

Date: _____

Day: _____

Given the protected nature of the dispute, is there any chance of durable peace between Israel and Palestine.

On October 7, 2023, the Palestinian military group Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel. Consequently, at least 1400 Jews were killed by gunmen infiltrating the Gaza Strip as well as air strikes. 6100 Palestinians have been massacred in retaliation by the Israeli military followed by a complete blockade on the territory, denying food, fuel and other essentials.

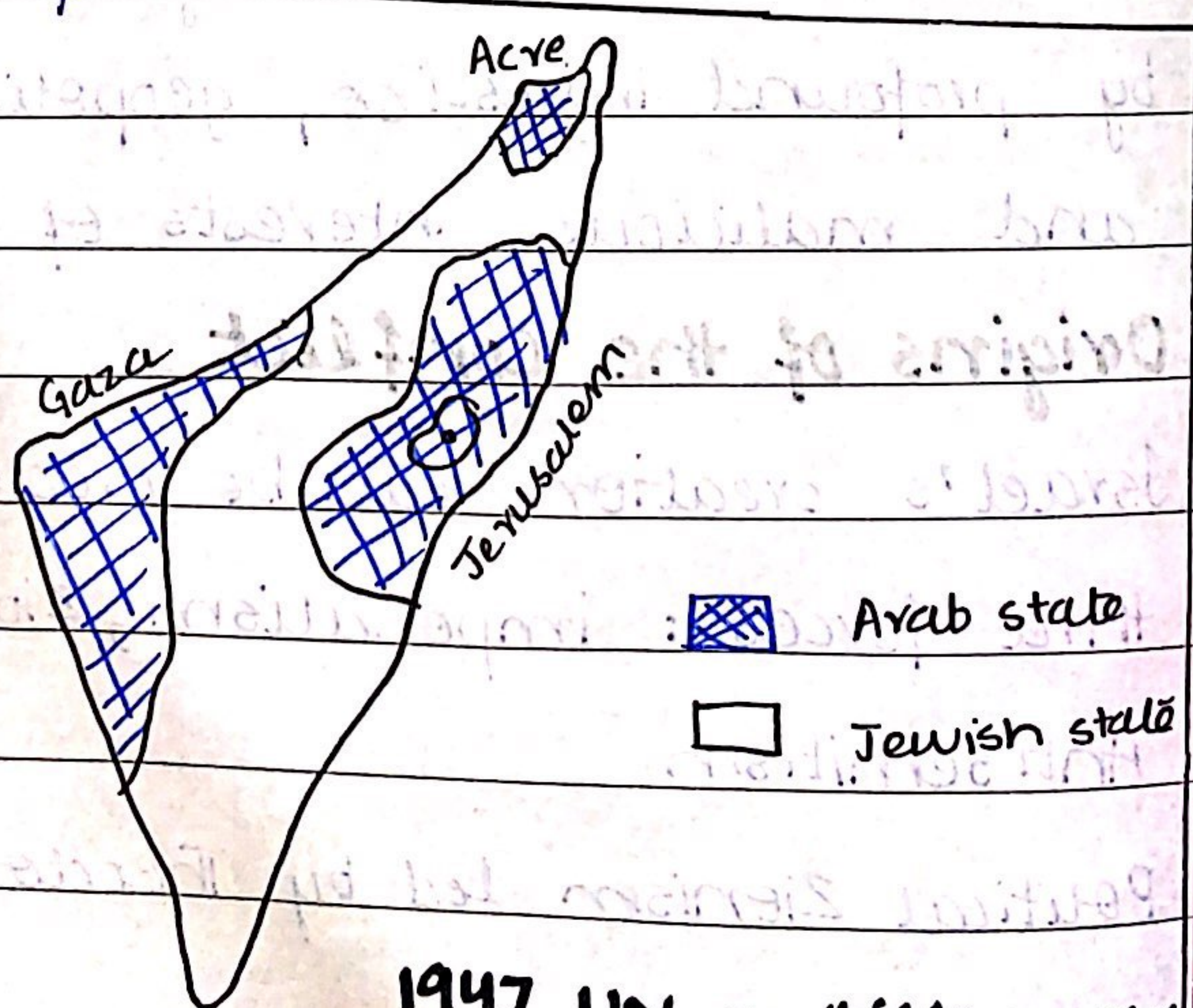
However, the clash between Israel-Palestine is not a recent development. Its origins are rooted in a century long era marred by profound injustice, geopolitical manipulation and malicious interests of western powers.

