



ISSN: 0975-833X

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### CLASH FOR EXISTENCE: THE ISRAEL – PALESTINE CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGION

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#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article History:

Received 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2013  
Received in revised form  
18<sup>th</sup> October, 2013  
Accepted 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2013  
Published online 02<sup>nd</sup> December, 2013

##### Key words:

Middle East,  
Cannan,  
Zionism,  
Holocaust, IDF.

#### ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the deep historical reason for the Israel and Palestinian conflict. In this backyard numerous wars have been fought in this region between the Arabs and Israeli forces and is still continuing with varying intensity and severity to each other. Today in the era of cyber and digital warfare sympathizers of both the groups are threat to global security through terrorist activities. The Israeli and Arabs have their logical argument to support their fight against each other. Important secret treaty and declarations has further enflamed this conflict. This issue is very severe today and vulnerable for peace in this region of Middle East. Today both the Israeli and Palestinian are fighting for their existence and will keep doing till their end unless peace is attained with mutual acceptance and recognition in the region

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#### INTRODUCTION

Israel and Palestine comprise a small land (25,600 sq km area at present) at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. During its long history, its area, population and ownership varied greatly. The present state of Israel finally occupies all the land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea bounded by Egypt in the south, Lebanon in the north and Jordan in the East. The declaration of Israel's independence and its victory in the 1948 war with the Arab countries gave it control of 78 percent of the land. Part of the remaining 22 percent is consist of Occupied territory by Israel since 1967 (Six Days War) and autonomous region under the control of Palestinian authority.<sup>1</sup> The Gaza strip occupies an additional 361 sq km area, south of Israel along the sea coast and is mostly under the control of Palestinian authority with small area occupied by Israeli settlements.

#### Early History and Rise of Zionism

The present day Israel or Palestine, was known as Cannan, the land of Cannan after the people who shared a cultural tradition derived from Mesopotamia and the civilization identified with the city of Ebla in northern Syria. The name Israel and Palestine derived from the people that entered this regional approximately at the same time, during the twelfth century

before the Christian era<sup>2</sup>. This region witnessed a series of rulers and respective Dynasties with time (Jews, Persians, Romans, Greeks, Turks, Ottoman, and British etc). The Jews were the ancient rulers of the city state of Cannan and based upon the Biblical tradition, it is estimated that king David conquered Jerusalem and the city state of Cannan about 1000 B.C and the Jews who at that time called themselves as 'Bnei Israel' (the people or tribe of Israel) believed that the land had been given to them by their God. But they were forced to exile different period of time. The hope of returning one day to the Promised Land (Jerusalem) of the Old Testament never died among the Jews. In fact for two thousand years, Jews prayers and rituals were built around the theme of the eventual coming of the Messiah to unite the Jews in Israel and rule over them<sup>3</sup>. With emancipation of Jews ( socially, economically, politically etc) mainly of the Europeans Jews signaled by the French revolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought Jews out of the ghetto and exposed them to the modern ideas, blending their nationalistic ideas with traditional Jewish idea about Israel and Zionism . The modern nationalism took place first amongst the Sephardic (Spanish and Eastern) Jewish community of Europe. The core beliefs of Zionism is that to constitute one Jewish nation and the only one solutions to anti Semitism is concentration of as many Jews as possible in the establishment of a Jews state in the area now referred to as Israel and Palestine. The Zionist movement become a formal organization in 1897. The world Zionist organizations established by Theodar Herzl in 1897 declared that the aim of Zionist was to establish a national home for the Jewish people secured by

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<sup>1</sup> Gazi-walid Falah, Third World Quarterly, vol 25, p-956

<sup>2</sup> Charles D. Smith, Palestine and Arab Israel Conflicts, p-1

<sup>3</sup> Fred J. Khouri, The Arab- Israeli Dilemma, 6<sup>th</sup> ed, p-3

public law<sup>4</sup>. The emancipation of the Jews triggered a new type of virulent anti Jewish political and social movement in Europe. Beginning in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century oppression of Jews in the Eastern Europe stimulated emigration of Jews to Palestine and as result population there increased drastically in a short time period. Zionism gained adherents among Jews and support from the west as a consequence of the murderous anti-Jewish riots (known as pogroms) in the Russian Empire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Nazi genocide (Mass Murder) of the European Jews during II World War killed over six million Jews and this enhanced international support for the migration of Jews in large numbers to Palestine and later for creation of a Jewish state Israel in May 1948.

