

AL-AQSA FLOOD

A Turning Point in the
Middle Eastern Politics

EDITOR
MUHİTTİN ATAMAN



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SETA

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SETA Publications 107

First Published in 2024 by SETA

ISBN: 978-625-6583-49-8

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Cover: Erkan Söğüt

Layout: Said Demirtaş

Printed in Türkiye, İstanbul by Türkuvaz Haberleşme
ve Yayıncılık A.Ş.

SETA Publications

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INTRODUCTION

THE PREVIOUS AND CURRENT CONTEXTS OF THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI QUESTION

MUHİTTİN ATAMAN*

INTRODUCTION: THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI QUESTION

The Palestinian-Israeli question is one of the most enduring crises in modern history. Since the last quarter of the 19th century, the Palestinian-Israeli question has been at the heart of Middle Eastern politics. Moreover, who has the rights over the land of Palestine has been one of the main subjects of international politics since the beginning of the 20th century, it has been one of the most persistent issues representing the struggle between Western imperialism and anti-imperialism. It was Western imperialism that effectively established the artificial state of Israel, and this has since led to many regional crises.

The Israeli state has been the instigator of many regional wars such as the four Arab-Israeli wars and the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, continuous expansionism and discrimination against the Palestinian people. Israel is consistently found to be in violation of international law, basic human rights and resolutions of the United Nations. Millions of Palestinians have been forced to leave their country since 1948,¹ while Palestinians who preferred to stay in their lands have been deprived of their basic human rights. A typical apartheid regime² is being implemented against the Palestinians on their own land by the Israeli state.

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¹ Julie Peteet, "Problematising a Palestinian Diaspora," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (2007), pp. 627-646.

² Ran Greenstein, "Israel, Palestine, and Apartheid," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2020), pp. 73-92, p. 82.

Because of its critical implications, all regional countries and most global powers have for many years been directly or indirectly involved with this question, which has four main dimensions. At the narrowest level, it is a question of national liberation struggle between the defensive Palestinian nationalism and Zionism, the aggressive Israeli racism. The Palestinian resistance movements have been struggling against the Zionist state to liberate their lands since the 1940s. Traditionally, the Palestinian national liberation movement is represented by two organizations, namely the secular Fatah (the Palestinian Liberation Organization) and the religious Hamas (The Islamic Resistance Movement).³ Palestinian people from different ideological backgrounds have been fighting against a common enemy, the Israeli state, which has been supported by the West and many of its allies. Most Western countries consider the existence of Israel in the Middle East as the first priority of their Middle Eastern policies.

At the regional level, it has the Arab-Israeli dimension.⁴ Arab states have been trying to liberate the Arab lands under the occupation of Israel, who illegally and unlawfully occupies not only the lands that under international law belong to Palestinians (East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip) but also Lebanon (the Shebaa Farms) and Syria (the Golan Heights). It is evident from the statements of Israeli officials and politicians that Israel is determined to occupy more Arab lands to realize its long-time dream of establishing the greater Israel, stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates.

At a larger level, the Palestinian-Israeli question has a civilizational and religious dimension.⁵ It is a dispute between a pro-Zionist coalition and Muslim countries

³ Helga Baumgarten, "The Two Palestinian National Movements Today: The Process of Converging of the 'Secular' Fatah and the 'Religious' Hamas," Conference Paper Prepared for "The Transformation of Palestine: Palestine and the Palestinians 60 Years after the 'Nakba'," Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Berlin, March 8, 2010; Zena Al Tahhan, "Hamas and Fatah: How Are the Two Groups Different?," *AlJazeera*, 12 October 2017, retrieved on April 10, 2024 from <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/10/12/hamas-and-fatah-how-are-the-two-groups-different>; Hani Awad, "Understanding Hamas: Remarks on Three Different and Interrelated Theoretical Approaches," *Al-Muntaqa: New Perspectives on Arab Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2022), pp. 42-62.

⁴ Many academicians wrote books and articles focusing on the Arab-Israeli dimension of the question. Some books with "the Arab-Israeli" concept in the title are presented below: T. G. Fraser, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004); Steven L. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985); Hassan A. Barari (ed.), *The Middle East Peace by Piece: The Quest for a Solution to the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (Amman: Friedrich, 2009). Also, for a concise history of the Arab-Israeli question see: Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar, "Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Primer" *MERIP*, February 2014.

