**The Israel-Palestine War 2023**

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The war that has flared up between the Hamas political leaders in the Palestinian Gaza Strip and Israel has led to a terrible political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis. It is also a military and security crisis. Israel has occupied the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights since 1967. When Hamas came to power in 2006, having won the elections, Israel’s contact and cooperation with Gaza became very limited. Yet, Israel has not been able to control developments in the area through its occupation. Hamas’ terrible terrorist attack on Israel on the seventh of October could only happen because the occupiers had failed. The attack killed over 1400 people, including 260 in a massacre while attending a music festival. Over 200 Israelis and other nationals were taken as hostages. More attacks and retaliation have taken place, and more people have been killed on both sides.
Israel has told people in the northern part of the tiny and overcrowded Gaza Strip, where Gaza City is situated, to move south in the forty-five-kilometre-long territory, with a width of only five to twelve kilometres, before it begins its massive ground attacks. The United Nations and humanitarian aid organisations have said it is impossible for over one million people, almost half of Gaza’s total population, to evacuate and move in a few days, including people in hospitals, old people, children, and so on. Thus far, Israel has not begun its full operation, but it is likely that it will, knowing how brutal it can be, it continues with targeted attacks and has blocked supplies of electricity, petrol, water, food, and even medicines and other necessities. Shops in Gaza will run out of food in a matter of days. This week, a terrible explosion at a hospital in Gaza killed more than five hundred people, but Israel denies having been behind it, although not believed by anybody.
The Palestinian Authority (PA), based on the West Bank in Israel, a landlocked enclave to the northeast of the Gaza Strip, does not cooperate with the leaders of the Gaza Strip. The moderate President Mahmoud Abbas (87) is heading the PA. No full elections have taken place since 2006. The living conditions for the Palestinians on the West Bank are better than in the Gaza Strip, but it is also not a sustainable and lasting land for the Palestinians, indeed not because Israel continues increasing its settlements there, but because of limited livelihoods and general conditions.
The current crisis and war between Gaza and Israel have occurred because of the long Israeli occupation of Gaza, including a sea and land blockade, making living conditions and prospects for people in Gaza very grim and deeply unhappy. The Palestinians in Gaza rely to a major extent on international aid, and on supplies through the illegal underground tunnels to Egypt in the south. The tunnels were used for food, medicines, and other supplies, including weapons and ammunition, which made the current attack on Israel possible. It was a terrorist attack, but it was provoked and built up due to the long Israeli occupation.
Historically, when Israel was created in 1948, an independent Palestinian state should also have been created. But that was just after WWII and the holocaust when six million Jews had been killed, and therefore the UK, USA, and the other winners of the war felt guilty about the terrible Nazi record, and they wanted the Jews to have their own homeland.
However, the area where Israel was set up is as much a homeland of Palestinians as of Jews, some would say more so. There is no prospect of peace in the area unless an overdue two-state solution is implemented. Such a solution was proposed in the famous Oslo Peace Accords of 1993, but not followed and hammered out in detail afterwards, but further meetings were held in the coming years.
In many ways, the focus on talks and normalisation of relations between Israel and the Arab countries took away attention to the Israel-Palestine situation, and it contributed to the current crisis and war – but we should all have seen it was bound to come. Even after the current crisis, the USA gives more sympathy and support to Israel than Gaza and Palestine in general. But the crisis is given focus by the USA, with the Secretary of State Antony Blinken having travelled in the region. Even US President Joe Biden came to its close ally Israel, focusing on closed-door talks with Israel’s PM Benjamin Netanyahu and others on humanitarian aid, and avoiding escalation and direct involvement of other states in the region in the war, and proxies.
Israel is important to the USA, because there are as many Jews in USA as in Israel, and they are important voters in elections there, and they play a key role in business, media, and more. Also, many Christian voters in USA consider Israel special. There is less American and international support for the Palestinians, but many people show support and solidarity for the Palestinians, especially people on the left.
Let me end my article by stating the prolonged crisis for the Palestinian people, the Israelis and all the people in the Middle East. Unless a two-state solution is implemented, there will be no peace for the two peoples and the region. The current war can escalate and spread to involve other countries in the region directly. It is indeed a shortcoming of the international community that the Israel-Palestine situation has not found a peaceful solution. It is 75 years since the Israeli state was created, alas ignoring the rightful needs of the Palestinian people. Again, a two-state solution is the only way towards lasting peace.