Origins of the Conflict

Israel's creation can be credited to three forces: imperialism, Zionism and Anti-Semitism.

Political Zionism led by Theodor Herzl

gained prominence in the early 20th century. Simultaneously, the demand for a Jewish homeland was taken up by the British as evident in **Balfour declaration 1917**. Palestine was already under control by the British as **British mandate Palestine** as ascribed by **Sykes Picot agreement**. Jewish influx into Palestine was fueled by European anti-semitism that culminated into a tragic Holocaust. Arabs foresaw a threat to their homeland and social unrest emerged in the region. Britain remained a silent spectator and finally entrusted the partition of Palestine to the United Nations in 1947. The UN voted to split the land into two countries



1947 UN partition plan

As a result, Israel was given a 51% share in land despite being only 32% of the total population. Arabs were given 48% land and Jerusalem was declared an independent territory. Israel declared independence in 1948.

History of Wars

Arabs expressed severe disapproval of a foreign organization handing their land over to "outsiders". Resultantly, a series of wars were fought over the years.

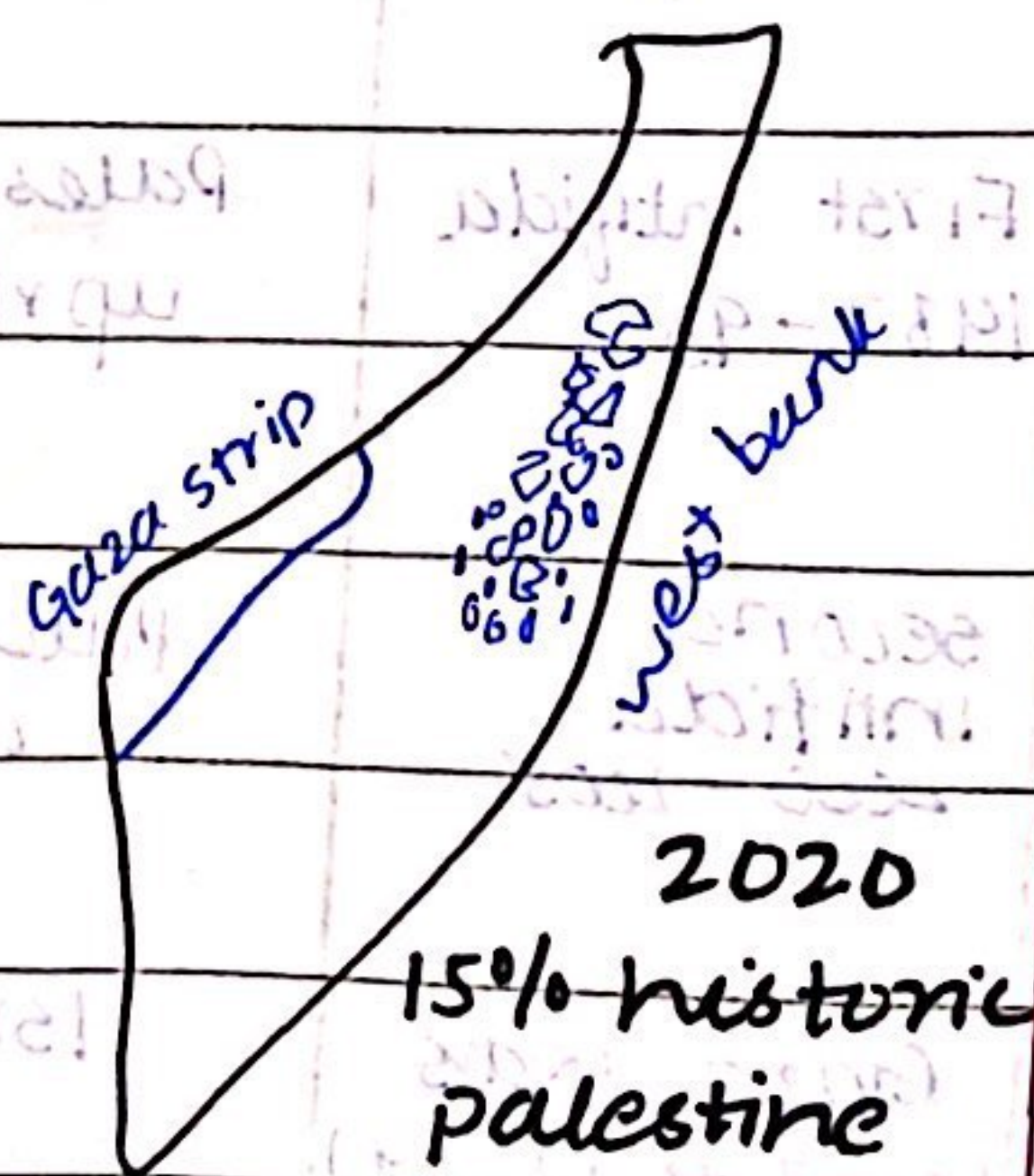
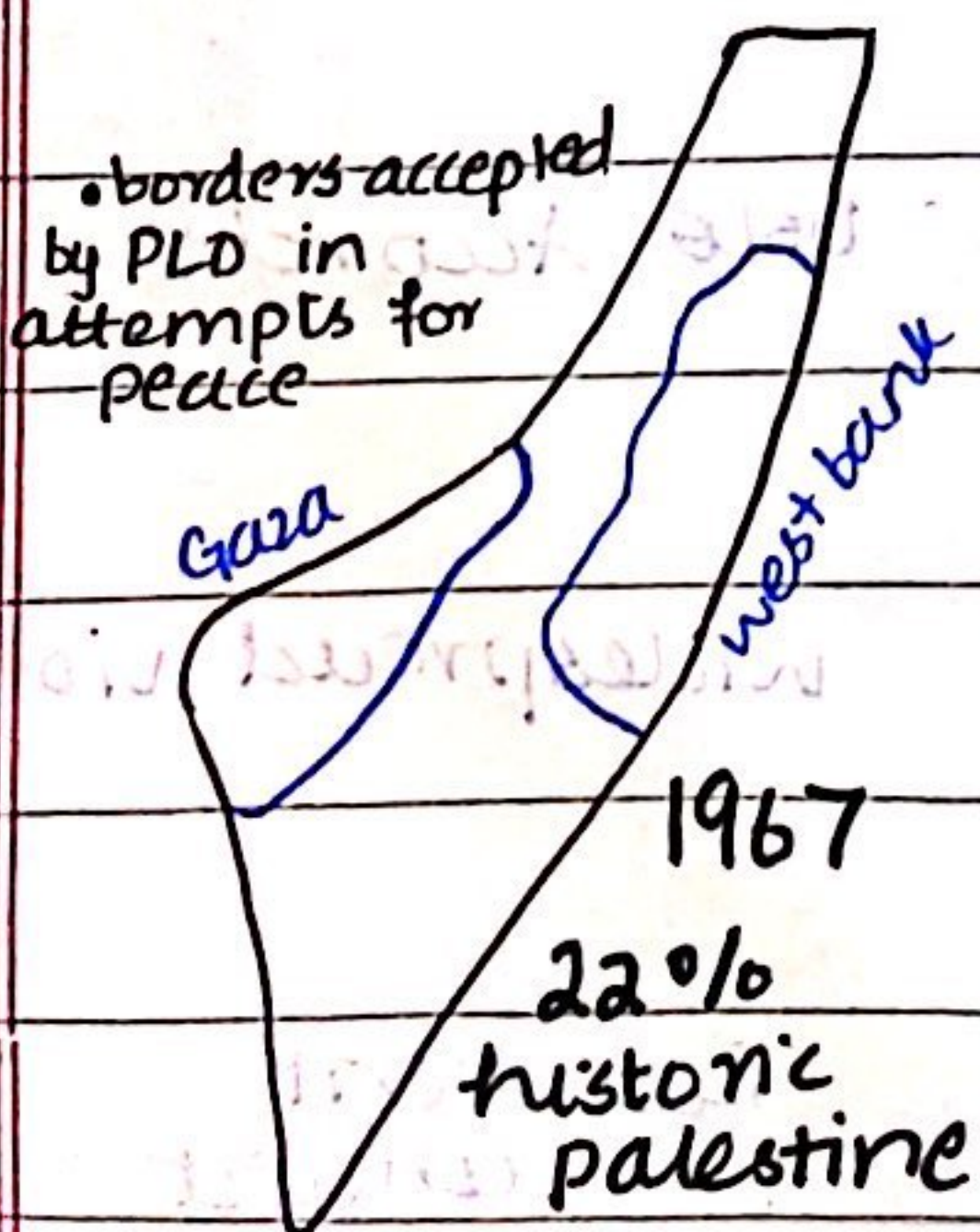
| War | Events | Outcome |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 1948 Arab Israel War | Israel vs Arab states | Israel's territorial gains: "Al Nakba" |
| 2 Six day war 1967 | Israel vs Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq | Israel's gained Sinai peninsula, West bank, Gaza, Golan Heights, East Jerusalem. |
| 3 Yom Kippur war 1973 | Israel vs Egypt and Syria | Limited territorial gains |
| 4 First Intifida 1987-93 | Palestinian uprising | Oslo Accords |
| 5 Second Intifida 2000-2005 | Palestinian uprising | widespread violence |
| 6 Gaza wars (2008-9, 12, 14) | Israel vs Hamas | Recurrent conflict |

