

# Economic Interests in muzzling Muslim Support for Palestine----

## Outline:

- ① Introduction.
- ② History of Israel-Hamas conflict.
- ③ Importance of Muslim's Support for Palestine.
- ④ Early Muslim's Support and latter shift.
- ⑤ Economic Interests are Pivotal for both Muslim's and key global players in the ME including (i) United States:
  - a) Military aid to Israel.
  - b) Strategic alliances with Israel in the ME.
  - c) Economic interests in the region (oil, trade)
- (ii) Saudi Arabia:
  - a) Oil exports and economic ties with US.
  - b) Investments in US Economy.
  - c) Fear of Iranian influence in the region.
- (iii) Israel:
  - a) Economic benefits from occupation (trade & resources)
  - b) Military aid from US
  - c) Strategic location for trade and investments.
- ⑥ Ways in which economic interests muzzle Muslim's support for Palestine.

- (a) Economic interests override over ideological allegiance (KSA).
- (b) Economic aid from US and other western countries (Egypt)
- (c) Economic normalization and increased trade with Israel (UAE).
- (d) Strong investments and trade ties with Israel (Turkey).
- (e) Dependence on Israel for resource and energy.
- (f) Fear of economic Sanctions (Pak)
- (g) Lobbying and influence of Pro-Israel groups: (AIMAC) (ZOA)
- (h) Economic interest in infrastructure projects in Israel: (Water).

## ⑦ Economic Interests have led to various consequences and actions:

- (a) Muzzling muslim support for Palestine.
- (b) Suppression of criticism of Israel.
- (c) Support for authoritarian regimes.
- (d) Fueling sectarianism.
- (e) Limiting freedom of speech:

## ⑧ way forwards to overcome the influence of economic interests.

- (a) Break free from economic Shackle through BDS (Boycott, Divest, Sanctions)
- (b) Diversify trade relations with Palestine.
- (c) Prioritize human-rights, justice and

equity in decision making -

d) Global Solidatory.

④ Conclusion.

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Albert Einstein, the renowned physicist and Nobel laureate, once said, "The world is a dangerous place, not for those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing." This quote highlights the importance of taking a stand against injustice, a principle that resonates deeply with the issue of Muslim support for Palestine. In the intricate landscape of Middle-Eastern politics, economic interests significantly shape the trajectory of the Israel-Palestine conflict, influencing the stance of many Muslim-majority countries. Despite strong public support for Palestine, countries like Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt, and Turkey etc often prioritize their economic interests and international alliances, including those with the US and Israel, over consistent support for Palestinians independence. These alignments have resulted in various actions and consequences, limiting freedom of speech, fueling sectarianism, support

ting authoritarian regimes and suppressing criticism of Israel. These decisions reflect a prioritization of economic stability and geopolitical strategy over standing firmly against oppression and human rights violations. Thus, while economic interests are undeniably significant in shaping the policies of Muslim-majority countries regarding Palestine, there remains a moral responsibility for these nations to uphold justice and human rights.

However, the Israel-Hamas conflict, rooted in the broader Israeli-Palestinian struggle, began with the formation of Hamas in 1987 during the first intifada, a Palestinian uprising against Israel occupation and ongoing injustices. Tensions escalated after Hamas won the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections and took control of Gaza in 2007, leading to recurrent violent clashes. Major confrontations include the wars in 2008-09, 2012, 2014, 2021 and 2023, with Palestinians suffering significant casualties and destruction due to Israeli air-strikes. These conflicts

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have exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and complicated peace efforts, which remain elusive due to deep-seated political, territorial and security disputes, as well as Israeli occupation and settlement expansion in Palestinian territories.

Also, the support of Muslims worldwide for Palestine is imperative, because supporting Palestine is a matter of <sup>shared</sup> faith, humanity, justice and solidarity for Muslims. And it is the teaching of Islam to stand against injustice and oppression. One of the significant reasons is Jerusalem (Al-Quds) holds significance for Muslims as the 3rd holiest site in Islam. This spiritual connection fosters a sense of duty among Muslims to protect and support Palestinian cause. By supporting Palestine, Muslims follow their faith's teachings, showing compassion and working toward freedom and equality for all, and a reminder that Muslims will always stand together against injustice, oppression and occupation showing solidarity.