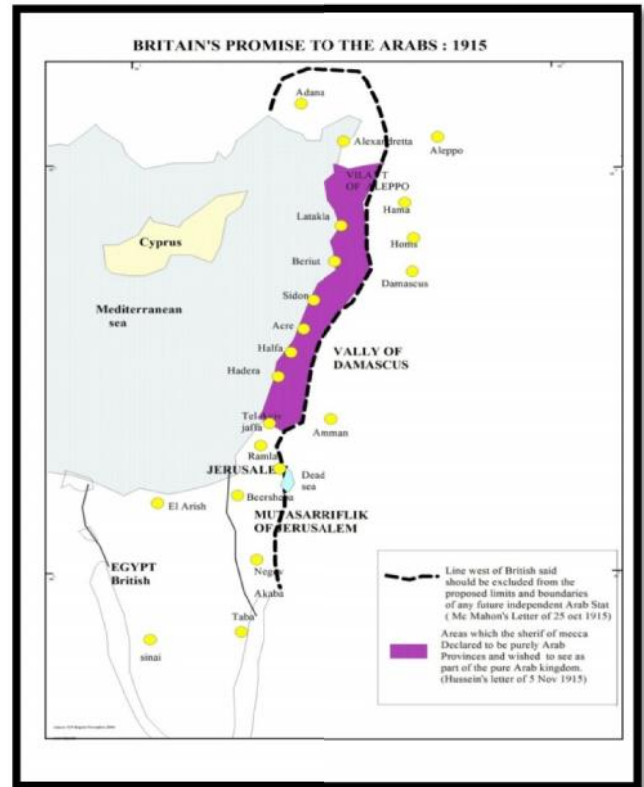
### Sykes- Picot Agreement (1916)

The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 was originally a secret pact among Great Britain, France, and Russia dealing their plans to partition the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. The agreement led to the division of Turkish held Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine into various French and British Administered areas. The agreement took its name from the negotiators Sir Mark Sykes of Britain and George Picot of France. Sergei Sazanov was from Russia to draw the agreement with British and French. However Russia under Tsarist government was a minor party to the Sykes-Picot Agreement dropped out following the Russian Revolution (Bolshevik revolution) of October 1917. The Bolsheviks exposed the agreement to the world after which the British were embarrassed, the Arabs dismayed and the Turks delighted. This Sykes –Picot agreement of 1916 called for part of Palestine to be under British rule, part to be placed under joint Allied government and for Syria and Lebanon to be given to the France. However the Arabs were unhappy and felt cheated by the British which has assured them for a post war independence from the Ottoman Empire in return for Arabs support for the Allies forces during World War I. The Arabs demands and British concession were mentioned in exchange of ten letters between the Sharif Hussein of Mecca from Arabs and Sir Henry Mc Mohan, British High Commissioner of Egypt.<sup>5</sup> The British requested Husayn ibn Ali of H shimite dynast the then Sharif of Mecca to bring the Arabs of the Hejaz into revolt against the Turks on the understanding that the Arabs would eventually receive a much more important share of the fruits of victory. The Arabs, who had learned of the Sykes-Picot Agreement through the publication of it, together with other secret treaties of imperial Russia, in 1917 further scandalized by the British, French and Russian policy towards Arabs in these region.

### The Balfour Declaration (1917)

The Balfour Declaration (2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1917), was a letter from the British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Baron Rothschild, a popular leader of the British Jewish community based on the request of the Zionist organization in Great Britain. This declaration stated support for the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine without violating the civil and religious right of the existing non Jewish

community<sup>6</sup>. This was a result of the Zionist lobbying in Great Britain and support by International Jews Organisation. During World War I, Great Britain needed military help from various country and groups (including the Arabs and Jews). Since Germany (Britain's enemy during WWI) had cornered the production of acetone -an important ingredient for arms production. Chaim Weizmann<sup>7</sup> had invented a fermentation process that allowed the British to manufacture their own liquid acetone.