⁵ Abdullah al-Ahsan, "The Question of Palestine and the Muslim World," *New Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (2018), pp. 84-106.

and peoples. Since Bayt al-Maqdis is one of the three most sacred and holy sites for Muslims, all Muslim states and nations feel strongly about this conflict. They expect Israel and its supporters to respect the Islamic sites in Palestine. The Islamic Cooperation Organization was established by Muslim states as a reaction to the attacks of Israel against the Muslim holy sites in Bayt al-Maqdis.

At the global level, the Palestinian-Israeli question has a strong humanitarian dimension therefore Palestine has been considered as a “global cause” by many political actors and peoples worldwide.⁶ The struggle between Palestinians and the Zionists symbolizes the struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor. On the one hand, it is a struggle between the imperialist West and the anti-imperialist non-Western states.⁷ On the other hand, it is a struggle between those who respect and defend universal human rights (Palestinians and their supporters) and those who insistently violate basic human rights principles (Israel and its Western supporters).

Within these contexts, many international organizations have passed many resolutions offering solutions to the Palestinian-Israeli question. Among them is the Islamic Cooperation Organization, which was established following the many attacks against sacred places, notably the city of al-Quds (Jerusalem) and al-Aqsa Mosque, in Palestine. The international community represented by the United Nations (UN) has been calling on the Israeli state for decades to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories (return to the 1967 borders) and to abide by the international rules and principles. As the UN resolutions, international law, and international public opinion expect, and Palestinians also aspire for, Israel must withdraw from the occupied territories, namely East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip and recognize an independent Palestinian state as part of a two-state solution.

Although almost all states, including the United States, the main supporter of Israel, officially state that they support a two-state solution, most states have so far effectively opposed the establishment of a truly independent Palestinian state. Global powers, especially the United States, have not allowed the UN to force the Israeli state

⁶ Sune Haugbolle and Pelle Valentin Olsen, “Emergence of Palestine as a Global Cause,” *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2023), pp. 129-148; Ramzy Baroud, “The Palestinian Cause Belongs to the World,” *Malaysia Now*, October 17, 2023, retrieved on April 10, 2024 from <https://www.malaysianow.com/opinion/2023/10/17/the-palestinian-cause-belongs-to-the-world>.

⁷ Fawwaz Trabulsi, “The Palestine Problem: Zionism and Imperialism in the Middle East,” *New Left Review*, No. 57 (1969); Tariq Dana and Ali Jarbawi, “A Century of Settler Colonialism in Palestine: Zionism’s Entangled Project,” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2017), pp. 1-23.

to move out from the occupied territories and to restore peace in the region. In other words, the Palestinian people and Muslim nations have long witnessed the continuous Israeli *fait accompli*, the never-ending Palestinian suffering, the weakness of the Muslim Middle Eastern countries, and the indifference of the global powers.

For decades, Israel has been expanding its territories against the Palestinians and Palestinians have been paying the ultimate price. Due to the one-sided Israeli and Western narrative, the Palestinian resistance was otherized and alienated, continuously presented to the international community as terrorism. Therefore, most Western governments have been supporting Israel in the name of its so-called self-defense and the so-called struggle against terrorism. In the face of this biased international discourse, the Palestinian resistance movements have been trying to survive and fight for their self-determination. However, in spite of this dominant and biased Zionist Western narrative, more and more people are now becoming aware of the racist politics of Israel and therefore give their moral support to the Palestinian national liberation movement.

With the support of the global Western powers, Israel has continued to violate not only the rights of self-determination of the Palestinian people but also their basic human rights. The strongest example of this inhumane policy is the action taken against the Gaza Strip, which has been under continuous Israeli blockade and attacks since 2006.⁸ Israel has been attacking the Gaza Strip and the West Bank intermittently, to expand its territories in order to establish new illegal Jewish settlements and squash any hope for Palestinian statehood. Israel's large-scale attacks against the Gaza Strip in 2008, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2019, and 2021 have made conditions in Palestine unlivable. The attack in 2021 stopped with yet another cease-fire, however the fate of that has not been different from the previous ones. Israel has never fulfilled its promises and cynically considers the cease-fire as a temporary process, allowing time to prepare for a new wave of violence. The events of October 7, 2023, known as the al-Aqsa Flood, are being used by Israel as justification to continue its plans of occupation and expansion.