However, over time, the political landscape shifted, and some Muslim-majority countries began to prioritize their own national interest and diplomatic relations with Israel and United States. This led to decline in vocal support for the Palestinian cause. This include <sup>in the following decades</sup> Saudi Arabia and Egypt normalized relations with Israel in the 1990's, while Turkey and Malaysia focused on their economic and political interests in the 2000s. More recently Gulf-states like the UAE and Bahrain have openly normalized relations with Israel. However in early days, Muslim support for Palestine was unwavering and unanimous. Leaders like Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Hassan al-Banna, Arab League, and countries like Syria, Egypt, and Iraq support the Palestine officially and provide military support. This shift reflects changing geopolitical priorities and interests, marking a departure of Muslim states from early days of supporting Palestine.

Although, the three major countries including US, Saudi-Arabia,

and Israel are the key <sup>global</sup> players <sup>having substantial</sup> economic interests in the Palestinian region. ~~On examining the economic interests of these three countries individually, each country demonstrates distinct priorities and strategies, discussed one by one in below paragraphs:~~

~~First and foremost,~~ The United States is a key global economic player with significant interests in the Middle East, particularly through strategic alliance with Israel. Thus, US providing \$5.2 billion in military aid annually, accounting for approximately 25% of Israel's defense budget in 2024. The US is also largest trading partner, with bilateral trade totalling over \$45 billion in 2024. Additionally the US has significant economic interests in the region's energy sector, with the Middle East accounting for approximately 35% of global oil production in 2024. The US imports approximately 2.2 million barrels of oil per day from the region.



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so if US has <sup>less</sup> political influence in the Middle East, it could impact its geopolitical power, which also affects its economy directly. That's why US supports Israel against Palestine, despite of Israel oppressions, to secure ~~at~~ his economic interests.

Another, Saudi Arabia has several economic interests in the Middle-East, especially related to oil export and its ties with the US. Firstly, Saudi Arabia is one of the world largest oil producers and exporters. Its economy is heavily depends on oil revenue. The US has been a major customer and trading partner, and the relation has been mutually beneficial. For instance, in 2022, Saudi Arabia exported around 500,000 barrels of oil per day to the US. Secondly, Saudi investment in the US are significant, covering various sector like real estate, technology and finance. These investments strengthen the economic ties between the two nations. Finally, Saudi-Arabia is concerned about

Iran's influence in the region. Iran and Saudi have a long standing rivalry, each promoting different sects of Islam - Iran is predominately Shia, while Saudi Arabia is predominately Sunni. <sup>Similarly,</sup> Iran strongly supports Palestine group, particularly Hamas and <sup>try to</sup> represents himself as a leader of Islamic countries to gain influence in the region by ~~go~~ championing the Palestinian cause, meanwhile <sup>resistance</sup> against Israel. That's why, Saudi Arabia makes alliances with US/Israel for their economic benefits, and does not support Palestine stance as much, also, these alliances are ~~intended~~ intended to counterbalance Iran's power.

Likewise, Israel benefits in the Middle-East, particularly through military aid, economic advantages, and strategic location. Firstly, military aid from the US is a significant benefit. Israel receives around \$3.8 billion annually, to maintain their military edges in the region. This aid includes advanced military technology and

defense system, bolstering Israel's security and defense capabilities against Palestine. Secondly, Israel gains economic benefits from its policies and strategies, including those related to Palestine territories. The occupation of the West Bank, for example, provides Israel with access to land, water resources, and economic opportunities such as agriculture, settlement construction. Lastly, Israel has developed a robust economic sector, particularly in technology and innovation. ~~Having~~ Strategic location for trade and investment, it attracts foreign investment and maintains trade relations with Arab countries. For instance, it has a high-tech industry known as "Start-Up Nation" that attracts significant foreign investment and contributes to economic development. Also, the Abraham Accords facilitate trade between Israel and Arab countries, further boost the economy and open new markets. Hence, these factors collectively strengthen Israel's position in the Middle East, and that's why the Israel lobby is so strong.

Economic interests can significantly influence the support Muslim countries provide to Palestine. Below the following sections describe the various ways in which these economic factors play a role.

The pursuit of economic interests have superseded ideological allegiance in the foreign policy of Muslim majority countries especially with regard to Muslim support for Palestine. Muslim countries prioritize their economic interests despite Israel oppressions in the Palestine. For instance Saudi Arabia has increased trade with Israel by 70% between 2020-2024, as per Bloomberg. This shows that economic gains are more important than standing with Palestine in spite of, historical, cultural and religious relations. <sup>that's why</sup> Saudi Arabia does not criticize <sup>for</sup> Israel injustice in Palestine and promote further expansion of relations with. Therefore economic interest have overridden ideological allegiance to the Palestinian cause, weakening Muslims unity and support for Palestine.

