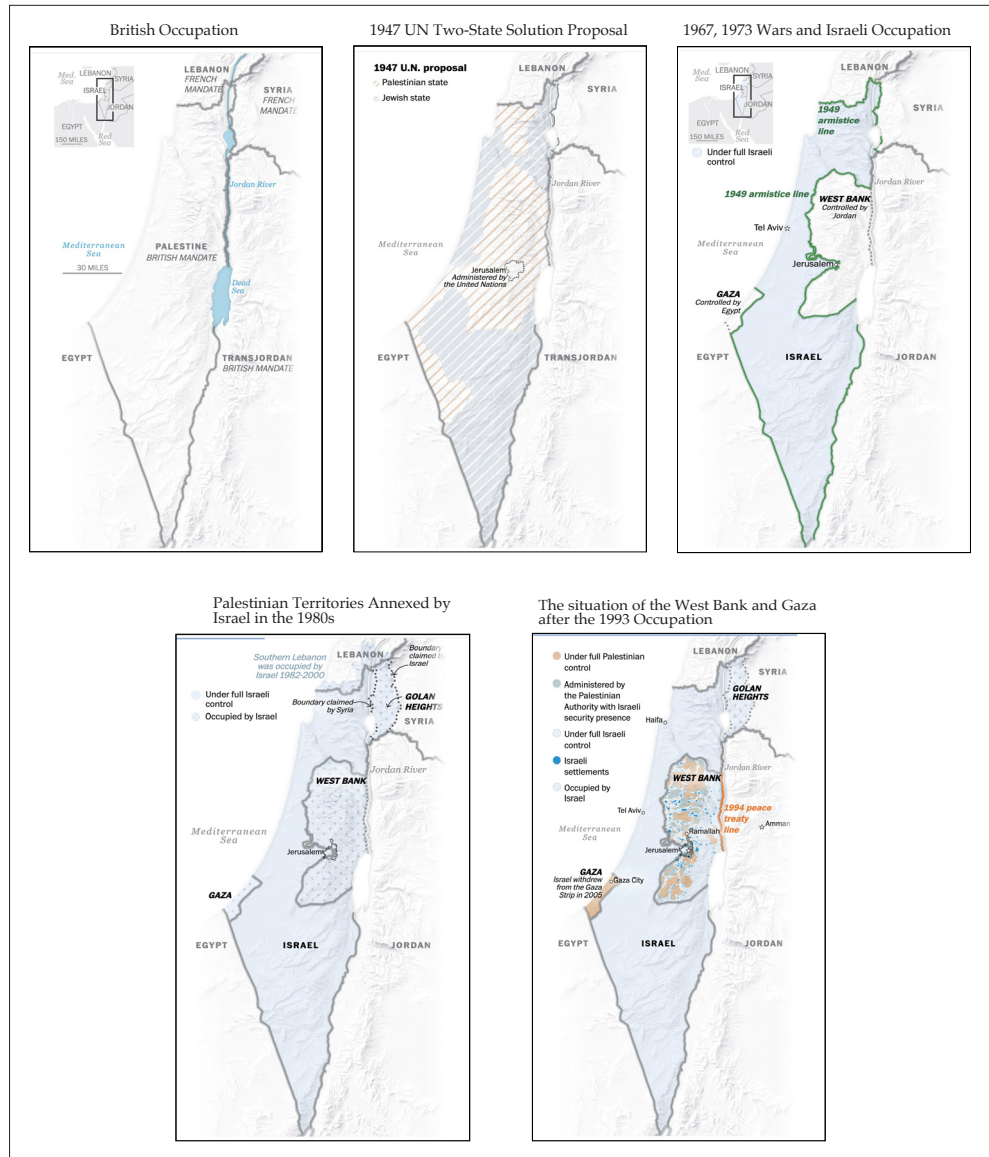
deaths of over 3,500 Palestinian civilians, mostly refugees, in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps near the Lebanese capital, Beirut, in 1982. The conditions agreed upon for the occupied Palestinian territories were not fulfilled. Former Israeli Defence Minister Ariel Sharon was accused of being a war criminal for not taking steps to prevent the massacres planned by the Christian Phalangist minority in the refugee camps, despite knowing about them (Human Rights Watch, 2001; TRT World, 2019).

Following all these occupations and civilian massacres, the Intifadas began in 1987-1993, the first in the Gaza Strip, and spread to the West Bank. The Intifadas, defined as a series of actions that included civil resistance, boycotts and strikes, were symbolized by Palestinian children throwing stones at heavily armed Israeli soldiers (Issac, 2013b). In an environment where public order was not possible to maintain under attacks and occupations, the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood carried out its activities in Gaza to meet the social needs of the people and to heal social traumas against the occupation. In 1987, Hamas was founded under the leadership of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin (1937-2004) as a reaction to all Israeli attacks and occupations after the First Intifada, which started when Palestinian workers were crushed by Israelis with a truck at a checkpoint in Gaza. The Kassam Brigades, the armed resistance arm of Hamas, made its name known for the first time in 1991 (Hroub, 2000).

The 1991 Madrid Summit and the 1993 Oslo Peace Process between the PLO and Israel were followed by the signing of the Oslo I (1993) and Oslo II (1995) Agreements Accords. These negotiations witnessed the representatives of the occupied Palestinian people being pushed to the point of welcoming the idea of a common and shared future with Israel and longing for peace. In the Oslo Secret Talks, the Palestinian people, who were somehow seeking peace in their own land, were prepared to accept recognition of Israel in exchange for a phased withdrawal from the territories occupied by Israel in 1967. The talks ended with the signing of the Declaration of Principles. These and many other agreements strongly registered the PLO internationally as the representative of the Palestinian people. However, due to Israel's failure to withdraw from the territories it occupied in the 1967 war (map 3), the PLO was unable to establish effective sovereignty over the Palestinian territories and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state was not possible.

Map 3.

Maps showing Israel's occupation of Palestine (Tierney et al., 2023).



During Israel's partial withdrawal from the territories it occupied in Gaza and the West Bank, the 1994 massacre at the holy Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron demonstrated the dehumanising nature of 'Jewish fundamentalist militants'. Baruch Goldstein, the occupier, opened fire on praying Palestinians, killing 29 people (Wiles, 2014). In the following year, the Oslo II talks proposed dividing the West Bank into three separate territories. Palestinians rejected the

plan, while fundamentalist Jews declared that 'all Palestinian land is ours.' Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (1922-1995), who had led the negotiations, was assassinated by Israel's far right. Shimon Peres (1923-2016) succeeded him as prime minister.

The early 2000s continued with the disturbing and provocative policies of Benjamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon, leaders of the right-wing Likud Party, against Muslims and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Indeed, the Second Intifada began on September 28, 2000, when Israeli expansionist politician Ariel Sharon led more than 1,000 heavily armed police and soldiers to storm the Al-Aqsa compound in occupied East Jerusalem. The following events lasted from September 28, 2000, until February 8, 2005. These provocative policies and the ongoing occupations are important in terms of showing that the Oslo Accords failed to provide a solution (Dowty, 2004) and that the Palestinians will not give up their occupied lands (Robinson, 2010). By 2002, the aggressive Israel had occupied the entire West Bank and committed war crimes in its attacks on Jenin and Nablus (Human Rights Watch, 2002). The process deepened with the 2003 Bush administration's aggressive Middle East policy (Goldsmith & Horiuchi, 2012). The International Court of Justice declared in 2004 that the walls built by Israel in the Palestinian territories were illegal (UN News, 2004). After Arafat's death on November 11, 2004, Mahmoud Abbas became the leader of the PLO, and in the same year, Israel withdrew from the occupied Gaza Strip, completely blockading it. Hamas was overwhelmingly elected in the Palestinian elections in 2006, and the US and European Union (EU) countries, finding Hamas incompatible with their national interests, cut off their financial aid to Palestine. The process turned into a competition between Hamas and Al-Fatah, which was founded in 1964, over who would represent Palestine; Hamas forced Al-Fatah out of Gaza in 2007. In 2009, Netanyahu's Likud Party returned to power on the Israeli side. The Goldstone Report, which showed that Israel committed war crimes by proving that it targeted civilians and used disproportionate force in Operation Cast Lead against Gaza in 2008, was adopted by the UN in 2009 (UN, 2009).