Since the book is divided into two parts, *The Previous Context* and *The Current Context*, I will shortly explain the developments and conditions of these two contexts. This short summary will clearly demonstrate that there are not radical differ-

⁸ Khalid Manzoor Butt and Anam Abid Butt, "Blockade on Gaza Strip: A Living Hell on Earth," *Journal of Political Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2016), pp. 157-182; "Suffocating Gaza – the Israeli blockade's effects on Palestinians," Amnesty International, (June 1, 2010), retrived from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2010/06/suffocating-gaza-israeli-blockades-effects-palestinians/>.

ences between the two contexts. Al-Aqsa Flood is a turning point in the history of the question. However, it is not a paradigm shift, but rather an intensification of the processes already existing on the ground.

THE PREVIOUS CONTEXT OF THE QUESTION

The previous context of the Palestinian-Israeli question was established after the so-called Arab Spring, the Arab uprisings and revolutions which erupted in 2011. States and regimes that were known as the main carriers of Arab nationalism were collapsed during the Arab insurgencies and revolutions, which became a watershed development for the Middle East region, including the Palestine-Israel question.

At a time when there is no will or strength in the Arab world to resist against any anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab development, the current Israeli and U.S. governments are trying to legalize the years of Israeli atrocities, crimes against humanity, and violations of human rights. Most steps taken by these two governments during the post-Arab Spring period contradict with and violate international norms and rules. Below, I will summarize some of the unilateral steps taken by Israel and the U.S. to consolidate the de facto conditions.

First, the Israeli parliament adopted a law that is known as the “basic law” or “the nation-state act” in 2018. According to this law, the right to exercise national self-determination in the state of Israel is unique to the Jewish people and thereby it denies Palestinian people any national rights or existence. In other words, this bill declared Israel as the state of the Jewish people only, so depriving other ethnic groups living in the state of the right of self-determination. With this act Israel has effectively formalized its discriminatory/apartheid regime.⁹

Second, U.S. President Donald Trump’s unilateral recognition of the “united Jerusalem” as the capital of Israel and the transfer of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is a pivotal point in the history of the Middle East, for both regional and global actors. This decision, with significant implications for Middle Eastern politics, is not only about the transfer of the Israeli capital from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, but also about the halt of the so-called Middle Eastern peace process. Furthermore, it implicitly means that the U.S. supports the expulsion of Palestinian people from their homeland and the prevention of the establishment of a Palestinian state. In other words, the U.S. has contradicted its traditional policy

⁹ Elia Zureik, “Israeli Practices of Governance in Palestine,” *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2020), pp. 93-107, p. 95.

and has abandoned the long-time advocated two-state solution. In addition, this decision is a clear violation of the basic rules of international law and decisions of the UN.

Third, contrary to basic rules of international law and a number of UN resolutions, the U.S. government announced that they do not consider the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories as inconsistent with international law. Thus, the U.S. paved the way for other states to follow the same path and invade lands of other peoples. For example, global powers such as Russia and China have followed similar policies in their near abroad.

Fourth, the U.S. stopped funding the United Nations Palestinian Refugee Agency (UNRWA) and closed down the Washington D.C. office of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), a body internationally recognized as the legal representative of the Palestinian people. With all these steps, the U.S. government demonstrated that it abandoned its relatively balanced policy towards the question and fully and unconditionally supported the Israeli state. The U.S. began to otherize the UN-affiliated institutions, which generally legitimize the U.S. global hegemony. That is, the U.S. has flaunted its own global hegemonic rules.

Fifth, on January 28, 2020 then U.S. President Trump, after meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and opposition leader Benny Gantz in Washington D.C, declared a so-called Middle East peace plan the “Deal of the Century.”¹⁰ With this plan, the U.S. government ignored and violated all decisions made and resolutions passed by the UN regarding the issue, according to which the Israeli state is an occupier of the Palestinian land and violator of international rules and norms. The U.S. plan violated international law over Bayt al-Maqdis and undermined the importance of the al-Aqsa Mosque, which is a holy site for all Muslims.¹¹ Bearing in mind all these illegal steps, it can be said that the U.S. shares the responsibility with Israel for the violation of Palestinian rights.