Owing to the protected nature of the conflict and the widespread potential unrest hovers in this region, a multitude of agreements have been signed.

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

| Agreement | Outcome |
|---------------------------|--|
| Camp David Accords 1978 | Israel withdrawal from Sinai Peninsula |
| Oslo Accords 1993 | Limited Palestinian self governance in Gaza and west bank by Palestine Liberation Organization |
| Camp David Summit 2000 | Failed peace negotiation |
| Road Map for Peace 2003 | 2 state solution by US, UN, EU and Russia. Not implemented |
| Annapolis conference 2007 | Limited progress in negotiations |
| Gaza ceasefires | Temporary peace initiatives to reduce escalation between Gaza and Israel |

As a result of constant war and numerous agreements, the territorial boundaries of Palestine have changed considerably.



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In order to restore peace in the region, it is important to understand the viewpoints of Israelis and Palestinians, as well as the potential role of Global and regional players

Israeli Demands

Benjamin Netanyahu while explaining the shortest history of Israel opined that Jews have been native to Palestine for 3500 years.

The Arabs were colonialists who drove out the Jews from their deserving land. The

Jews were scattered and suffered greatly but never gave up on their land that

is Israel. Palestinians can co-exist with them but can not proclaim the land as Arab. It is ^{the} Jewish homeland.

Netanyahu's speech aptly summarizes the entire philosophy of Zionism and Israeli

agenda. ^{The} Jews demand complete sovereignty

over Jerusalem, as well as the prohibition of any Palestinian refugees' ^{return in their} land.