Israeli politicians displayed an aggressive and confrontational attitude not only towards the Palestinian people but also towards the Mavi Marmara humanitarian aid ship. The ship was sailing from Türkiye to Gaza to deliver humanitarian aid when it was attacked by Israeli soldiers in international waters on May 31, 2010, resulting in the loss of nine Turkish citizens' lives. Due

to mounting international pressure, Israel was compelled to open the Rafah border crossing from Gaza to Egypt. The 2010 report by the UN Human Rights Council provided a detailed account of Israel's violation of international law during the attack on the Mavi Marmara vessel (Human Rights Council, 2010).

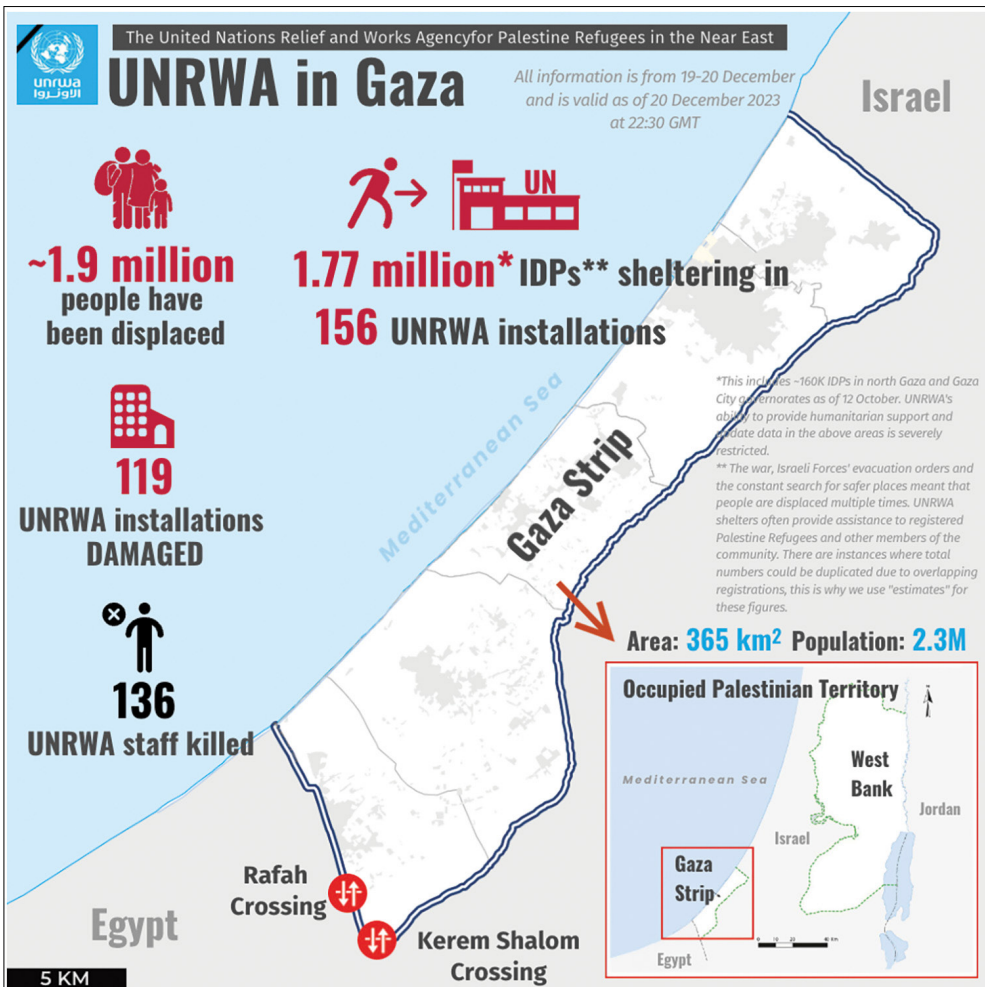
However, Palestinian representatives and the Palestinian people have attempted to gain support from international institutions and expose Israel's unlawful aggression. They have often encountered obstacles from the US and pro-Israel countries. For instance, Palestine applied for membership in UNESCO to garner support for its cause in international institutions. Upon its acceptance, the US canceled its planned \$60 million aid to UNESCO. In 2012, the UK abstained and the US voted against when the state of Palestine was granted observer status at the UN. However, between 2009 and 2017, US President Barack Obama did not recognize Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem and settlements (Reuters, 2017) and kept the US embassy in Tel Aviv. In 2015, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2334, which called on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories and to immediately and cease entirely illegal settlement activities (UN, 2016). The US abstained from voting on this matter. However, on December 6th, 2017, the newly elected US President, Donald Trump (2017-2021), announced that the US Embassy in Israel would be relocated from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. In 2018, the Embassy building was opened, and Israeli soldiers killed 59 Palestinians who were protesting this move. In 2021, Human Rights Watch declared Israel's destruction of Gaza and the killing of civilians to be an apparent war crime (Human Rights Watch, 2021). The Israeli government has approved the construction of 2791 new homes in Jewish settlements that are considered illegal under international law in the occupied West Bank. This decision has been condemned by the United Nations and the European Union (EEAS, 2022). According to the UN's Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) Report published in 2022, Israel was responsible for the deaths of almost one hundred Palestinian children and the maiming of nearly a thousand in 2021 (UNSC, 2022).

After all these massacres and occupations, in the light of the historical flow and the brief information provided, the sentence of Nathan Thrall, an American writer and journalist living in Jerusalem, "South Africa's apartheid lasted 46 years. Israel's is at 72, and counting" (2021) makes sense in all its aspects. In the Palestinian-Israeli War, Israel continues unabated its behavior as a state that does not recognize international legal norms and considers itself above them (WAFA Agency, 2023). In the dire situation in the Gaza Strip, where urgent and

safe humanitarian assistance must be delivered and the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation must be improved, Israeli attacks continue to severely damage the staff and infrastructure of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (map 4) (UN News, 2023). UNRWA announced that approximately 1.9 million people have been displaced in the Gaza Strip, which covers 365 square kilometers and is home to 2.3 million people. According to data released on December 20, 2023, 1.77 million people are sheltering in 156 UNRWA facilities in the Gaza Strip, 119 of which have been damaged and 136 UN staff killed in Israeli attacks.

Map 4.

Damage caused by Israeli attacks on the staff and infrastructure of the UNRWA (UN News, 2023).



Israel has consistently failed to comply with any of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the UNSC, in addition to violating UN resolutions. The inability to impose de facto sanctions against Israel, especially when the UNSC resolutions are binding, makes the internal reform of the UN necessary and inevitable.