Achieving peace between the Israeli state and the Palestinian people appears to be unachievable, because the Israeli side does not take any Palestinian demands

¹⁰ Ayfer Erdoğan and Lourdes Habash, “U.S. Policy Toward the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict under the Trump Administration: Continuity or Change?” *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2020), pp. 125-146, p. 136-137.

¹¹ For More Information About the Possible Future and importance of Jerusalem See Khalid El-Awaisi and Cuma Yavuz, “The Future of al-Aqsa Mosque in the Light of Trump’s Deal of the Century,” *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (2020), pp. 215-235; Olileanya Amuche Ezugwua, “The 21st Century Israel-Palestine Conflict over Jerusalem and Its Peace Processes,” *Malaysian Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 11 (2023), pp. 107-127.

into consideration. All steps taken so far have been unilateral and against the interests of the Palestinians. The Deal of the Century is no exception; it is also a unilateral intervention to the question.¹² Effectively, it is a dictation to the Palestinian-Israeli problem, which ignores the realities on the ground.

The timing of the Deal of the Century has to do with the post-Arab Spring situation in the Arab world. As a matter of fact, today there is “no political Arab world,” since almost all heavyweight nationalist Arab states are in chaos, politically unstable or vulnerable. The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia who claim the leadership of the Arab world are closely associated with the Trump Administration and the Israeli state.¹³ These two Arab states and the current Egyptian government support Israel rather than the Palestinians and blame Palestinian political groups instead of the Israeli state for the ongoing situation. These states condemn the retaliatory actions conducted by the Palestinians and remain silent about the inhumane treatment they suffer at the hands of the Israeli war machine.

Consequently, there is no strong Arab state to defend the rights of Palestinians. For decades, Arab regimes have exploited the issue for domestic political legitimacy. Arab regimes who were afraid of their peoples tried to satisfy their demands by exaggerating the Israeli threat. Nowadays it appears that their fear of external powers is greater, which is why they capitulate to the demands of countries such as Israel and the U.S. and accordingly use the Palestinian issue in negotiations to their own benefit. However, Trump’s proclamation of the Deal of the Century caused fierce reaction from public opinion worldwide, especially from the Arab streets and Muslim communities. The Trump Administration miscalculated the civilian reaction. This time, it will be difficult to convince the Arab public, since it is much more aware than before about their regimes’ foreign policy behavior. Trump’s declaration, which contributed to the reunification of the Arab and Muslim peoples, satisfies only radical Christians and Zionist Jews.

As long as the blockade on the Palestinian lands continues, the region will be subject to new waves of violence. Considering the unstable international system, ultra-nationalist, and xenophobic Western politics, chaotic regional atmosphere and Israeli domestic politics, it is not expected that the Israeli government will ease the blockade and give some rights to the Palestinians. Global powers such as the U.S. and the European Union not only close their eyes to the Israeli atrocities but

¹² Zureik, “Israeli Practices of Governance in Palestine,” p. 103-104.

¹³ Erdoğan and Habash, “U.S. Policy Toward the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict under the Trump Administration: Continuity or Change?” p. 138-139.

also support its unequal and limitless violence. Even the UN has begun to warn “the two sides” about the escalation of violence, thus undervaluing the Israeli brutality by equating it with the small retaliatory actions of the Palestinians. Therefore, it can be said that there is currently no deterrent power in the world that is preventing Israeli aggression. In other words, considering the unilateral steps taken by Israel and the U.S., there is no hope to reach a lasting solution in the Palestinian lands at this point.¹⁴ Only a significant change in the regional and global balance of power will bring considerable changes in Israeli policies towards the region.

THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF THE QUESTION

The comprehensive and effective attack launched by Hamas on October 7, 2023, the al-Aqsa Flood Operation, has become a turning point not only in the Palestinian-Israeli question and the Middle Eastern balance of power but also in modern world history.¹⁵ Being isolated from the rest of the world, subjected to any kind of inhumane treatment and under a fierce blockade for 17 years, Hamas, the Palestinian resistance movement that has ruled the Gaza Strip since 2006, initiated the al-Aqsa Flood operation and inflicted what is to date the biggest military, political, economic, social and psychological damage to Israel. Israel replied with one of the most brutal and disproportionate attacks against not only Hamas but also against the whole people of Gaza, with a population of more than 2.3 million, a large portion of which were forcefully displaced by the Zionist regime and live in refugee camps.

