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## **A Critical Analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Its Impact on the Continent of Africa**

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### **Abstract**

The Israel-Palestine conflict of 2023 encapsulated a year of heightened tensions, recurring violence, and elusive peace prospects. Against a backdrop of historical grievances and territorial disputes, the region witnessed a resurgence of hostilities marked by intermittent clashes, rocket attacks, and retaliatory airstrikes. Amidst escalating violence, both Israeli and Palestinian leadership have faced internal challenges and political turmoil, exacerbating the complexity of reaching a sustainable resolution. The absence of meaningful dialogue and trust-building measures further entrenched the cycle of violence, deepening the humanitarian crisis and exacerbating civilian suffering. Similarly, international actors, including the United Nations and key regional powers, have engaged in diplomatic efforts to broker a ceasefire and revive peace negotiations. However, deep-seated mistrust and divergent political agendas hindered progress towards a comprehensive peace agreement. As a result, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has resonated far beyond the borders of the Middle East, with reverberations felt even on the continent of Africa. Therefore, this research paper explores a critical analysis and delves into the multifaceted dimensions of the conflict's impact on Africa. Adopting qualitative methods and secondary sources of data, the research finds that the impact of the conflict on Africa ranges from political, economic, humanitarian, and social consequences. The paper concludes that the conflict has detrimental effects on the continent's social cohesion and political stability. Lastly, the research paper recommends Ending of Settlement Expansion, Negotiation and Dialogue, Two-State Solution, and Promotion of Reconciliation as some of the possible means by which the conflict can come to an end.

**Keywords:** *Africa, Conflict, Impact, Israel, Palestine*

## **Introduction and Problem Statement**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict stands as one of the most enduring and complex geopolitical conflicts of the modern era, deeply rooted in historical, religious, and territorial disputes. Its origins trace back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as Jewish and Arab nationalist movements emerged in response to the declining Ottoman Empire and the subsequent British mandate in Palestine. The conflict revolves around competing claims to the land known as Israel/Palestine, which has historical significance for both Jews and Arabs. For Jews, it is the biblical Promised Land, while for Palestinians, it represents their ancestral homeland (Joseph, 2020). This shared attachment to the territory has fueled competing national identities and aspirations, resulting in decades of tension and violence.

The roots of the conflict can be traced to the late 19th century when Zionist leaders began advocating for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine as a response to anti-Semitism and persecution in Europe. The Balfour Declaration of 1917, issued by the British government, expressed support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, laying the groundwork for Jewish immigration to the region (Ghanim, 2022). However, the influx of Jewish immigrants sparked resentment among the Arab population, who feared displacement and marginalization in their land. Tensions escalated in the aftermath of World War II and the Holocaust, leading to increasing violence between Jewish and Arab communities.

The United Nations proposed a partition plan in 1947, which aimed to divide Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under international control. While Jewish leaders accepted the plan, Arab leaders rejected it, leading to the Arab Israeli War of 1948. The conflict resulted in the establishment of the state of Israel and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, who became refugees in neighboring Arab countries (Ben-Meir, 2022). Subsequent wars and conflicts, including the Six-Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973, further entrenched the divide between Israelis and Palestinians. The Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem since 1967 has been a major point of contention, as Palestinians seek to establish an independent state in these territories.

Efforts to achieve a lasting peace agreement, including the Oslo Accords of the 1990s and various international initiatives, have been hindered by deep-seated mistrust, competing claims to territory,

and the ongoing cycle of violence. Despite occasional periods of relative calm and diplomatic engagement, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains unresolved, with profound implications for regional stability and global security.

Following the October 7th, 2023, armed incursion by Hamas on Israeli's nationals, there have been a series of counter-attacks by the Israeli government. Heightened tensions between Israel and Palestine have resulted in fatalities from bombings and terrorist assaults against Israeli civilians perpetrated by the Sunni Islamist extremist group, Hamas. Simultaneously, Israel has witnessed a surge in right-wing nationalism and extremism, prompting demands for the annexation of the West Bank and the compulsory relocation of Palestinians. Presently, the situation is characterized by sporadic escalations of violence, resulting in numerous casualties and profound instability. The conflict has recently escalated with Israel conducting airstrikes on the Gaza Strip in response to Palestine's continuous missile attacks, leading to fatalities and mass displacement. Since the beginning of the renewed conflict in October 2023, more than 31,000 lives have been lost on both sides (World Report, 2024).