Current Situation

The main reason that caused the problem in the Palestinian territories is related to the immigration of the Jewish people from other countries to the Palestinian territories and their subsequent settlement there through planned population and occupation policies without the consent of the people of the region. At this point in the century-old occupation plan, Israel's population in 2023 consists of approximately 8.2 million Jews living outside Israel's borders, including 6 million in the US and 2.2 million in other countries (TRT Haber, 2022). According to the data of the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, 70 thousand Jews immigrated to Israel in 2022 (Klein, 2022). On the one hand, while the processes of intimidation, displacement and massacre of the Palestinian people in the region by Israel continue, on the other hand, attempts to solve the problems in the Middle East in a single session, similar to the template approach of 200 years ago (Sher, 2020), continue to seek legitimacy for the Jewish occupation. The Donald Trump administration shared its "Peace to Prosperity" programme with the world public in 2020 under the title "Deal of the Century" (The White House, 2020). The proposal was presented as a déjà vu of the Marshall Plan, a vision to improve the lives of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. The document is 181 pages long and divided into political and economic sections. In a way, it is a text that can be considered as a search for legitimacy for the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories (map 5). It has been argued that this plan, which restricts all the possibilities of the Palestinians in terms of livability and sustainability, is stillborn (Sher & Cohen, 2020). In terms of the acceptability and feasibility of the proposed solution, the Palestinian people, whose cities have been destroyed, whose lands and vital needs have been taken away from them, have been promised the construction of an industrial zone that will produce high technology on their lands that have been under occupation since 1967. The settlement program can be seen as an artificial/instantaneous attempt to fulfill promises made to US domestic public opinion. The deep fractures caused by the last war have proved the US administration's disconnection from the reality on the matter.

Map 5.

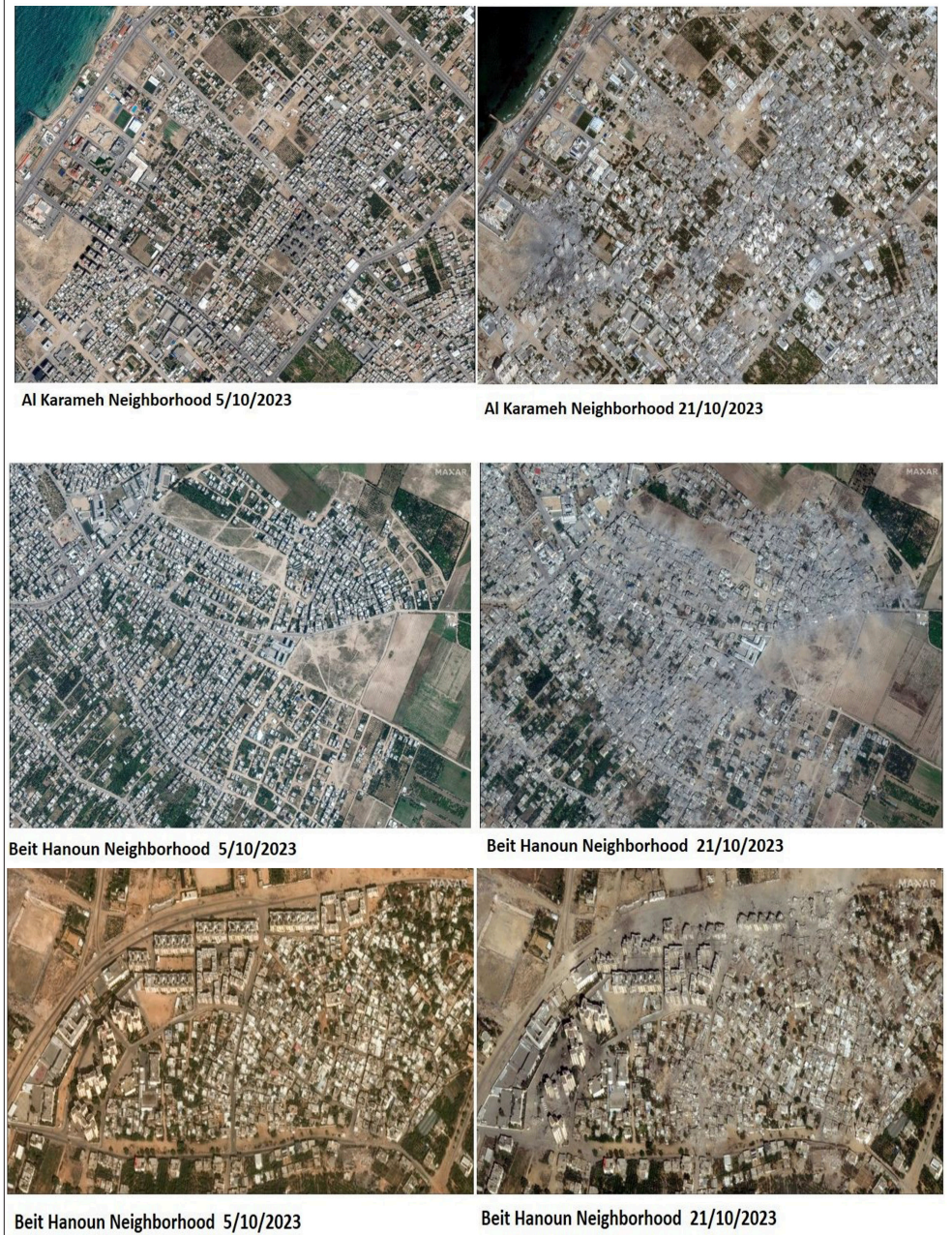
Map of the proposed division of Palestinian territories under Donald Trump (The White House, 2020).



The Palestinian territories have been under occupation for over a century. On October 7, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades led the 'Aqsa Flood' operation, infiltrating and attacking Jewish settlements near the Israel-Gaza border. The attacks resulted in over 1,200 deaths, more than 5,132 injuries, and the capture of over 250 people, mostly military personnel (Global Security, 2023). During Operation Aqsa Flood, the Israeli military suffered the second-highest number of casualties against the Palestinians since the 1973 War. The operations prompted a reassessment of Israel's indisputable superiority, particularly its intelligence and security weaknesses (Global Security, 2023). The initial responses from the Israeli President and Prime Minister to the events were quite surprising. It was shared with the world public that 1,200 Israelis killed in Israel, with a population of 9.3 million, is equivalent to 36,000 Americans in the USA, with a population of 332 million (Ellenberg, 2006). President Isaac Herzog said: "Not since the Holocaust have so many Jews been killed in one day", exploiting history and trying to capitalize on Western indebtedness before the state terror and civilian massacre planned by Israeli forces (Herzog, 2023). Prime Minister Netanyahu stated "On October 7th, Hamas murdered 1,400 Israelis, maybe more. This is in a country of fewer than 10 million people. This would be equivalent to over 50,000 Americans murdered in a single day. That's 20 9/11s. That is why October 7th is another day that will live in infamy" (The White House, 2023). The Israeli Academy of Sciences supported the calculations of the two most authoritative figures in the country based on the number of deaths with similar statements (Israel Academy of Sciences, 2023). As a result, the current population of Palestine is only 5.2 million, and a total of 18,484 Palestinians, including 7,729 children and 5,153 women, were killed in Israeli attacks (image 1) between October 7 and December 12, 2023.

Scientific studies have revealed that Israeli forces conduct war and defense industry tests in the Palestinian territories using Palestinians as a laboratory (Loewenstein, 2023). As Human Rights Watch found in its report (2023), Israel occasionally uses phosphorus bombs. At the beginning of the war, although it was impossible to obtain a precise and accurate figure due to the difficulties encountered, the government in Gaza announced on December 6, 2023 that the number of casualties in Israeli attacks had increased by 349 to 16,248, with 7,112 of the dead being children and 4,885 women (Stepansky et al., 2023). It was also publicized that 32,300 people were wounded and no news was received from 3,750 people because they were under the rubble.