Since October 7, Israel has killed more than 33,000 people, the majority of whom were children and women, and wounded more than 75,000 people. Israel, confident in its unconditional support from most Western governments, has been targeting any person or place. As of March 28, Israeli security forces have killed more than 100 journalists. According to the reports published by the United Nations agencies such as UNICEF, Israel hit more than 200 schools, totally destroying most of them. Israel even hit UN-run schools, ambulances, and charity organizations such as the World Central Kitchen and killed hundreds of international civil-servants and aid volunteers. Similarly, Israel has destroyed dozens of

¹⁴ Galia Golan, “Obstacles and Possibilities for Peace between Israel and Palestine,” *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2020), pp. 33–46.

¹⁵ Murat Aslan, “Israel’s Attacks on Gaza: A Military and Political Assessment,” SETA, No. 86 (November 2023), retrieved from <https://setav.org/en/assets/uploads/2023/11/A86En.pdf>; Muhammed Hüseyin Mercan, “Operation al-Aqsa Flood: A Rupture in the History of the Palestinian Resistance and Its Implications,” *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (2023), pp. 79–90.

mosques and churches in Gaza. The Zionist regime targeted ambulances carrying wounded people. It hit dozens of hospitals, preventing treatment of the people. In short, Israel has violated all red lines of humanity and repeatedly committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.¹⁶

The Gaza genocide committed by Israel with the overt support of the Western governments is the first genocide that has been observed online and live. Israel and its accomplices have violated all related basic principles of International Humanitarian Law, which display characteristics that can be easily described as war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide. All aspects of the crimes are well documented not only by the Palestinians and independent media coverage but also by the UN institutions and other international organizations. In addition, statements of Israeli officials, social-media sharing by the Israeli soldiers, explanations of Israeli religious leaders and civil society representatives can be used as evidences of the crimes committed by Israel.

Thus, it has become the latest in a succession of genocides committed under the ordinance of Western countries. Even though the Western governments stated “never again” in the wake of the Jewish genocide under Nazi Germany, they have nevertheless remained indifferent and even contributed to several genocides since then, such as Bosnian, Rwandan and now the Gazan genocide.

The al-Aqsa Flood is a turning point in the Palestinian-Israeli question. First of all, Israel has understood well that it will never provide its safety through more aggression and expansion. Israel’s strategic doctrine has totally failed. Considering that thousands of Jews are currently leaving Israel and the Palestinian lands, Israel could not provide a safe haven for the Jewish people.

Second, it is clear that Israel could not crush the Palestinian resistance. Israel’s position during the post-Arab insurgencies was similar to the position of the U.S. during the post-Cold War period. Both states celebrated the new balance of power but soon began to lose power vis-à-vis their rivals and face new challenges. The Palestinian side is still there and fighting against the Israeli occupation. It seems that the two sides of the conflict will continue to fight for their respective position. While Zionists have been trying to invade every inch of Palestine on a daily basis, the Palestinian resistance movements have been trying to both prevent further invasion and to liberate their territories.

¹⁶ Yücel Acer, “Israel’s Crimes in Gaza,” SETA, No. 85 (November 2023), retrieved from <https://setav.org/en/assets/uploads/2023/11/A85En.pdf>; Berdal Aral, “Israel’s Fateful March: From Settler Colonialism to Genocidal State,” *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (2023), pp. 181-196.

Third, since the al-Aqsa Flood has moved all pieces in the Middle East, the region is about to experience a new wave of tectonic earthquakes. On the one hand, regional states will seek for new alignments, which will ensure their national security. On the other hand, more global powers, such as China, will begin to intervene into the regional affairs of the Middle East. Western powers have lost trust of the regional actors along with their moral superiority against non-Western international actors.

Fourth, the al-Aqsa Flood and the following Israeli mass killings and genocidal activities supported by the Western governments is bringing an end to the already weak rule-based world order. From now on, the West cannot ask other states to abide by the principles of international law. A return to complete *realpolitik* is pushing the world to the brink of a global war. It seems that the messianic and shallow ultra-nationalist and racist politicians will force the world towards a systemic war, which will bring about the end of the current world order.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE BOOK

This edited book, *Al-Aqsa Flood: A Turning Point in Middle Eastern Politics*, highlights different subjects regarding the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Some of the leading and well-known intellectuals and academicians from Türkiye, Palestine, Europe, and the United States have contributed to this issue focusing on different dimensions of the problem.