Palestinian Viewpoint

- Palestine's primary demand is the withdrawal of Israel from pre-1967

borders and establish independent Palestinian territory in West Bank and Gaza.

- Another important demand is to halt Israeli settlement in the West Bank and Palestinian territory.
- East Jerusalem should be the capital of Palestine.
- Palestinian refugees should be able to return to their homes.

Restoring peace in the region: Global and regional players

To ensure peace in this region, the role of many international and regional parties is vital.

Role of the US: The US has been an important mediator throughout the history of

- conflict. However, its role in escalating unrest by vetoing UN Security Council decisions has been severely criticised

by OIC.

currently, the US needs to carefully navigate through this dilemma as

it has potential to spread across the region into Lebanon and Iraq.

Moreover, its relations with Saudi Arabia are becoming strained ever since Muhammad bin Salman announced a 1 million barrel reduction in oil supply for the US. Hence, it needs to balance its policy towards Arab states with that of Israel.

The US carefully needs to reconsider its generous funding for Israel. Recently, Biden administration announced a 100 billion dollar package for Israel and Ukraine. International media has equated Biden's policy to war mongering in the region.

The role of the United Nations needs to be seriously questioned in this regard.

It has consistently failed to enforce international borders ascribed in 1967 by Palestinian liberation organization and Israel.

Even in the current impasse between Hamas and Israel, it has failed to denounce usage of white phosphorus on Palestinian civilians.

The UN can take the following steps to ensure peace.

The road map for peace initiative was

a deal brokered by US, UN, EU and Russia

in 2003. The UN should implement

the prescribed schedule for Palestinian

state.

- It should take a firm stand against illegal Israeli settlement in the Palestinian region. In 2011, all UN security bodies called Israeli settler violence a "huge disruption" to the overall peace process.

- The "two nation" solution, which has been emphasized since 1967 should be made a basis to ensure withdrawal of Israeli army and settlements from Palestinian land.

It needs to vehemently condemn Israel and call out its war crimes against innocent civilians. Recently, Netanyahu declared killing of Palestinians a divine prophecy and has unleashed all kinds of horror against civilians. Israel is clearly above the international law.

and the UN needs to step up.

- The "Law of return" of Israel stands

as ~~contradictory~~ to UN resolution 194 for return of refugees safely to their homeland. Israel discriminates against Palestinian return to their homeland. The UN needs to consider this matter to expedite peace process in the region.

Role of the Arab World

Arab countries have been trying to de-escalate tension in the region half-heartedly. While the populations support the Palestinian cause, the governments are deeply intertwined with the US dollar and hence bow down to its designs.

Notable actions by Arab world are

- The Arab Peace initiative²⁰⁰² in Beirut summit called for a "final solution" - the normalisation of relations and withdrawal of armies. It was accepted in Riyadh summit but could not materialise.
- Recently, the US was brokering a historic deal between KSA and Israel to normalise relations and further economic cooperation.

• KSA needs to actively engage in the peace process to realise its Vision 2030.

The security of the region is an important facet for it to diversify its economy.

• Qatar condemned Israel while UAE and Bahrain issued statements against Hamas. This underscores the divided stance of Muslim countries on the issue of Palestine. The OIC has done little with regards to this regional conflict.

The least it can do is unify the stance of Muslim countries with regards to Palestine.

• Thorough investigation needs to be undertaken with regards to Iran's role in fueling regional tensions by funding Hezbollah and potentially Hamas.

A final word for Israel-Palestine.

The "two-nation" formula which has been repeatedly emphasized needs to be implemented. The extreme

Date: _____

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far right, hard liner Israeli government needs to cooperate with the UN and Arab world to iron out a viable solution in this regard. The Biden administration should take a prudent stand in this regard.

It is important to acknowledge that the collapse of Hamas does not guarantee a peaceful region. In reality, the mushrooming of multiple hard liner terrorist organizations is a grave concern for both global and regional security.