Image 1. Satellite images of Al Karameh and Beit Hanoun neighborhoods in Gaza before and after the attacks (Yerushalmy, 2023).



According to UN estimates, 68 percent of those killed in Gaza were women, children and the elderly (OCHA, 2023). While the proportion of Ukrainians displaced from their homes since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine was 25% of the total population, the proportion of people displaced from their homes in the Gaza Strip has reached 75% since October 7, (WHO, 2023). In one week, Israel dropped more bombs on the Gaza Strip than the US dropped on Afghanistan in a year (Epstein & Lee, 2023).

The environmental problems in the narrow 365 square kilometer area of the Gaza Strip are another aspect of the damage caused by Israel. Since October 7, Israeli troops have killed tens of thousands of people, while the heavy bombardment weapons they have used have left no living thing in the area. The severe damage caused to the region's habitat, soil, and water will be felt for many years (Saber, 2023). Despite warnings about the potential damage to the region's groundwater, Israeli forces have begun filling underground tunnels in the Gaza Strip with seawater since December 2023. Such actions contradict the green consensus underlined at the G-20 and COP meetings (Wehrey, 2023) and should be subject to sanctions. Any environmental damage caused should also be compensated. Israel's actions are incompatible with the morality and laws of war (photo 1). The casualties resulting from the conflict indicate that Israel has caused ten times more deaths (1400) than it has suffered in a month. In response to these attacks, Marione Ingram, an 87-year-old Holocaust survivor, stood with the Palestinians against Israel's actions in Gaza as a humanitarian response (Democracy Now, 2023).

UNFPA underlined that there are 50,000 pregnant women in the Gaza Strip, with over 160 births occurring daily (UNFPA, 2023). However, on October 17, 2023, Israel launched a missile attack on the Baptist Hospital (Al Ahli Arab Hospital) in the Gaza Strip, despite the critical need for medical facilities and personnel in the area. The Gaza Ministry of Health reported 471 fatalities, while the US Director of National Intelligence estimated between 100-300 deaths (Herb, 2023). The Director of Al-Shifa Hospital stated that more than 250 people lost their lives (Padilla et al., 2023). According to the Geneva Conventions (1949) and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998), bombing a civilian hospital is considered a war crime under international law.

Photograph 1.

6-month-old Palestinian baby Sama Alwadia is rescued from under the rubble following the Israeli airstrike on the Gaza Strip on October, 9 (Çolakoğlu et al., 2023, p. 55).



In addition to air strikes, Israel has also launched a ground offensive that has not only killed tens of thousands of Palestinians but has also taken the lives of more than 50 journalists and media workers from around the world who came to do their jobs (The International Press Institute, 2023) (photo 2).

These actions violate the norms of the liberal international order and international law. They have sparked international condemnation and led to anti-Israeli protests worldwide in support of Palestine. Thousands of people from Islamic countries such as Türkiye, Pakistan, Iran, Lebanon, and Morocco, as well as non-Muslim countries such as the USA, Germany, Spain, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, and Greece, took to the streets to make their voices heard. Slogans ranged from 'Freedom for Palestine' to 'No to Genocide,' and boycott campaigns against Israeli goods were initiated. It is worth noting that the majority of those protesting against Israel were young people, women, and middle-class individuals. The participation of these groups in anti-Israel protests can be seen as a sign that the legitimacy of Israeli behavior will continue to be questioned, not only by today's generation but also by future ones. The incidents that occurred in countries where institutional reactions were given, such as Ireland, demonstrated how

even countries that can freely express the truth through democratic means can be threatened. This highlights the potential use of violence by actors who do not follow the rules, in addition to the social reactions to Israel.

Photograph 2.

The helmet of journalists Saeed Al-Taweel and Mohammad Sobh, who were deliberately killed while filming Israeli warplanes targeting a house in the Rimal area on October, 10, 2023 (Çolakoğlu et al., 2023, p. 45).



Although Israel's actions have been criticised for their violent nature, including the use of force against civilians, destruction of property, psychological harm, and dissemination of false information (Directorate of Communications, 2023), the support of several Western nations, particularly the US, has resulted in both global protests and internal divisions within Israel and the US. Israel had been hosting anti-Netanyahu protests for some time before October 7, claiming that Netanyahu's social legitimacy was gradually eroding. In line with Netanyahu's 'Mad Man' theory, he unleashed his increasing and uncontrollable aggression to protect his power and avoid social criticism, paving the way for the rise of radicalism and possible fascism in the region. According to Gagnon's study, the Netanyahu Massacres that ensued may be attributed to irrational behavior on Netanyahu's part. It is suggested that he sought to restore lost social trust and increase his bargaining power in foreign policy by fueling international conflicts through ethnic references (Gagnon, 1994).

The strategy of prolonging the unresolved war and avoiding a long-term ceasefire is to avoid criticism from national and international public opinion.¹ After October 7, although a unified Israeli policy against Hamas seems to have emerged, it has also been observed that the social and institutional motivation against Netanyahu has not entirely disappeared. Discussions such as the case of Ofer Cassif, a Knesset member who was suspended for 45 days for criticizing Israel's attacks on Gaza (European Parliament, 2023), the families of hostages who do not trust Netanyahu seeking help from Turkish President Erdoğan (Agencies, 2023) or the alienation of the Israeli Left (Jewish Currents, 2023) could be all evaluated in this direction. In the end, it is expected that it will be very tough for Netanyahu to survive in the post-war period, as the international community, as well as the Israeli society, increasingly holds him responsible not only for the genocide of Palestinians but also for the loss of Israeli lives.

Another example where Israeli aggression is reflected in domestic politics is the US. The special relationship between the US and Israel has always been an essential area of interest throughout the two countries' history, as in Eric Alterman's (2022) analysis of how American presidents who wanted to change Israeli behavior kept backtracking. In fact, in recent years, the growing conflict between Israeli identity and American Jewish identity has led to a process in the US that is as much in favor of Palestine as it is against Israel. This conflict, which has been felt in the Obama era, has led to a major split between Israeli political Zionists and liberal Zionists, especially in the Democratic Party, over the future of both Palestine and US-Israeli relations. In a process that has given examples such as the proposal by Martin Indyk, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and former US Ambassador to Israel, to reconsider US military aid to Israel, a Gallup poll conducted in March 2023 revealed that Democrats who expressed more sympathy for Israel than for the Palestinians by a 35-point margin in 2013 now favor the Palestinians by 11 points (Saad, 2023). While the socio-political change in the US is moving in this trend, Biden's post-October 7 support for Israel was seen as a domestic political move before the upcoming elections as much as the US national interest in the Middle East, but it was observed that it caused

1 The initial Israel-Hamas ceasefire agreement commenced on November 24, 2023 and has since been extended daily. As a result of the ceasefire, the fighting has largely ceased, and humanitarian aid has been permitted into Gaza, which was previously deliberately blocked by Israel. Hamas released its prisoners, and Israel released Palestinian prisoners.

a reverse wave effect, especially in the social base of the Democratic Party. Biden's support for Israel, from the reactions rising from states known to be critical for the elections to resignations such as Josh Paul, who resigned from his position as director of the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, which oversees US arms sales, in protest of arms transfers to Israel, has caused significant damage to him in domestic politics, especially among young people and those who embrace progressive ideology.

