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Q2: Critically evaluate the chances of continuation and Expansion of Hamas-Israel war across the region.

### 1- INTRODUCTORY NOTE:

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Since October 7 (2023), the ground offensive of Israel has not halted for a day. The war between Hamas and Israel has turned into <sup>the</sup> worst humanitarian crisis globally. Gaza war failed to remain confined to the region, but it has spread to West Bank, and aims to involve regional players in it. The world has been witnessing the Arab-Israel war since 1948, but a peaceful resolution is still not in horizon. Currently the Middle East is becoming more volatile region. Further, the involvement of regional actors and powers are further complicating the case scenario. Still role of international players and organization is important in deescalating the situation.

### 2- EVOLUTION OF HAMAS-ISRAEL WAR:

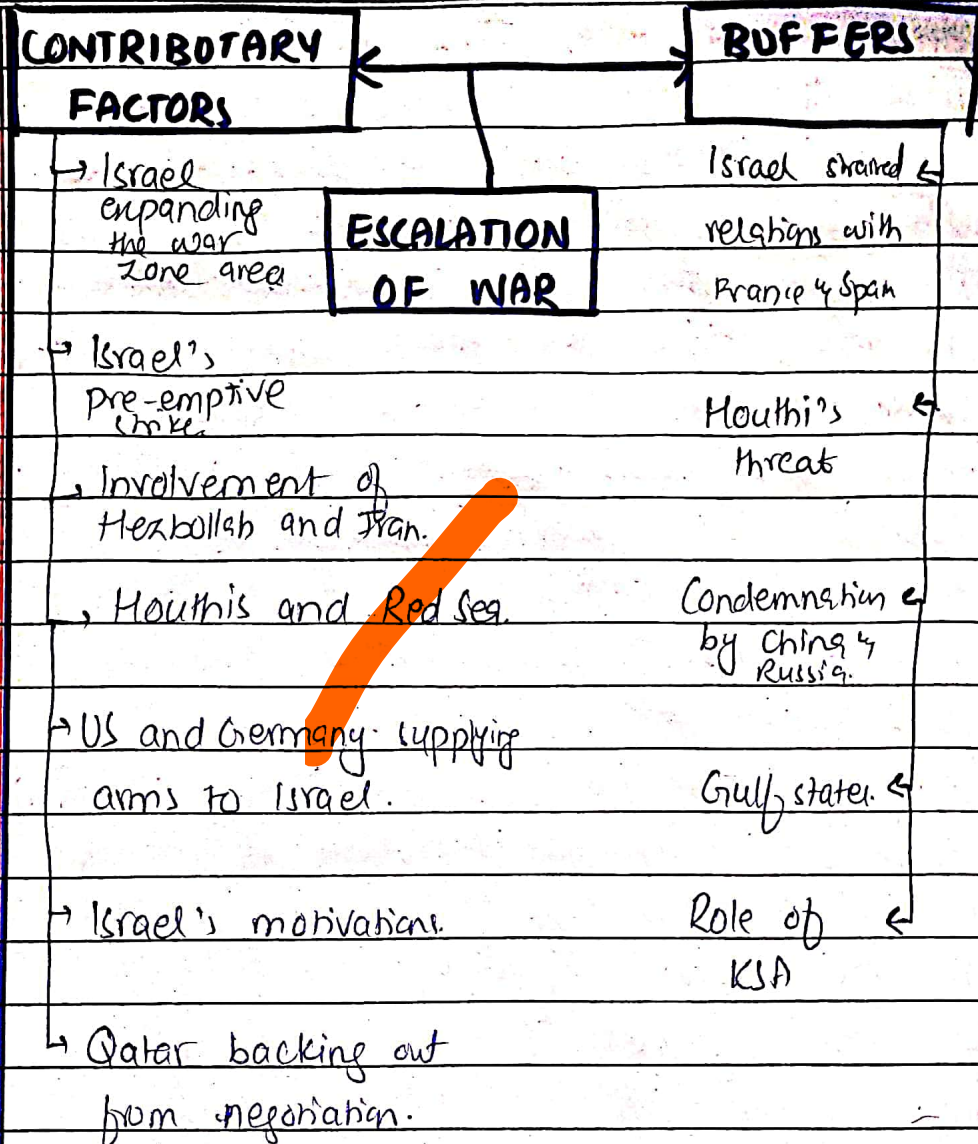
Israel retaliated to the Hamas's strike on 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 in an explanation for 'self-defence'. Since then, there has been unprecedented casualties (around 4000), widespread destruction (60% of the buildings have been destroyed due to war), severe food insecurity, mass displacement and scarcity of safe space. The war gained momentum when Israel executed notable religious leader.

of Muslim revolutionary groups like Ismail Haniyeh etc. Recently, Israel conducted pager device explosions in Lebanon on Hezbollah. Hezbollah used these devices for communication. Such atrocities and pre-emptive strikes of Israel were reciprocated positively by Hamas Hezbollah. But in September 2024, a ceasefire resulted in retreat of both Hezbollah and Israeli armed forces. The conflict gained importance as a regional one when Iran conducted fired around 150 ballistic missiles on Israel and Israel declared that it will respond with equal might. These are the incidents which changed the dynamics of Gaza conflict into a regional one and the timer is still running to see it escalating into a regional crisis.

### 3- CHANCES OF ESCALATION OF WAR ~~IN~~ ACROSS REGION:

There are many factors that contribute to that fact that Hamas-Israel war will escalate across region. However, there are certain factors that can buffer the chances of a full-blown war. Both are important but it is the interplay of factors and situations that can lead to a war or avert it. Still, chances of continuation and expansion of Gaza war are high or at least it will further ~~the~~ destabilize the region.