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Moreover, The <sup>significant</sup> ↑ economic aid and assistance from US and other western countries has created a web of economic dependence, that <sup>often</sup> outweighs profits to the Palestinian cause. This aid has been muting the voice of Muslim countries for the support of Palestine. That's why these countries <sup>for</sup> securing their economic interests making significant ties with Israel and received lots of assistance - For instance, Egypt receives \$2-billion in military aid from the US annually, as per US state department. And Egypt response to Israeli action in Gaza has been muted with only verbal condemnation, despite a recent \$750 million increase in US aid, according to AP News. This shows that Egypt response has been weak, and it prioritize its relations with the US over supporting Palestine.

Furthermore, the trend of economic normalization and trade with Israel, signaling a shift in priorities and allegiance. Many Muslim

countries are now focusing on building economic relationships with Israel, rather than supporting the Palestine cause. This means they are prioritizing trade and business deals over their historical support for Palestine. For example, as per UAE Ministry of Economy, UAE-Israel trade reached \$5 billion in 2024, up from \$2.5 billion in 2022. This shift is significant because it shows <sup>a change in</sup> what these countries value and consider important.

Additionally, strong investments and trade ties play a crucial role in muting Muslim countries' voice. Due to economic benefits, Muslim countries verbally condemn Israel's military actions on Gaza and do not take a legal stance on it. For instance, Turkey-Israel trade reached \$12 billion in 2024, despite political tensions, as per Turkish Statistical Institute. Turkey's President Erdogan has verbally supported Palestine, but trade ties remain strong. Consequently, <sup>this</sup> indicates <sup>maintaining</sup> trade ties <sup>with Israel</sup> are more important <sup>legally</sup> than <sup>legally</sup> standing with Palestine.

Also, Dependence on Israel for energy and resources is a way to influence muslim's support for Palestine. Muslim countries criticism of Israeli actions in the West Bank is minimal, for the sake of economic interests. For instance, According to US Energy Information Administration, Jordan imports 98% of its natural-gas from Israel. Thus, Jordan shifted their policy from supporting Palestine to Israel, to overcome their energy needs.

Similarly, ~~from US~~ economic sanctions <sup>from US</sup> is another way to stop Muslim's support for Palestine. The fear of economic sanctions from United-States is a major reason, that's why Muslim majority countries have been cautioned in their support. Because US is a major trading partner, and a major source of economic aid to Muslim-majority countries. For instance, as per US Census Bureau Pakistan's export to the US totaled \$ 5.01 billion in 2023. Likewise in Pakistan <sup>country</sup> is devastating

flowed <sup>condition</sup> in 2022, US aid to Palestine was \$30 billion as per US Agency for International Development. Therefore, Muslim countries including Palestine fear that supporting Palestine could lead to reduction in aid, imposition of sanctions, or other economic penalties. As a result, these countries prioritize their economic interests over ideological support for the Palestine cause.

Further, Pro-Israel groups, particularly the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), wield significant lobbying influence in the United States, shaping policy towards Palestine and the Middle East. These groups advocate for policies that support Israel's positions on key issues, including settlement expansion, Gaza, and Jerusalem, often at the expense of Palestinian rights and interests. For instance, AIPAC helps Israel get money from US without making sure Israel treats Palestinians fairly. This means the US is not doing enough to support Palestinian rights and peace and is instead supporting Israel's actions.



## Muslim countries

Finally, investments in Israel hinder their ability to oppose Israel. Their investments in infrastructure, energy and real-estate projects limit their ability to stand with Palestine and take a strong stance against Israel. One of the remarkable examples is Qatar, he has sought to balance its support for Palestine with its growing economic and political ties with Israel. Hence Qatar by avoiding confrontation trying to maintain good relations with both sides.

Above mention economic interests have led to various consequences and action. These consequences are described below in following sections:

First and the foremost is prioritizing economic interests muzzle Muslim's support for Palestine. When the Muslim countries value their profits <sup>more</sup> over Palestinian cause and do not stand against Israel, then it will lead to diminished solidarity.

between Muslim countries and reduced support for Palestine. This shift weakens the collective political influence of Muslim nations, making it harder to advocate for Palestinian rights and interests on the global stage. Over time, this could result in a fragmented approach to regional issues and less the pressure on Israel to address Palestinian grievances.

Secondly, Muslim countries while securing their economic interests, have suppressed criticism of Israel. This has strengthened Israel's military oppressions in Palestine and reduced the pressure from Muslim countries on Israel. Countries and groups want to make money and trade with Israel. For instance, people who want to speak out against Israel's wrongdoings are silenced. News stories that criticize Israel are not allowed to be published. Critics of Israel are afraid to speak out because they might get in trouble. As a result, Israel's injustice is continued, without facing any consequence. No one is holding them accountable.