The book consists of two main parts. While the first part, *The Previous Context*, focuses on the Palestinian developments before the al-Aqsa Flood, the second part, *The Current Context*, deliberates on the post-al-Aqsa developments. This has been done in order to emphasize the impact of al-Aqsa Flood and the following developments to the readers. The main question is: what was the previous context in Palestine and how has the October 7 attack changed this context?

While preparing this edited volume, I have brought together some of the previously published articles from the *Insight Turkey* journal. The articles of the first part are all previously published in different issues of *Insight Turkey*. Six of the previously published articles of Part One (“The Status and Significance of Bayt al-Maqdis in Islam” by Ikrime Sa’eed Sabri; “Israel, Palestine, and Apartheid” by Ran Greenstein; “Israeli Practices of Governance in Palestine” by Elia Zureik; “Israeli Settlements, U.S. Foreign Policy, and International Law” by Victor Kattan; “Evaluating Hamas’ Struggle in Palestine” by Nasuh Uslu and İbrahim Karataş; “U.S. Policy Toward the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Under the Trump Administration:

Continuity or Change?” by Ayfer Erdoğan and L. Habash) have been published in the special issue focusing on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (*Insight Turkey*, Volume 22, No 1, Winter 2020). One of the previously published articles (“Palestine after the Arab Spring” by Norman G. Finkelstein, Mouin Rabbani, Jamie Stern-Weiner) was published earlier (*Insight Turkey*, Volume 15, No 3, Summer 2015).

Three articles of the second part (“The Right of Return: The Only Future for Palestine” by Salman Abusitta; “Israel’s Fateful March: From Settler Colonialism to Genocidal State” by Berdal Aral; “Operation al-Aqsa Flood: A Rupture in the History of the Palestinian Resistance and Its Implications” by Muhammed Hüseyin Mercan) are also previously published in *Insight Turkey* (Volume 25, No 4, Winter 2023).

FIRST PART OF THE BOOK

Ikrima Sa’eed Sabri’s piece explains the significance of Bayt al-Maqdis by addressing the close bonds, namely the bonds which are firm ties that link Muslims to Bayt al-Maqdis and the land of Palestine. It should not be forgotten that from a religious/Islamic perspective, the status and significance of Bayt al-Maqdis, the city of al-Quds, which is one of the main themes of the problem, must be acknowledged. He claims that there are four significant bonds through which Muslims link to Bayt al-Maqdis, namely bonds of creed, worship, civilization and culture, and historical bonds.

The article written by Norman G. Finkelstein, Mouin Rabbani and Jamie Stren-Weiner focuses on the impact of the Arab Spring on the Palestinian-Israeli question. According to the authors of the article, *Palestine after the Arab Spring*, contrary to the expectations of many observers, the Arab uprisings and revolutions - which led to internal strife, the return in several Arab states of the ancient regime, and an intensified regional cold war - have left the Palestinians isolated and vulnerable.

The influx of immigrant Jewish communities from different countries to Israel has disenfranchised the Palestinians from their land. Although Israel claims that it offers democratic rights for all its citizens, in reality Palestinians have nothing. Ran Greenstein conceptualizes this situation by comparing the Israeli policies with the practice of the apartheid administration in South Africa. He identifies the policies practiced by Israel as “apartheid of a special type” and a crime against humanity. This article explores the similarities and differences between the now abandoned practice of apartheid in South Africa and the current apartheid policies of Israel,

highlighting the need to differentiate between Israel proper (within its pre-1967 boundaries), Greater Israel (within the post-1967 boundaries), and Greater Palestine. According to Greenstein, all seven pillars of apartheid can be shown to exist in the occupied territories, where the Israeli regime is the sole authority, leaving the Palestinian Authority powerless.

To reveal how the status of the original Palestinian population has been ignored, Elia Zureik highlights the Israeli practices of governance in Palestine and how the Zionist movement and later the Israeli state have worked to kill the dream of the Palestinian people for their own state. This has been achieved through passing racially biased laws that discriminate against the native population, and using violence when enforcing those laws, especially after the Israeli state codified its new citizenship law that defines Israel as the state of the Jewish people.