### A- Contributory Factors:

There are many emerging factors that is converting the Gaza war into a regional war and these factors are:

- 1- Israel has successfully expanded the war zone from Gaza strip to West Bank and has no intention of stopping. This creates a clear possibility that it can expand the war zone by engulfing regional actors into it.
- 2- Besides Gaza strip and West Bank, Israel has been conducting pre-emptive strike.

on Lebanon and Iran. Retaliation from Iran and Hezbollah is the proof that regional actors will not shy away from engaging in war with Israel.

3- This year has seen increased tension between Iran and Israel along with Israel and Hezbollah. The military conflicts and strikes are more likely to engage these actors into a full-blown war.

4- After Hamas and Israel war, Houthis of Yemen targeted the European cargo ships passing from Red Sea for trade in an act of retaliation. Red Sea is an important economic navigational route for economies of European. Moreover, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states can group up with European and Western states to counter Houthis influence and Red Sea and the war can escalate further involving more players into it.

5- Despite multiple resolutions by the United Nations and pleas by world community to halt arms supply to Israel, the United States and Germany support Israel in its 'self-defence'. This military aid provides space and opportunity to Israel to not stop its operation until its aims are achieved.

6- Israel's motivation of getting involved into the war was not to retaliate but eradicate Hamas. With recent



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confrontations with Iran and Hezbollah, it becomes clear that Israel has no intentions of ending war. Moreover, the recurrent announcement of 'a new Nakba' by Israeli leaders tells its expansionist ideology and acts won't stop.

7 The hope for peace and ceasefire broke when in November, 2024, Qatar announced to suspend its mediation efforts due to non-seriousness and unwillingness of Hamas and Israel to reach a solution. The backing out of sole mediator further paints a grim picture of regional instability.

## **B BUFFERS:**

Still one should hope for the best. There are certain factors that can buffer the escalation of conflict into a regional one and these are:

- 1- European powers are reevaluating their stance on Israeli occupation. Already three European states have recognized Palestine. Moreover, France and Spain has halted arms supply to Israel. These strained relations tell that global public opinion is changing towards Israel and its heinous face is being revealed. Chances are that pressure from European powers can pressure Israel to reevaluate its priorities.
- 2- Houthis' threat of blockade in Red Sea

is of great significance for Europe. All ships docked from Israeli ports will come under attack of Houthis, and few countries have already stopped using Israeli ports like Germany. Such acts will prove detrimental to Israeli economy and ~~with~~ any set back to its economy will provide an additional pressure on its policy of war.

3 - World is changing and so is the world order. In this multipolar world, US is not the only important state at top level. Russia and China share the throne with it. Both nations have condemned Israel's atrocities in Gaza, Lebanon and strike on Iran. This multipolar world order can also make Israel to think twice before escalating and expanding war.

4 - When Iran and Israel's confrontations were high in 2024, Gulf states were lobbying the United States to stop Israel from retaliating by ~~at~~ and attacking Iran's oil resources. Oil is the black gold of international economy and Gulf states along with European value it. Any hlt in supply is detrimental to their economy so hopes can be placed on these countries to buffer and stop expansion of war into regional apparatus.

5 - Role of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is very important in this Middle East.



crisis. Before Gaza war, KSA was willing to recognize Israel and form diplomatic relations with it. But after Gaza crisis, KSA is stern on recognizing Israel only when the crisis will be resolved on two-state solution. Moreover, it shares good relations with America, and can exert influence on Israel indirectly.

#### 4- CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

By taking both factors into account, if it not means to say that chances of peace and stability in regional apparatus are grim. There are more than likely chances of escalation of conflict across regional border. Moreover, the happen are not concrete steps but narratives and narrative serve no purpose when it comes to motivations of Israel. Silence of international bodies like UNGA and UNSC is another contributory factor that encourages Israel to continue its offensive against the states. So, regional destabilization and regional conflagration has more chances of prevailing than peace and stability.

#### 5- CONCLUSION:

Gaza war is can turn into a regional war due to volatility of the region. It will have implications for Pakistan also because of its bordering country Iran and Red sea trade embargo.

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Pakistan will face challenges on economic and diplomatic front if the conflict escalated to regionally. The cautious approach of Pakistan towards the crisis will be missed. It is a high need of situation that international leaders and organizations step in and deescalate the situation in Gaza. Moreover, a permanent ceasefire and resolution of Palestine<sup>conflict</sup> on the basis of two-state solution is the only way that can bring stability into region.

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## Q7. ICT - ISRL - WAR CRIME:

1- Introduction.

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- Historical background.

- Impacts regionally and globally.

2- War Crimes by Israel.

i- Civilian casualties.

ii- Stricter monitoring of border to control flow of basic commodities.

iii- Using starvation as a method of warfare.

iv- Persecution, murdering and use of civilians as human shields.

v- Intentionally depriving people of basic commodities of life like water, health care etc.

3- Decision of International Court of Justice.

i- Positive step to acknowledge atrocities of Israel.

ii- Important step towards justice.

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iii - Still actions needed rather than judgement

iv - Arrest warrants by International ~~Court~~

Criminal court is a positive step.

1 - Reaction of United States of America

i - Supports Israel's self-defence

ii - Denounce arrest warrant of Netanyahu

iii - Not viewed positively by Arab world

5 - Conclusion.