The timing of the Aqsa Flood, organized by Hamas at a time when the international community, particularly American sociology, was at its highest level of reaction to Israel's illegal settlement policies and the changing trend in favor of the Palestinians, was highly debated. Although the Aqsa Flood was seen as part of the just struggle of the Palestinians, whose lands have been occupied for years, as in the case of protests around the world that mobilized in support of Palestine, it nevertheless damaged the perception of Palestine, which had been moving in a positive direction for a long time, by supporting Israel's terrorism discourse. There has been serious international criticism of Hamas' methods, and the chain of command of the Kassam Brigades has been questioned. It is considered very difficult for Hamas to carry out this action on its own, which is why conflict theorists believe that actors such as Iran encouraged the attack in order to prevent rapprochement between Israel and the Gulf states (Reisinezhad, 2023; Said et al., 2023). However, despite Israel's statements blaming Iran immediately after the attack, the US security elites insistently emphasized that Iran had nothing to do with the attack. In particular, the lifting of the US blockade on Iran's purchase of \$10 billion worth of electricity from Iraq while the conflict was in full swing raised doubts about the secret bargain that the US might have made with Iran in the context of "strategic secrecy", which has recently become fashionable in the conflict literature (Nutt & Pauly, 2021). Nevertheless, the organization of the Aqsa Flood has supported the debate that the post-conflict Palestinian politics may be reshaped in the sense that the democratic demands of the people are not decisive in Palestinian politics, especially the Mahmoud Abbas Administration, which has been in power without elections for a long time.

Reflections of the War on the Region, the International System and International Relations

Some argue that the geopolitical consequences of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and Syria have led to annexations by countries such as Russia, China, India (Unlü, 2022), and Israel. Examples include the annexation of Crimea and changes to the status of Jerusalem, Kashmir, and Hong Kong. If we consider Russia's post-Crimea aggression in Ukraine as the second wave of annexation, then we can also consider Israel's attempt to annex Gaza as a continuation of this wave. The Palestinian territories have a framework that fits well with 'problem of indivisibility' (Fearon, 1995). This refers to issues that cannot be reconciled through negotiation, as emphasized by scholars such as Fearon, who have analyzed the rational foundations of the conflict. The region's history shows that even a tiny spark can escalate the conflict over an imaginary historical claim both sides believe belongs to them. The conflict over the geography of Jerusalem, which is considered crucial for the Islamic world in opposition to Israeli policies that are significant for the Western world, is likely to have repercussions on short-term interests and medium to long-term strategies.

Jervis (1978) argued in 'The Security Dilemma' that peaceful cooperation may sometimes seem more costly, especially for hegemonic powers in this era of Great Power rivalry, than engaging in conflict. This is due to the problem of indivisibility. In other words, every time the US cooperates with other Great Powers, actors such as Russia and China move closer to it

in terms of capacity, which may create an ontological problem for the US. Rational strategic theorists predict that if a conflict results from the Great Power rivalry, the US will initiate it rather than China and Russia. Currently, the US believes that it may be less costly for them to control conflicts in the medium term than to cooperate. In this context, it is rational for the US to support such a conflict in the Middle East, where it will not undermine its own reputation and can increase its prestige. It is important to note that the benefits to be gained in these conflicts, which the US aims to achieve in the short term in foreign policy, may result in a loss of reputation and ground in its position as a hegemonic power in the long term. On the other hand, prominent Realist theorists, notably John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, have insisted that unconditional US support for Israel and its direct involvement as a party to armed conflicts in the Middle East in general, distracts the US from focusing on its main rival, China, and results in the US wasting its prestige as well as its military and economic resources for Israel's interests, insisting that unconditional support for Israel is a harmful policy contrary to US national interests (Mearsheimer, 2001; Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). Nevertheless, they attributed the US pursuit of such a wrong and harmful policy in terms of its own interests to the influence of the political lobby organization in US domestic politics, which they defined as the Israel Lobby (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007) (photo 3).

China's UN Representative Ambassador Zhang Jun, whose position, along with Russia's, is closely followed, commented on the draft peace proposals being discussed at the UNSC in the context of Israel's occupation of Gaza. He stated that China recognizes Israel's security concerns. The draft is criticized for attempting to create a new narrative on the Palestinian-Israeli issue, while ignoring the fact that the Palestinian territories have been under occupation for a long time (UN China-mission, 2023). Currently, the war does not have any direct repercussions for the Asia-Pacific. However, the events on the ground are being closely monitored. The unconditional U.S. support for Israel, which is currently occupying the Gaza Strip and has been accused of violating international law and norms, is also under scrutiny. China considers Taiwan an integral part of itself and the US is using its diverging positions on Ukraine and Palestine to gain prestige and justification in its actions towards Taiwan (Al Jazeera, 2023; CGTN, 2023; Heydarian, 2021; Yu & Hsiu-chuan, 2023).

Photograph 3.

Shows US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu exchanging greetings upon their arrival at Tel Aviv Ben Gurion airport on October 18, 2023. The photo was taken the morning after the Israeli bombing of Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza (Brendan Smialowski / AFP) (Motamedi, 2023).



The current international system has a structural problem in that it lacks tremendous Muslim power and adequate representation of Muslims, even though Muslims make up a significant religious grouping in the world. It is apparent that Muslims, as the largest religious group globally, lack representation among states holding veto power or recognized as great powers within the membership of the UNSC. The members of the UNSC include the US (Protestant Christian), Russia (Orthodox Christian), France (Catholic Christian), Britain (Protestant Christian), China (Confucian), and Hindu-majority India, which has the world's largest population and one of the five largest economies, as well as nuclear weapons. The absence of a Muslim superpower may be a contributing factor to the lack of military or political intervention in numerous humanitarian crises where atrocities amounting to genocide against Muslims have occurred (Aktürk, 2020, pp. 168-169).

The US position during the Gaza occupation may lead to a re-examination of its global influence and role in international politics, potentially causing it to lose ground. This situation also highlights the contradictions within the Western liberal system, primarily represented by the US and its allies. It could deepen the disillusionment among European citizens and the American public with their respective governments' policies. The policies in question are biased and hypocritical. They have become more evident with the massacre of innocent people in Gaza. These policies may cause Russia, China, and other developing countries to develop alternative mechanisms to the existing global order.

The most profound impact of this war that started in Gaza will, of course, be seen in the Middle East region. For the predominantly Muslim countries of the region, the agenda and decisions of the international organizations of the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation were closely followed, as the war was not only a Gaza war but also included Jerusalem. However, the inadequacy of the policy proposals, which mostly remained at the level of calls, caused criticism among their people (El-Fetouh, 2023). To open a paragraph on the weakness of the collective moves of Islamic countries in their diplomatic and political positions, the nature of the platform they come together on is determinative mainly of their attitudes. Neither the Organization of Islamic Cooperation nor the Arab League has become a political or military alliance.

Furthermore, there have been no initiatives or plans to advance the internationalization of universal values or support democratization through broad coalitions. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation is a union of states, but it has yet to create a collective model of action effectively. Axelrod (1984) discusses cooperative behavior in an anarchic order and highlights the shadow and uncertainty of the future. The necessity for an organization that fosters solidarity and unity among Islamic countries is evident during times of crisis. Collective action is required, where actors who benefit during peaceful times also share the costs during crises. However, it is observed that some exhibit responsibility-avoidance behavior, known as 'free-riders' in the literature (Conybeare, 1987). Islamic countries have often been limited in their ability to develop coercive and deterrent measures against Israel, despite its broad international support base, due to their inability to overcome certain tendencies.