Source: The Dent Atlas for Middle East-Martin Gilbert

**Map.1 – Britain Promise to the Arabs**

It was this fermentation process that brought Weizmann to the attention of David Lloyd George (minister of ammunitions) and Arthur James Balfour (previously the British prime minister but at this time the first lord of the admiralty). Weizmann's contact with Lloyd George and Balfour continued, even after Lloyd George became prime minister and Balfour was transferred to the Foreign Office in 1916. Additional Zionist leaders such as Nahum Sokolow also pressured Great Britain to support a Jewish homeland in Palestine. He was also close to Zionists powerbrokers in the United State of America such as Bernard Baruch, Louis Brandeis, Paul Warburg (father of the US Federal Reserve), and Jacob Schiff. Britain wanted the United States to join World War I and the British hoped that by supporting a Jewish homeland in Palestine, world Jews organization would be able to sway the U.S. to join the war. The US Zionist mounted much pressure to their President Woodrow Wilson in support to their cause and all these

<sup>4</sup> [www.merip.org/palestine\\_conflicts/primer\(1\).html](http://www.merip.org/palestine_conflicts/primer(1).html) Israel and the Arab-Israel

<sup>5</sup> ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid,p-8

<sup>7</sup> Chaim Weizmann was not just a scientist who had invented a fermentation process for the production of acetone -an important ingredient for arms production; he was also a very popular leader of the Zionist movement. Later became the President of the Zionist Organization, and the first President of the State of Israel. He was elected on 1 February 1949, and served until his death in 1952



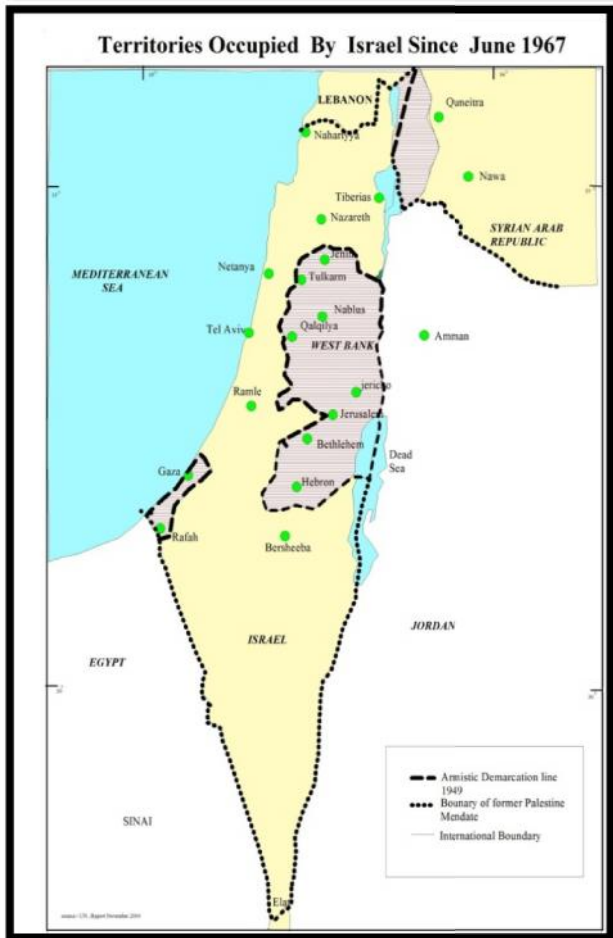
convinced the British to come up with this declaration in support of the World Zionist Organization. However after the 1<sup>st</sup> World War (1914-1918), discontent felt to both Arab and Israelis who felt cheated by British. The British had also promised the Arabs leaders to reward the same land in return of their support against the Ottoman after the World War I, to what they had promised to Jews organization to give in return of their support by the Balfour declaration. As a result, major riots that broke out between the Jews and the Palestinian Arabs in different places at various times. Frequent clashes, loss of life and property were seen frequently happening in this region. The riots of 1929 broke out with a rumor that the Jews are encroaching over Temple Mount compound including Al-Aqsa mosque (sacred place to both Jews and Muslim in Jerusalem). Again in 1936 wide spread rioting took place, which is also known as Arabs revolt against Jews. Hundreds and thousands of Arabs and Jew were killed in the revolt, but in between these two World Wars (1918-1939), large numbers of immigration of Jews to Palestine continued from the different parts of the world. During World War II (1939-45) Jews and Arabs supported the Allied forces in the hope of getting favor after the war. However the mutual discontent, hatred, rioting and frequent clashes between Jews and Arabs continued in the region, the situation got worsened and Britain later found it ungovernable and thus returned the mandate to UN ( United Nation) in 1948. The "Balfour Declaration" was later incorporated into the Sèvres peace treaty with Turkey and the Mandate for Palestine.

