

PAKISTAN AFFAIRS

Q. CURRENT SITUATION OF

PALESTINE AND THE ROLE OF

ARAB COUNTRIES

A. INTRODUCTION:-

The Palestine Israel conflict a modern phenomenon that can be dated back to the end of 19th century. Even though the two groups have different religions, religious difference is not the primary cause of this strife. The greed of occupying more and more land for geopolitical reasons under the pretense of religion is what Israel has been doing since seven long decades. The current situation of the Palestine-Israel conflict raises concerns of the world falling into another war. Here, the role of the neighbouring countries of Palestine are going to play an important role in saving or losing Palestine.

BACKGROUND:

Israel was recognized by many Muslim states. The first one to do so was Egypt in 1979. This was followed by Jordan in 1994. In Sep 2020, UAE also signed the Abraham Accords and tied diplomatic relations with Israel. After that, other middle Eastern countries, such as Bahrain, Oman and Morocco recognized Israel and tied diplomatic ties with it.

Saudi Arabia was in the middle of negotiations and peace talks with Israel; US playing the role of a broker. The original plan was to normalize relations with Israel in exchange for a US defence pact and civilian nuclear programme. However, this has come to a halt for now.

CURRENT SITUATION OF PALESTINE:

→ EVENTS OF OCTOBER 7, 2023:

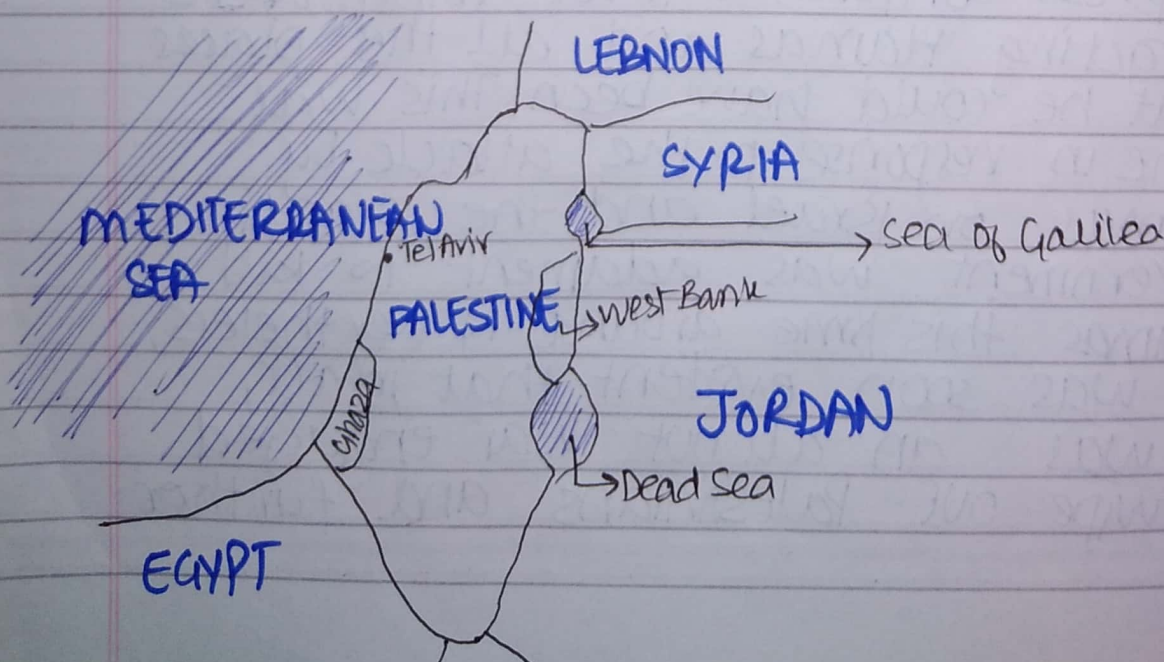
On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched an attack of 1000 missiles into Israel. This attack took Israel, as well as the entire world, by surprise. Not only was Israel unable to intercept these missiles within Israeli territory, but they also had no plan about how to go forward in such a situation. However, a full fledge war broke out the following day when Israel showered the city of Gaza with missiles. Without taking any pauses, the city of Gaza was bombed and civilians targeted all around.