The likelihood of a coercive alliance of Muslim states against Israel is considered highly unlikely. In one of her studies, Einat Wilf, a member of the Knesset and foreign policy advisor to Shimon Peres, argued that the real threat in the Middle East is the dominance of Sunni Islam, which could spread throughout the region. He emphasized that the Israeli grand strategy prioritizes preventing the emergence of a dominant Sunni authority over non-Sunni Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as preventing the unification of Arab-Sunni groups. Wilf emphasized that any state or states with the potential to represent, protect, and unify the Sunni Muslim majority in the Middle East are seen as the primary threat. The report examines Türkiye, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia separately as three Sunni Muslim majority countries with this potential. However, the report suggests that Iran and other Shiite and non-Muslim countries and elements may align with Israel against the Sunni Muslim majority in the Middle East (Wilf, 2017). Türkiye's support for the overthrow of minority dictatorships in Arab countries, particularly in Syria, Egypt, and Libya, has drawn reactions from all states and actors in the Middle East. These countries perceive initiatives that could lead to regional cooperation, integration, and unity as a major threat. As a result, Türkiye has become a target (Aktürk, 2017). Israeli foreign policy in the Middle East has recently focused on engaging with Gulf Muslim countries. The Abraham Accords, signed on September 15, 2020, aim to normalize diplomatic relations between Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan. Essentially, these agreements aim to facilitate the flow of financial resources to the countries in the region through Israel (Egel et al., 2021). Subsequently, a series of agreements were signed to increase trade volumes between Middle Eastern countries.

However, the Middle East region has an artificial security environment that has not yet reached its natural borders (Bilgin, 2019). It is unlikely that the Abraham Treaties, which aim to establish trade relations similar to those between European countries, will be effective without first addressing the issue of the occupied territories of Palestine. However, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) was proposed by the leaders of France, Germany, India, Italy, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and the European Commission with the support of the US at the G20 summit in New Delhi. This initiative, which passes through the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel, appears to be disconnected from the field and reality (Calabrese, 2023). The recent civilian massacres and occupations in the Palestinian territories, which occurred after October 7, have once again exposed the harsh realities faced by the Palestinian people. Dalal Iriqat, a

Palestinian researcher, commented on the top-down economic initiatives in the region, stating, 'We are a nation full of visionaries, dreamers, and hard workers who can change this miserable and racist reality imposed on us' (Iriqat, 2020, p. 108). Currently, the Palestinian people do not accept the promised prosperity in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel, particularly with the support of the US. The suggestion that the Palestinian people's civil resistance fatigue will make the people of Gaza forget their homeland and convince them to negotiate the Sinai Peninsula indicates a failure to learn from the age-old problem.

While most partner countries in the international alliance system that Türkiye is a part of expressed support for Israel, Türkiye remained steadfast in its support for the Palestinian people in their just cause against Israel. This highlights the significance of the Middle East region in Turkish foreign policy (Balci, 2021). The primary objectives of Turkish foreign policy's grand strategy generally involve countering the occupation of a major actor (such as the US, China, or Russia) in Türkiye's neighborhood, as well as opposing the presence of large military forces in Türkiye's vicinity by significant powers that pose a threat to Türkiye (Aktürk, 2020). The political instability and conflicts in the Middle East have challenged Türkiye's regional foreign policy. Türkiye has been compelled to enhance its capacity to become a leading actor to keep up with the rapidly changing regional agenda. Türkiye conducts diplomacy and competes with Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt in the region. Recently, Türkiye has initiated extensive diplomatic talks with Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Egypt. However, the war that began on October 7, caused a setback in the diplomatic and economic cooperation processes with Israel, which had not yet been established. As of December 2023, Turkish foreign policy regarding the occupation of Gaza is fully aligned with UN principles and calls for the follow-up and implementation of all decisions made for the Palestinian territories. Türkiye has offered to become a guarantor, requiring intensive political, diplomatic, and military efforts to ensure the successful establishment of peace and subsequent processes (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, 2023). Additionally, Türkiye has proposed convening an international peace conference with the participation of all influential parties to settle with Israel and Palestine (TASS, 2023). Türkiye, at the highest level of government and via all of its institutions, is actively engaged in diplomatic efforts to mediate and secure ceasefires on various international forums, including at the UN. Efforts to facilitate the exchange of prisoners and offer logistical assistance for humanitarian relief and necessities via Egypt have achieved positive outcomes. Medical aid has been given to patients requiring

immediate intervention in the region, particularly in response to the attacks on hospitals and the targeting of health professionals and patients. Some patients are being sent to Türkiye for further treatment after receiving initial care in Egypt.

Türkiye's foreign policy stance against the Russian occupation of Ukrainian territory is also reflected in its stance against the occupation of Palestinian territory by Israeli forces. Although Türkiye's political economy suggests increased cooperation with Israel, its foreign policy has been consistent in responding to political and humanitarian crises, unlike the US and many European countries after the war in Ukraine. Türkiye has taken a moral and humanitarian stance on the right side. In an environment where many European countries and the US openly take a position on the side of Israel, Türkiye's role as a mediator and guarantor is the closest diplomatic solution to the ongoing conflict and the long-standing Palestinian problem. In the current situation, Palestinians find Türkiye, Japan (Doğrul, 2019), and China (Yi, 2023) more acceptable to host Palestine and Israel negotiations due to their diplomatic stance and past and present contacts with the region.

The events and occupations described in the text clearly violate international law and UN resolutions. According to Article 2(4) of the 1945 UN Founding Treaty, states are prohibited from resorting to military force or threats of military force in international relations. Therefore, any act of aggression undermines international peace and security and is deemed unacceptable. The UN General Assembly's 1970 'Declaration on Friendly Relations between States' emphasizes that territorial gains resulting from the use or threat of military force will not be legally recognized. The 1974 'Resolution on the Definition of Aggression' states that territorial gains resulting from aggression will not be recognized as legal. UN resolutions and the International Court of Justice jurisprudence are essential guidelines on the legal status of occupied territories. They emphasize that acquiring land in these territories is illegal and must be reversed. Therefore, under international law, Israel is obligated to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories and return them to their rightful owners. This includes the West Bank, including (East) Jerusalem. This is under the established principles of international law regarding occupied territories and land acquisition. These violations increase pressure on the international system and institutions, undermining efforts to prevent wars and conflicts and destabilizing global peace.

The events after October 7 have brought to the attention of the world public opinion all the unlimited aggression of the Zionist oppressive Israeli government. Professor Tayeh, a top 2% scientist worldwide and Rector of the Islamic University of Gaza, the largest university in Gaza, was killed with his family in an Israeli airstrike on the Jabalia Refugee Camp. In addition to this massacre targeting academia and science, according to the report focusing on the effects of antisemitism on academic freedom and autonomy, it was found that the pressure on academics, writers and students who react to Israel has increased in the UK, USA, France and Germany. In some countries, academics and students who expressed opposition to Israel were targeted. Accusations of antisemitism, which is considered a hate crime, were used as a means of intimidation after October 7. Jewish lobbies increased their financial and political power against statements critical of the Israeli occupation. Seminars and conferences of academics who criticized Israel were canceled, and some of these academics were forced to resign or were dismissed from their posts (Savaşan et al., 2023). In the US, Dr. Liz Magill, the President of the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Sally Kornbluth, the President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Dr. Claudine Gay, the President of Harvard University, were forced to resign after testifying in Congress on December 5, 2020 (Brooks, 2023; Luscombe, 2023). The reason for their resignation was the alleged failure to take sufficient measures against anti-Semitism and to prevent student protests in support of Palestine (photo 4).

Photograph 4. Claudine Gay, Elizabeth Magill, and Sally Kornbluth (L to R) testified on Capitol Hill about rising antisemitism on their campus (Image source: Reuters / Ken Cedeno and Kevin Dietsch / Getty Images North America & AFP) (Sen, 2023).