**UN Partition**

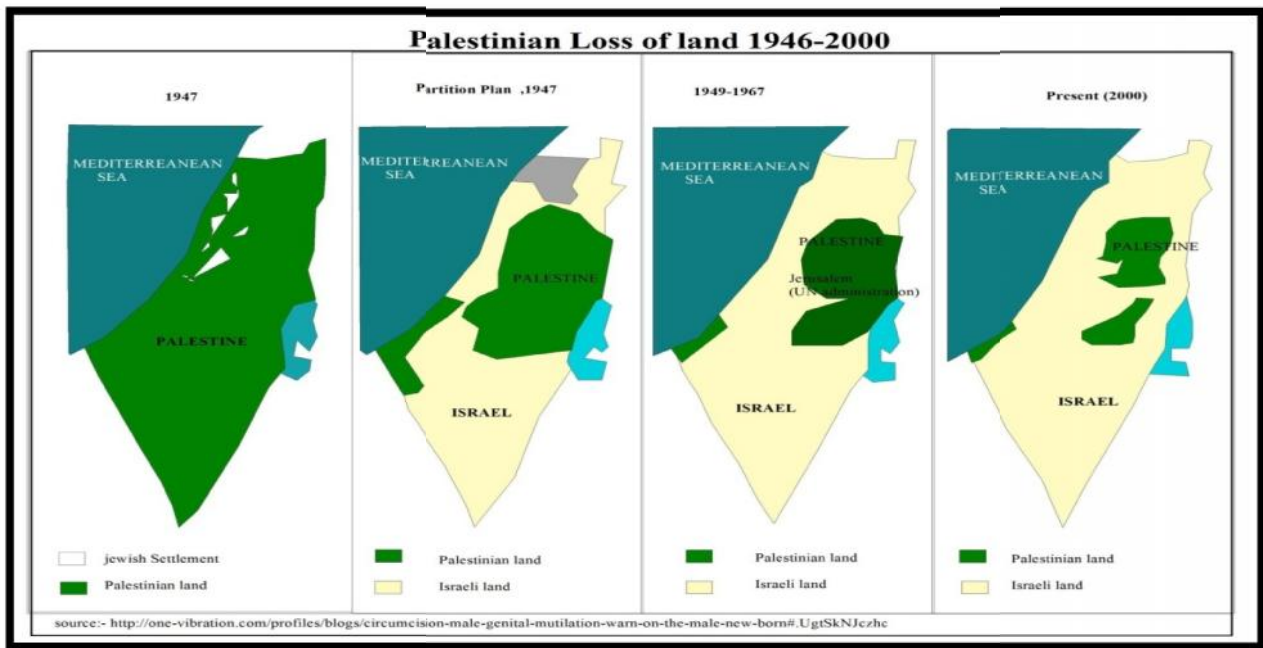
The United Nation Special Commission on Palestine (UNSCOP) recommended a 'Two State Solution' to the problem of Palestine, that the Palestine be divided into a Arab state (Palestine) and Jews State (Israel). The UN adopted this plan and implemented it with UN resolution (General Assembly) 181. The Jews accepted the UN decision but the Arabs rejected it. The State of Israel was created in 1948. However the plan was deeply flawed and the states territories were long, narrow and almost fragmented, giving each side a sense of vulnerability and insecurity