The Israeli Foreign Minister said in a press conference that they were targeting Hamas and all the places that he could name. This was done in response to the attack by Hamas on Israel and the Israeli government was adamant to kill Hamas this time around. Nevertheless, it was soon evident that in fact, it was an all out war engaged to wipe out Palestinians and further

occupying the land. Soon after Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said: 'We are at war, there is no packing off now.'

Backed by the United States, Israel has, since then, been at war with Palestine. He has managed to kill more than 8000 Palestinians in response to the 1400 Israelis that were killed in the initial attack by Hamas. An international chaos has broke out, people have been divided into two - Pro-Israeli and Pro-Palestinian and worldwide protests against this genocide have been launched.

ROLE OF ARAB NEIGHBOURS :-



(i) ROLE OF EGYPT:-

Egypt is the only country to share immediate border with Gaza - the area where the war is currently taking place. The Egyptian President said: "This is the cause of all causes and the cause of all Arabs." Not only did Egypt condemn this brutal war taking place in Gaza but also made several public statements against Israeli government. The Egyptian President also advised the Palestinians to not leave and evacuate their land but fight for it.

Egypt was one of the first states to send any form of aid to Gaza. The border between the two called **Rafah Opening** was also bombed as Egypt tried to enter Palestine with aid. After several days of wait the humanitarian aid was allowed into the city. Around 20 trucks of aid entered Gaza on 21st Oct '23. The trucks carried medicines and food supplies. With this, Egypt also warned the Palestinians that the Rafah opening would only be used to deliver aid and not allow any refugees to enter Egypt at any cost.

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(ii) ROLE OF JORDAN:

Jordan is located next to the Israeli-occupied West Bank. It too, has warned against unjust expulsion of Palestinians from their land. This reflects the deep fear of mass displacement of Palestinians amidst the war. In an emergency meeting of the Arab League, Jordan's Foreign Minister stated 'All Arab states have agreed to confront any attempt that would be made to displace the Palestinians from their homeland.'

(iii) ROLE OF SYRIA:

Syria has also been in a long-term fight with Israel. A war and conflict of more than fifty years is a shared history among the two countries. Syria and Israel exchanged shelling on 10th Oct '2023. This happened when Syria attacked the Northern Israel in an attempt to show solidarity with Palestine. Israel responded with artillery strikes. Whenever Syria attacks, it seldom has an effect, as it is a small state and weakened due to constant state of conflict.

(iv) ROLE OF LEBNON:

Lebnon is located in the north of the Now-Israel. Among its neighbours, Palestine is relying on Lebnon the most. This is because of the Lebanese freedom fighter group **Hezbollah**. There is a growing fear in Lebnon that if Hezbollah joined the war, the situation would spiral out of control. Lebnon's **Prime Minister** warned that chaos would engulf the region if his country entered the Israel-Hamas war.

The locals of Lebnon are not in the favour of the state entering into war and an online petition already has more than 8000 signatures against entering the war already. The **caretaker Prime Minister** said '(The) Lebanese have had enough of wars.' The government wants to maintain the security of the state and so is the wish of the Lebanese people.

→ Hezbollah:

where the government is avoiding any sort of active role in the war, Hasan Nasrullah, the head of Hezbollah has announced **Jihad** against the Israeli tyrants. Hasan Nasrullah

addressed the people on 29th October '23, after the Friday prayers and gave a full speech in its the favour of the Palestine. Hezbollah has claimed that they have already lost 50 freedom fighters up to now. He claimed that 'You are wondering when we will go to war. We entered on 8th October.'

He stated that Hezbollah would not back down in playing its role in the war. He said that a full fledged war is possible. He ~~stated~~ called onto other Muslim States and said 'Arab and other Muslim countries need to cut off oil and gas to Israel.' He is making constant efforts in support of the people of Gaza and is not afraid to be involved in a war.

CONCLUSION:

Even though the neighbouring countries are trying their best to play a role that would be positive and impactful for Palestine, there is still a lot lacking. The absence of unity among the neighbouring states is the major hindrance towards achieving success against Israel as of now. If all the Arab countries join hands, the massacre of

of Palestinians can be avoided.

Everyday hundreds and thousands of lives are being lost and even though a ceasefire is demanded, no such effort is in any avail.