As an indirect result of the process, the increasing world public interest in the legitimate rights of the occupied Palestinian people and the awakening sense of justice, especially in the younger generations, have shown that the Palestinian land problem has a global basis. In this environment where all the values that were once dictated as international law norms have been devalued and rendered meaningless by the actions of the occupying and aggressive Israeli state, international law, human rights and values have lost their former meaning. The point reached can be considered a milestone and may mark a period in which the genocide² committed in Gaza will trigger the fall of the world's dominant powers from their peak.



2 Israel W. Charny (born 1931) is an Israeli psychologist, genocide scholar, and editor of the two-volume Encyclopedia of Genocide. He defines genocide as the mass killing of a significant number of people, not only during conflicts with the military forces of a particular enemy, but also when the victims are defenseless and helpless (Charny, 2000; Morton & Singh, 2003, p. 51; Jones, 2006, p. 18; Değirmenci, 2007, p. 58).

Overview and Conclusion

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) once stated that “the crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and new cannot be born, and in this interregnum, a great variety of morbid symptoms appear” (Gramsci, 2021). The conflict in Gaza today has roots stretching back centuries and contains unresolved issues from the colonial past. Once again, it has become clear that addressing the war and occupations in a historically integrated manner is of utmost importance. This conflict, which has been defined as the Ottoman-British, Arab-Israeli, and now the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, has the potential to escalate into a hot conflict quickly. It is one of the most explosive problems in the world, and its impact has gone beyond regional, becoming a global problem.

The conflict in the Palestinian territories is causing harm to both Israelis and Palestinians, resulting in the deaths of innocent civilians, including women and children. Mirjana Spoljaric, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, has stated that the lack of safe spaces for civilians in Gaza is unacceptable. The trauma of the ongoing conflict has had a profound impact on the Palestinian population. A sustainable and humane peace is the only viable solution. The attempt to justify Israel’s policy of violence by the US and European countries is complicit in the crime. It is recommended that these countries reconsider their partisan positions. Conversely, the stance of countries such as Spain, Ireland, and Belgium, which have rejected the massacre in the Gaza Strip, should be appreciated and not forgotten.

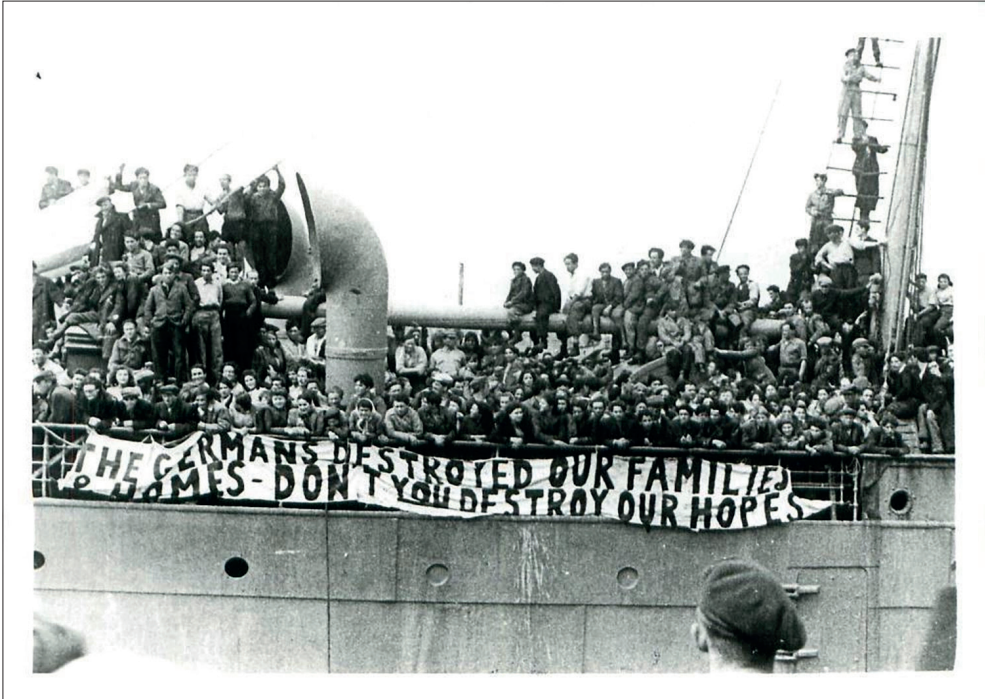
The anticipated social unrest in Muslim states and the increasing anti-Israel sentiment worldwide must be considered. It is imperative that the global community, regardless of religious or political affiliation, condemns the killing of innocent women and children. The impact of these events is not limited to the Gaza Strip, but also affects the psyche of individuals, causing trauma and a sense of helplessness.

Jews on a ship arriving in Palestine in 1947 held a placard that read in English: "The Germans destroyed our families and homes, don't destroy our hopes". This and similar expressions of despair paint a tragic picture that the immigrants, who then used arms and violence to expel or kill the indigenous Palestinian population, will never be able to explain to the world (photo 5). Historically, this land belongs to the Palestinians. It is unacceptable for Zionists to present their claims as the political reality and replace actual reality. The historical continuity of the inhabitants of this land should be prioritized over the narrative of Zionist settlement. However, the international media's narrative and positions in favor of Israel often conceal the devastation and severity of the conflict. The use of heavy weapons against civilians, who have sought refuge in schools, hospitals, churches, mosques, and other safe areas, indicates that the Israeli government has lost control of its military actions. The war in Gaza has ceased to be a conflict based on rational political grounds in the Gramscian sense. It has turned into a politics of madness leading to the destruction of the people in front of the eyes of the whole world.

Escalating the conflict could increase tensions in the international community and worsen regional instability. The conflict has already disrupted trade, political and economic relations, and upset regional balances. In a worsening war environment, diplomatic relations between even more countries could be harmed, and efforts to resolve the conflict could become more complicated. The traumas experienced by the parties involved may lead to the development of radical ideas, exacerbate security threats and perceptions, and escalate violence to a more structural level. As a result, more people may be at risk of displacement, potentially leading to new refugee and humanitarian crises. Additionally, there may be indirect economic and environmental losses, particularly in infrastructure, between the two countries and the surrounding region. Unlawful and immoral actions can have destructive consequences for future generations, particularly on the

land and water of a region. The 'Green Deal' discussed at the UN highlights the potential burden on the future. Therefore, Israel's actions should be heavily sanctioned and any damage should be compensated in favor of the Palestinians.

Photograph 5. Jews arriving in Palestine in 1947 with a banner and a note: "The Germans destroyed our families and homes, don't you destroy our hopes" (Alamy, 2018).



The current state of international affairs is marked by power struggles and irregularities, with events such as the invasion of Ukraine, political and military crises in Africa, and conflicts in the South and North China Sea, as well as the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli war. These developments are reminiscent of the interwar period (1918-1939). It is important to note that annexations and occupations are strictly prohibited under the principle of the supremacy of international law. The loss of these values in the processes that follow the UN's inability would end international peace and order. This could worsen the security dilemma between actors with long-standing animosity towards each other and create conditions that encourage early resort to violence, with actors suddenly realizing their responsibility for their security. As the Lebanese writer Amin Maalouf points out in his book

“The Decline of Civilisations”, the darkened future and broken hopes of the peoples of the Middle East at the hands of Israel and with the support of the West have led to a total loss of civilisation that has shaken all the values of the order represented by the present Western world. The war in the Gaza Strip may herald a Hobbesian chaotic era in the global system.