**Clash between Jews and Arabs**

In this region of Middle East before the First World War (1914-1918) there were no major issues in this region except that the colonizers had been colonizing the region. The Jews have been migrating by then to these areas particularly to Jerusalem, their promised biblical holy land. The large scale migration to newly carve out Israel had worried the Arabs. However, with the end of 1<sup>st</sup> World War and British Balfour Declaration of 1917 for a Jews homeland at Jerusalem to Jews and promising the same Promised Land to Arabs in hope of getting favored by them during the war. After getting of Mandates by British over Jerusalem, the Israeli -Palestinian existence issue came into limelight. Situation started getting worse over time, hatred, war with words and riots started taking place in Jerusalem and its surrounding area, underground militants group got formed which attacked each other (Israeli and Palestinian /Arabs). Insecurity amongst the people was very high by the end of Second World War (1945) situation has become much worse in today's Palestine; a big



Source: The Dent Atlas for Middle East – Martin Gilbert  
**Map 2. – UN Partition Plan**



Map 3. Palestine Loss of Land (1946- 2012)

difference has mounted up between Israeli and Palestinian Arabs, both fighting to reclaim the same land. The Israelis claimed, on religious ground, their holy land mentioned in their Old Testament (Jews religious Book) while on the other hand the Palestinian Arabs claimed on the ground that they are the original settlers where their ancestors had lived, own and are attached to the land which is also religiously holy for them.<sup>8</sup> Jews wanted to take away this land from Arabs on religious grounds, and were well supported and sympathized by USA and other European countries after the Hitler Holocaust in Germany during Second World War<sup>9</sup>. Situation in Palestine became worse and vulnerable especially after the Second World War. Both groups (Jews and Arabs) started attacking each other and even targeted to British civilian and officials, in Palestine whom they considered as their common enemy. This soon resulted in return of the Mandate to UN (United Nations) by Britain, where the UN suggested a two nation policy which the Arabs refused but the Israeli welcomed and declared their independence in May 1948. Soon the area enflamed into War, the Arabs jointly fought against Israel but it was well technologically supported with arms and ammunition by USA and other. As a result, the Arabs lost the War and many part of their territory too. Since 1948 after Israeli creation this region of Middle East has always been in news; many wars (1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982 , 2006 etc) have been fought on the Palestinian backyard making the region more volatile and

dangerous but till today no permanent peace policy has been accepted. Today the situation is very vulnerable in the Palestinian area where the Palestinian sovereignty, State, right to return and refugee problem etc, are still unsolved. Development is hampered in the region because of the ongoing conflict, insecurity; loss of life and property and in the absence of a proper peace plan, the rift, between the Arabs and the Israelis is getting broader and deeper day by day. A different warfare of suicide bombing, organized terrorist activity and growing militancy bringing threat not only to Middle East, but a globally which somehow has its root linked with this Palestinians crisis of Middle East. Beside the Palestinian cause, there are conflicts for regional hegemony, sectarian conflict, Border dispute and many more issues of conflict in the region. There were two major Gulf Wars, (1991 & 2003) where USA with its allies fought against Iraq and dropped hundreds of Cluster Bombs and killed thousands of civilians. There is also a continuous conflict of Israel with the Palestinian militant and underground wing especially Hamas in the Gaza and West Bank area in Israel, where in the name of security it has killed thousands of Palestinian by using Tanks, Sniper, Aerial Bombardment etc and occupied their farm lands, make them refugee and imprisoned them as in response to the Hamas<sup>10</sup>. While on the Lebanese front there is always an exchange of artillery and rockets from the Hezbollah<sup>11</sup> which has a strong control of southern Lebanon, another victim of Israeli torture. Majority of them are the Palestinian refugees who are fighting for their injustice with Israeli Defense forces making

<sup>8</sup> Jerusalem is important in Islam because of its association with Prophets before Muhammad, and also of the tradition that Muhammad was miraculously taken there from Mecca by night, above the huge rock in Jerusalem which is regarded as the very place from which Muhammad's ascension began, the Dome of the Rock was built. This is one of the earliest and most beautiful buildings of Islam, first constructed around 690 on the orders of the caliph Abd al-Malik.