The article written by Victor Kattan examines the legality of the Israeli settlements and occupations in the West Bank, based on the perspective of international law and U.S. foreign policy. He analyzes the motives of the International Criminal Court (ICC) decision to initiate an investigation into the alleged war crimes committed in Palestine by the Israeli state, which include Israel's settlement activities (occupation) in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Kattan also criticizes the pro-Israeli changes in U.S. policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli question.

Hamas has a dual role in the political and military struggle: against the Israeli state on one hand and Fatah in Palestinian politics on the other. Although Hamas has had many achievements, since its establishment in the late 1980s, it has also failed in many aspects. To understand why, Nasuh Uslu and İbrahim Karataş evaluate this dualist struggle of Hamas in Palestine. The authors conclude that since Hamas has been otherized by many international actors, the Palestinian Authority (PA) and some international actors contributed more to this struggle. The article, which examines the history and outcomes of Hamas' involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, evaluates the movement's achievements and failures since the onset of its active role in the military struggle against Israel and in Palestinian politics against Fatah, the other main Palestinian actor. It concludes that Hamas, while achieving some success in its military struggle against Israel, has not delivered on the expectations of the Palestinian people, partly because they was squeezed into the Gaza Strip by the Palestinian Authority, and partly because international actors have blocked aid from entering the Hamas-controlled areas.

Ayfer Erdoğan and Lourdes Habash question the continuity of the U.S. policy making towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially under the Trump Ad-

ministration. The results show that there has not been a radical change throughout the administrations; however, the U.S. position in the conflict has become more transparent with a sharper pro-Israel tilt during the Trump Administration. The 2017 inauguration of Donald Trump as the U.S. president opened a new chapter in U.S. policy making toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Several developments that have taken place under the Trump Administration mark a clear rupture from the Oslo Accords in favor of support for Israeli plans to annex a large fraction of the West Bank and design a new settlement of the conflict according to its interests.

SECOND PART OF THE BOOK

The second part of the book, which consists of 11 articles, focuses on different dimensions of the post-al-Aqsa Flood period. The Palestinian-Israeli question, which consists of different dimensions, actors and religions, is one of the most complex issues in modern history. Muhittin Ataman and Metin Yücekaya elaborate the impact of the al-Aqsa Flood on four different dimensions, namely the bilateral, regional, civilizational and global. At the narrowest context, the question is about two conflicting nationalisms, the defensive Palestinian and the aggressive and expansionist Israeli. The second and third contexts involve Arabs and Muslims, who have their own reasons (ethnic and religious) to get involved in this issue. The last context, the global context, includes a strong humanitarian dimension. According to Ataman and Yücekaya, the Palestinian resistance represents one of the most important fronts of anti-imperialist struggle. The article analyzes the impact of al-Aqsa Flood on these four contexts of the issue.

A well-known scholar on the Palestinian-Israeli question, Mohsen Saleh provides a thorough strategic analysis of the al-Aqsa Flood and its impact on the Arab and Muslim world. Saleh analyzes important strategic implications of the attack. He points out that Israel's national security doctrine, which is based on deterrence, early warning and quick military decision, failed after the attack. Israel now has to add a fourth principle to its strategic doctrine. For Saleh, on the one hand, al-Aqsa Flood has bolstered the Islamic project for Palestine, underscored the profound importance of Bayt al-Maqdis, and confirmed the effectiveness of the resistance project as the rightful means to secure the rights of the Palestinian people. On the other hand, it has shown the failure of the Zionist project to subdue the Palestinian people, inflicted a severe blow against the normalization process in the Middle East, and illustrated the collapse of the Western value system. Saleh analyzes the

The comprehensive and effective attack launched by Hamas on October 7, 2023, the al-Aqsa Flood Operation, has become a turning point not only in the Palestinian-Israeli question and the Middle Eastern balance of power but also in modern world history. Being isolated from the rest of the world, subjected to any kind of inhumane treatment and under a fierce blockade for 17 years, Hamas, the Palestinian resistance movement that has ruled the Gaza Strip since 2006, initiated the al-Aqsa Flood Operation and inflicted what is to date the biggest military, political, economic, social and psychological damage to Israel. Israel replied with one of the most brutal and disproportionate attacks against not only Hamas but also against the whole people of Gaza, with a population of more than 2.3 million, a large portion of which were forcefully displaced by the Zionist regime and live in refugee camps.