The final statement should be on academic freedom. Academic freedom and freedom of expression are crucial for societies in search for truth. The opinions of scientists who seek to construct a healthier future world by drawing inspiration from history and utilizing modern analytical data are crucial for humanity in all social and international events. For this reason, any attempt to attack, censor, pressure, or coerce scientists should never be accepted. Specifically, the recent controversy surrounding the chanting of ‘intifada’ slogans in support of Palestine in the US, which was considered by some as a call for genocide, and the subsequent demand for the resignation of rectors for not imposing sanctions on students, has reignited the debate on the purpose of universities. The images of university presidents on trial before members of Congress have brought to mind a new form of despotism. Antisemitic behavior has been rightly criticized in the past, but the “despotism of Antisemitism” may be even more frightening than before. Preventing it should be one of the Academy’s highest priorities.



Annex 1. TUBA Statement on the Situation in Ukraine (March 1, 2022).

March 1, 2022

TÜBA Statement on the Situation in Ukraine

War is described as a set of conflict situations that have global effects and have a negative impact on all living beings in the universe, in addition to showing substantial changes, particularly on the social structures of the parties engaged and their immediate neighbors. Wars have long-term catastrophic impacts on all living creatures, regardless of ethnic origin or location. Wars have a detrimental impact on economic, political, and scientific life all around the world, particularly on the parties involved in the conflict. Instead of resolving the problems, conflicts, whose negative consequences have grown over time, sow seeds of animosity and resentment among future generations.

Diplomatic methods and communication facilities should be the primary application method in solving problems in today's world within the framework of scientific and technological breakthroughs. Science Academies and scientists have key roles at this moment. A wartime is a moment when scientists and science academies must remember their responsibilities and effectively communicate about the results as stated by the [International Science Council \(ISC\)](#) and the [All European Academies \(ALLEA\)](#) on Ukraine War.

We, as Turkish Academy of Sciences Academy Council, urgently call on all parties to seek peace; we call on all states and all parties to accept responsibility for bringing the war to an end before it reaches even more catastrophic proportions.



Annex 2. Statement by the TÜBA about the latest situation in Palestine (October 19, 2023).

TÜRKİYE BİLİMLER AKADEMİSİ
TURKISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
www.tuba.gov.tr

19 October 2023

**Statement by the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA)
about the latest situation in Palestine**

Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA) expresses deep concern over the recent tragic events in Palestine, particularly the grave violations of international law and human rights by the Israeli government through its occupation and attacks. We are appalled by the attacks on civilian populations and civil institutions, notably the targeting of a civilian healthcare facility on October 17, 2023. Israel persists in its occupation and attacks in Palestinian territories, disregarding all legal norms and United Nations Security Council resolutions. TÜBA vehemently condemns this unlawful occupation and ceaseless aggression.

We reiterate that under international law, civilian rights, and assets, including medical facilities, educational institutions, and other public entities, are protected. Israel's deliberate targeting of civilian facilities and populations, such as hospitals, schools, and places of worship, constitutes a blatant disregard for the Geneva Conventions, as well as a violation of global conscience and the fundamental values of peace and cooperation. We demand an immediate cessation of these violations, which constitute crimes against humanity.

TÜBA calls upon the Israeli government to cease its unlawful and disproportionate attacks and urges all parties to adhere to human rights and international law, protect civilian lives, and work towards a peaceful resolution. The international community must ensure accountability in the event of violations of legal norms. TÜBA underscores the need for collective action based on academic research and legal jurisprudence to uphold human dignity, international law, and regional and global peace.

We extend our condolences to the Palestinian citizens who have lost their lives and offer our sympathies to the Palestinian people. TÜBA reaffirms its solidarity with the innocent Palestinians striving to survive in the occupied Palestinian territories.



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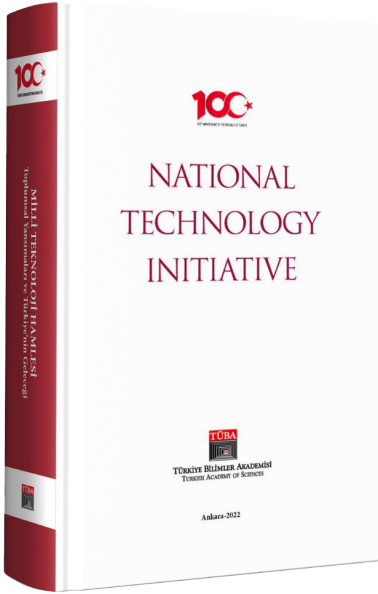
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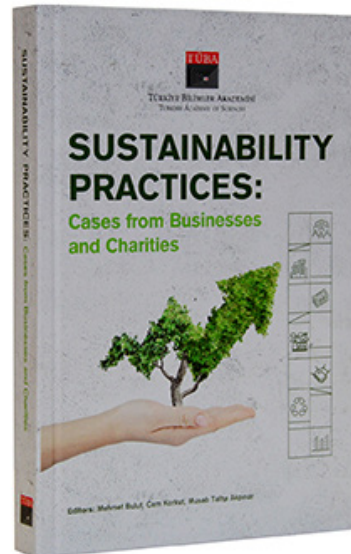


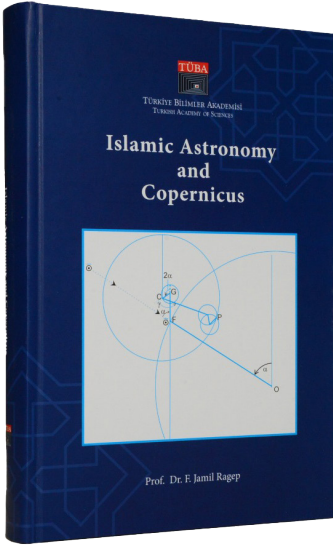


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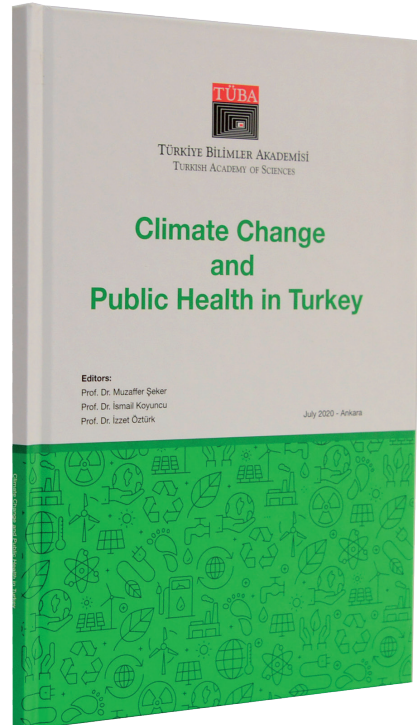


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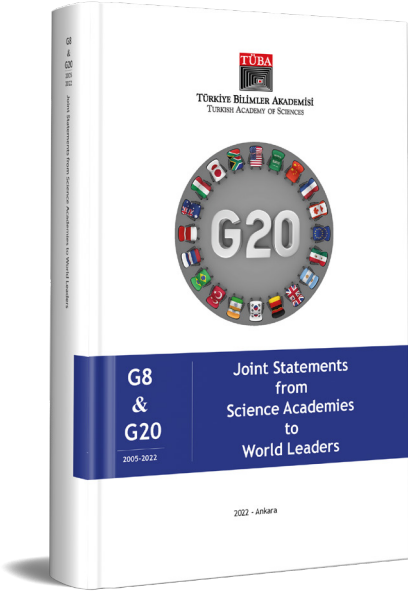




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