<sup>9</sup> Jews Holocaust - It's said that Hitler killed almost million of Jews in Germany in its Gas Chamber by cyanide gas during the Second World War to whom he considered as traitors of War. This sympathizes the whole world for Jews, especially by Britain and USA who supported them for settling in Palestine, their reclaimed holy land which was opposed by Palestinian Arabs who don't wanted them (Jews) on their own cost.

<sup>10</sup> Hamas, in full, Harakat al-mugawama al-islamiya (Arabic, Islamic Resistance Movement), Palestinian Islamic insurrectionary group dedicated to expelling Israel from Palestine through armed struggle. Founded in 1988 with Shaykh Ahmad Yasin as leader. It arose through the revolutionary impetus generated by the Palestinian intifada, which began in late 1987, and established itself as one of the more extreme elements in the uprising.

<sup>11</sup> Hezbollah (Party of God) a Shiite militia is an Iranian-backed force, controls parts of the south of the Lebanon. These guerrillas, who had been launching rocket attacks against northern Israel from southern Lebanon against Israeli torture to their peoples.



continuous threats in the region. There has been border conflict within Middle Eastern countries. The region is being alleged to possess chemical weapon, weapon of mass destruction. Iraq, Libya, Syria is best example who are being alleged to possess these weapons and as result major sanction was being imposed at various span of time hitting their economy and livelihood by US, EU and their allies. This has also resulted into war, military action and foreign intervention in these matters within these countries. This all has resulted in a major loss to life and property. This had hampered the development process and has increased the grievances, hatred amongst the people especially between Arabs and Israeli (along with their allies) and created a continuous threat and insecurity in this region of Middle East. There is also an indirect conflict of the super powers of the world to control this area of Middle East because of its rich and abundant Oil and Natural Gas reserves, almost two-third (66%) of the world oil reserve is in this region, a very big market for their finished products and also of its optimal strategic location in the world, which is almost centrally located in the present world, from where controlling, watching and reaching to other parts of the world is much easier and optimally suitable.

It seems that an arms race is going on in this region, besides external conflict, internal conflicts in form of civil war and uprisings are also very much in this region (especially in countries of Iraq, Libya, Syria, Algeria, Iran, Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Iraq, etc mainly between Islamic and Modernist and between Shias and Sunnis). This is because of growing Islamism and their greater involvement in country politics and also because of the growing sectarian divide strategy applied and promoted by western countries to these region. The insecurity has further increased with the greed of the west for rich oil resources and growing competence for the dominance and control of world market within the Middle Eastern countries. Middle East is also a major water scarce region and this has made water to become a highly prized commodity and a potential source of armed conflict within it. Its diverse religions of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and indifference among them add a further source of conflict (as Israel-Palestine conflict). Many resolution and document on Israel-Palestine were undertaken (UN General Assembly resolution 1948, Camp David resolution in 1978, Madrid Peace Plan 1991, Road Map 2003 etc). Even OPEC (organization of petroleum exporting countries), GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) OIC (Organization of Islamic Countries) besides the UN, the US and other major world powers and organizational and institutional body is struggle to maintain regional security in this region of Middle East. There are number of issues which are threatening to the security of this region, this somehow also threatens the world security in the form of global terrorism and in many cases the terrorists justify their acts in response to the Middle East crisis and Israeli torture along with its allies especially USA, France and Britain.

### **Current Situation**

Since the second Intifada, no major uprising has been there in Palestine. Even after the Palestinian self rule (Interim Declaration 1995) being progressively introduced and agreed by Israel in 1995-96. But the war of words and ambush has continued, specially by the Hamas, Hezbollah, Fatah and many more groups from the Palestinian side which the Israeli counter as militant acts. In between, many peace policies were initiated.