Although the Middle East where the conflict is taking place is hundreds of miles away from the continent of Africa, the conflict has had a devastating impact on the continent particularly, the diplomatic role between the African Union and Israel and the continuous condemnation of Israel's assault by South Africa. Hence, this research paper endeavours to examine the trajectory of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, focusing on the impact of the conflict particularly on the continent of Africa.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The specific aim of this research study is to critically elucidate the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on the Continent of Africa. However, the specific objectives are.

- i. To examine the impact of the Israel-Palestine conflict on Africa.
- ii. Suggest recommendations on how to mitigate the conflict between the two parties.

### **Methodology**

This research paper adopts a qualitative approach that involves the use of secondary data sources such as academic journals, government reports, media reports, and library sources. The choice of

secondary data is because it allows for an in-depth analysis of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Data collected is analysed via content analysis.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **Impact of the Conflict on the Continent of Africa**

The Israel-Palestine conflict on the continent of Africa cut across lots of strata. Some of the strata are discussed below;

#### **Political Impacts of the Conflict on Africa**

The Israel-Palestine conflict has had significant political impacts on the continent of Africa, influencing diplomatic relations, regional alliances, and domestic politics in several African countries. One of the primary political impacts of the Israel-Palestine conflict on Africa is the polarization of states along ideological lines. African countries have historically taken various stances on the conflict, aligning themselves either with Israel or Palestine based on their political interests, historical ties, and religious affiliations (Kwaja, 2024). This polarization often leads to diplomatic tensions and complicates regional cooperation efforts. For example, countries like Egypt, Sudan, and Algeria have traditionally supported the Palestinian cause due to historical ties, pan-Arab solidarity, and the predominance of Islam in their societies (Kwaja, 2024). These countries often advocate for Palestinian rights in international forums and condemn Israeli actions perceived as violations of international law. On the other hand, countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda have maintained close diplomatic relations with Israel, driven by shared security concerns, technological cooperation, and economic interests (Salman, 2024). Such alliances have shaped Africa's role in mediating or exacerbating the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Moreover, the Israel-Palestine conflict has influenced domestic politics in African countries with significant Muslim populations. Political parties and movements within these countries often leverage the Palestinian cause to mobilize support and legitimacy. For instance, in Nigeria, the Palestine issue has been used by Islamic political groups to rally public opinion against the government or to advance their own agendas. Similarly, in South Africa, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) has historically aligned itself with the Palestinian cause as part of its

broader strategy to promote solidarity with oppressed peoples and to differentiate itself from the apartheid regime it once fought against.

Also, the Israel-Palestine conflict has served as a proxy battleground for geopolitical rivalries within Africa. External actors, including the United States, European Union, and Gulf states, often seek to exert influence in Africa by either supporting Israel or Palestine. This competition for influence exacerbates existing tensions and complicates conflict resolution efforts. For instance, Gulf states like Saudi Arabia and Qatar have sought to expand their influence in Africa by providing financial aid and diplomatic support to countries sympathetic to their respective positions on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Additionally, the Israel-Palestine conflict intersects with other regional conflicts and security challenges in Africa, contributing to instability and exacerbating existing conflicts. For example, the proliferation of small arms and militant ideologies associated with the conflict has fueled violence in regions like the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, where various armed groups exploit local grievances and external support to advance their agendas.

### **Economic Impact of the Conflict on Africa**

The economic impact is often considered as the most affective impact on the continent of Africa. The Israel-Palestine conflict, though geographically centered in the Middle East, has far-reaching economic impacts that extend beyond the region, affecting various continents, including Africa. These effects manifest through diplomatic relationships, trade dynamics, and geopolitical alliances. Despite being physically distant, Africa experiences several economic repercussions due to its interconnectedness with global markets and political dynamics. One significant impact of the Israel-Palestine conflict on Africa is through its influence on 'Diplomatic Relationships'. Many African countries maintain ties with both Israel and Palestine, often navigating delicate diplomatic balancing acts. Historically, African states have expressed solidarity with the Palestinian cause due to shared experiences of colonization and struggles for self-determination. A typical instance of this is the African Union's Declaration against the continual bombardment of Gaza by Israel (Steinberg, 2023). This solidarity often translates into strained relations with Israel, affecting potential economic partnerships and collaborations. Conversely, African states recognizing Israel may gain access to Israeli technologies and expertise, which could bolster economic development in sectors such as agriculture, water management, and healthcare.

