**Palestinian suffering**

[Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/zafar-iqbal-yousafzai/%22%20%5Co%20%22More%20Articles%20by%20Zafar%20Iqbal%20Yousafzai)

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The ceasefire between Hamas and Israel brokered by Egypt, although violated within a few hours, holds so far. Indeed, the situation is returning to ‘normal’. However, the conflict has cost both the parties dear. More than 217 Palestinians, including 63 children and 38 women, have been martyred and 1400 wounded. The Israeli side lost 12 people, including two children.

Earlier, on May 7, the UN’s human rights office (OHCHR) spokesperson, Rupert Colville called Israeli forces’ eviction illegal and warned it could lead to full-scale war. Besides, “We call on Israel to immediately call off all forced evictions,” he added. For a long time, a land dispute case before the court filed by illegal Israeli settlers against Palestinians. Colville further added, “Israel cannot impose its own set of laws in occupied territory, including East Jerusalem.” Earlier this year, an Israeli court gave its verdict in favour of Israeli settlers that they had purchased the land when the area was under British control, before the Second World War, and then lost all property. Ironically, Israeli law gives them the right to prove pre-1948 property deeds yet does not extend the same right to Palestinians.

The question is: who will help settle the Palestine issue and stop Israeli brutality and unlawful acts? The United Nations is nothing but a tool in the hands of five powerful states. Whenever there is any resolution in favour of Palestinians in the UN Security Council, it is vetoed by the US. Washington is providing Israel with around $3 billion annually besides its strategic, political, technical, and technological support. The Israeli air defence system, ‘Iron Dom’ is made with US financial assistance. US President Joe Biden merely called on Israel and Hamas to stop the violence. As if Hamas initiated the violence. Washington calls itself a champion of human rights and democracy, however, when it comes to conflicts in Kashmir and Palestine, it turns a blind eye to ground realities. Recently, a group of artists, writers, and human rights activists led by Arundhati Roy and Nayantara Sahagal strongly condemned the illegal snatching of land by Israel in Palestine and termed Hamas rocket attacks as the legitimate right to self-defence. A balanced approach is needed in the Palestine-Israel conflict to pave the way for resolution or, at the very least, ease the suffering of the Palestinian people.

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Pakistan was active in highlighting the Palestinian issue on an international level and stressed ending the Israeli brutalities in Gaza and West Bank. Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi visited Turkey and then New York to mobilise the international community to push for an end to Israeli aggression against the Palestinians. Mr Qureshi strongly raised a voice at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for the rights of the Palestinians. Pakistan efforts yielded the desired results when Israel announced ceasefire the night following the UN General Assembly meeting in New York. Elsewhere, Iran openly supported Hamas and their struggle against Israeli atrocities. Tehran threw its support behind Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Earlier, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif on talked on the phone with Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyah as well as Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s Ziyad Al Nakhalah. Zarif “reiterated Iran’s all-out support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause”.

From time to time, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict resurfaces and take a number of precious lives on both sides. It’s the responsibility of the great powers to help settle this issue rather than taking sides. In addition, the Middle East faces competing threats to its stability. At the very least, the Muslim world must raise its voice in support of Palestinians. This would discourage future Israeli aggression and help push the UNSC, the EU and the international community to work for permanent resolution of the Palestinian conflict.

*The author is Senior Research Associate at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad and author of the forthcoming book “The Troubled Triangle: US-Pakistan Relations under the Taliban’s Shadow” (Routledge). He tweets @yousafzaiZafar5*