A few were partly successful. But till date hardly any peace has prevailed in this land. The deep rooted hatred of Palestinians against Israel has continued and it is increasing day by day. No country today ready to fight against Israel for the cause of Palestine, with continuous stealing of the land in the name of security by Israel, mounting population and poverty of Palestinians. Continued violation of Human right, torture, detention, suicide bombing and military force by the Israeli has made the Palestinians very weak, and dependent. Blockade, settlement building and discriminatory home demolitions policies, restriction in freedom of movement, arbitrary detention and detention of Children etc are commonly seen in Palestine by Israeli forces. Israeli forces continued to impose a "no-go" zone on lands within 500 meters inside Gaza from the armistice line with Israel by regularly firing on any Gazan in the vicinity; areas up to 1.5 kilometers from the Israeli perimeter fence were considered "high-risk" due to shootings by Israeli forces. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) use aerial and artillery attacks in Gaza, including in response to rocket attacks on population centers in Israel by Palestinian armed groups and killing Palestinian civilians in the "no-go" zone inside Gaza's northern and eastern borders.

Today they live a very suppressive life, where all the freedom is under the control of Israelis, Israel forces today control all the external boundary of Palestine even after giving some autonomy to Gaza, West Bank and Palestinian council and they are not ready to compromise this for any reason in the name of their security. Growing hatred between Jews and Arabs and among their sympathizers' worldwide is going to be a big challenge to global peace in this era of digital warfare and Cyber space. Palestinian today live in a cage like condition, where their movement and freedom is controlled by his master that is Israel, with frequent check points everywhere, snipers at night, bypass road for Palestinian, and restriction and passes for entry into Jewish locality all this make the movement controlled. Frequent use of tanks, machine guns, mines, bombs, helicopters and brutal tactics by Israel to control any Palestinian uprising make the situation volatile. Restriction on the use of many basic necessities, treating those second or low class citizen and using derogatory terms, indifferent policy make the situation of Palestinian worse which somehow results in growing militancy and terrorism. In the era of computer, nuclear weapons and global terrorism it's not good sign for Israel or any of his allies. So there is an urgent need for peace in Palestine and so also peace in Middle East and in the rest of the world.

There is a clash for existence for both the Jews and Palestinian. Jews reclaiming this territory on religious ground which is sacred for them as stated in their religious book and have been staying here since more than 100 years before independence of Israel in 1948. Excessive migration that started after the establishment of World Zionist Organisation in 1897 by Theodar Herzl further supported their demand and argument. They have been promoted and supported in earlier days by western countries mainly by US, UK, France, USSR etc. However after the Jews Holocaust during World War II, where Hitler killed almost million of Jews in Germany in its Gas Chamber by cyanide gas whom he considered as traitors of War. This holocaust sympathizes almost the whole world for Jews, especially by Britain and USA. They supported them for

settling in Palestine even after the Arabs opposition. Now after staying here for so long and in absence of any other alternatives for settlement. The Jews with growing strength, need, population, and religious sentiment etc, the Israelis are ready to take this fight against the Palestinian and Arabs to any level for their existence in this sacred land.

On the other hand, the Arabs Palestinian who has become victim of their circumstances. Being poor, weak and majority of the Palestinian have lost everything from dignity to well being have no other alternative except to fight till there end with whatever strength they have for their existence in this their ancestral land. They are the original settlers and have been staying here in peace and harmony. The Jews were the intruders for them in their land. To them the Jews got license to loot, kill and torture the poor and weak Palestinian because the West feel Injustice has been done to Jews in Germany ignoring the cost of regular injustice that is being done to fellow Palestinian by Israeli forces (IDF). Palestinian family is being killed, generation is being wiped off, their land is being taken off by Israeli forces in name of security and national policy, their life has become miserable with regular torture and detention,, they are being deprived from basic need, there movement is restricted, they are forced to flee from their home and become refugee by Israeli forces for their safety. Almost they lost everything today for no reason and to retain their lost glory, freedom from excessive clutches of Israeli, Protecting their family and meeting their demands altogether we can say they are fighting for their survival and existence and they will keep doing the same till their end. So they both have no alternatives and have logical reasons for this fight for their existence as result there is a regular counter attack to each other with varying intensity and severity. International community need to understand the severity of the issues and should take active participation in bringing peace and no best alternative than a two nation theory given by United Nation in 1948 is there for achieving permanent peace between Israel and Palestinian. Today the Israel action need to be checked and controlled toward Palestinian and Palestinian voices and issue need to be addressed, heard and resolved then only regional harmony, peace and security can be achieved in this region of Middle East.

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