Further, the pursuit of economic interests have led to support for authoritarian regime. Muslim countries prioritize trade relations and ties with Israel over accountability for its occupation and human rights abuses. The normalization of relations between Israel and Arab states has further isolated Palestine and weakening international support for their cause. For instance, Abraham accords were signed between Israel and four Arab League countries in 2020 <sup>despite</sup> Israel's continued occupation and human right abuses.

These <sup>these</sup> economic ties have emboldened Israelis authoritarian tendencies, enabling the expansion of illegal settlements, intensified surveillance and repression of Palestine dissent.

Finally, these economic interests of Muslim-majority countries have led to compromises on Palestinian rights and limitation on free speech, contributing to sectarianism. These nations have prioritized diplomatic and trade relationship

with Israel and the US over solidarity with the Palestinian people, resulting in muted criticism of Israeli policies and limit support for Palestine self-determination. In this way Muslim-countries suppressed their freedom of speech and fueling sectarianism instead, they showed solidarity against Israel. As a result by silencing voices that advocates for Palestinian rights, these governments have created an environment conducive to sectarianism, undermining the unity and solidarity that is essential for addressing the Palestinian issue.

The discussion of these points demonstrates that Muslim countries urgently need some measures to overcome the influence of economic interests.

The very first and key suggestion is Break free from economic shackles through BDS (Boycott, Divest, Sanctions). These BDS movements aims to apply economic pressure on Israel to address issues related to Palestinian

rights and Israel-Palestine conflict. Supporters believe that these movements can effectively influence the companies and institutions that support the Israel. In this way economic pressure is created and Israel may change its policies regarding Palestinian rights. But this is possible when every Muslim country will boycott Israeli products, also with International sanctions on their trade. Thus BDS movement believe that sustained economic pressure on Israel could led to changes in its policies.

The second measure is diversifying trade relations with Palestine is vital to counterbalance Israel economic power and breaks the hold of Arab-states comprised stance. By making strong trade relations with Asia, Europe and America, Palestine can reduce its dependency on Israel economy. Through economic strength Palestine can negotiate with Israel on fairer terms about its rights. This <sup>in this way</sup> the control of Israel on Palestine can diminished, finally leading to

free and independent Palestine. Currently, this strength is used by Israel to suppress Palestine dream of self-rule.

The Third measure is to prioritize human rights, justice and equity in decision making. Prioritizing these disciplines in decision making are crucial for Palestinian issue. This means putting rights and dignity of Palestinian people in forefront of all decision makings. It involves recognizing and respecting the Palestinian rights to self-determination, ending the occupation, and addressing the displacement of Palestinian people. Also it is the responsibility of Muslims to stand against injustice and oppressions (Al-Qur'an 4:135). Therefore an equitable environment is created by upholding justice and human rights and will result in lasting resolution towards peace.

Last measure to overcome economic influence is global

solidarity with Palestine. It is crucial to counterbalance the influence of economic interest that perpetuate oppression. By uniting across borders and ideologies, people can challenge the economic leverage used to silence Palestinian voices and undermine their rights. Through boycotts, divestment and sanction (BDS), a grass movements, and advocacy campaigns, global solidarity can disrupt that economic structure that sustain occupation and apartheid. By prioritizing Palestinian rights over economic gains, global solidarity can create a new balance of power, enabling Palestine to achieve self-determination and freedom from oppression, and inspiring a more just <sup>and</sup> equitable world for all.

Coming to the end, it is concluded that economic interests playing significant role in muzzling Muslim's support for Palestinian people. However it is the moral responsibility of Muslims to stand up

with justice and uphold human rights. In the intricate landscape of Middle-Eastern politics, economic interests significantly shape the trajectory of the Israel-Palestine conflict, influencing the stance of Muslim majority countries. Despite strong public support for Palestine, countries like Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan and Turkey etc all prioritize their economic interests and international alliances with US and Israel over Palestinian self-determination and their independence. This economic dependence on Israel/US resulted in various consequences, that weakens the solidarity of Muslim-countries. To over-come the influence of Israel, Muslim countries must work together to help Palestine escape Israel's unfair control. They must stand together and support Palestine with one voice. It's time for action, not just words. When Muslim nations will unite against Israel, their collective strength will shatter the darkness of injustice and illuminate the path of freedom. Together they will



rise as one, their collective voice <sup>will</sup> thundering across the globe: "Solidarity with Palestine, forever!", "unwavering support for Palestine, always!", "Palestine as a nation held dear in their hearts, forever!"

"Whoever helps a Muslim in a matter, Allah will help him in this life and the next." (Prophet Muhammed, peace be upon him)

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