Trade dynamics are another aspect of the economic impact. While Africa's direct trade with Israel and Palestine might not be substantial compared to other regions, the conflict's ripple effects disrupt global trade flows, affecting African economies. Instability in the Middle East often leads to volatility in global commodity prices, particularly oil, which has significant implications for oil-importing African states. Additionally, disruptions in maritime trade routes, such as the Suez Canal, due to regional tensions can increase transportation costs for African exports and imports, impacting trade-dependent economies.

Similarly, the Israel-Palestine conflict intersects with broader geopolitical dynamics involving African countries. Regional and global powers often align themselves with either side of the conflict, influencing their engagements with African states. This alignment affects foreign aid, investment, and military cooperation, all of which have economic implications. African countries find themselves pressured to take sides or face consequences in terms of reduced aid or investment from influential actors. Moreover, involvement in peacekeeping missions related to the conflict strain African states' resources and divert attention and funding from domestic economic priorities.

### **Social Impacts of the Conflict on Africa**

The significant social impact of the Israel-Palestine conflict on Africa is the emergence of solidarity movements and political activism. African states, many of which have experienced colonization and oppression, often sympathize with the Palestinian cause, seeing parallels between their struggles for independence and self-determination. For example, during the apartheid era in South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) found a common cause with Palestinian liberation movements, viewing both struggles as fights against colonialism and oppression. This solidarity has manifested in various forms, including protests, boycotts, and diplomatic support for Palestinian statehood.

Furthermore, the Israel-Palestine conflict has fueled religious tensions within African societies, particularly between Muslim and Christian communities (Tzidkiyahu, 2021). While religion is not the sole factor driving these tensions, the conflict's religious dimension exacerbates existing fault lines. In countries like Nigeria, which has a significant Muslim population in the north and a predominantly Christian south, debates over the conflict can deepen divisions and contribute to

interreligious violence Tzidkiyahu, 2021). Extremist groups may exploit these tensions to advance their agendas, leading to further instability and conflict.

Humanitarian crises resulting from the Israel-Palestine conflict also impact Africa, both directly and indirectly. The conflict's displacement of Palestinian refugees has created one of the world's most protracted refugee situations, with millions living in camps across the Middle East. Some of these refugees have sought asylum in African countries, adding pressure to already strained resources and exacerbating local tensions. Additionally, African states often face diplomatic and economic pressure related to the conflict, as international aid and investment decisions often intersect with geopolitical considerations.

### **Security Impacts of the Conflict on Africa**

This is also one of the significant impacts of the conflict on the continent of Africa. One significant security impact of the Israel-Palestine conflict on Africa is its role in exacerbating religious tensions and extremism. Africa is home to a diverse range of religious communities, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict often resonates deeply with Muslim populations across the continent. Extremist groups, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria or Al-Shabaab in Somalia, exploit grievances related to the Palestinian cause to recruit members and justify their violent actions. For example, both groups have referenced the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories in their propaganda to galvanize support and justify their attacks against perceived enemies (Khaemba, 2021). Thus, the conflict indirectly contributes to the spread of radicalization and terrorism in various African countries.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Israel-Palestine conflict has reverberated across continents, and its impacts on Africa are profound and multifaceted. As discussed throughout this research paper, the conflict has influenced various aspects of African societies, ranging from political dynamics to economic relations and social solidarity. Thus, the Israel-Palestine conflict has left an indelible mark on Africa, shaping its politics, economics, and social consciousness. While the conflict may seem geographically distant, its repercussions are deeply felt across the continent, intersecting with existing challenges and struggles for justice and liberation. As Africa continues to navigate its path toward peace, development, and self-determination, addressing the root causes of the Israel-

Palestine conflict and advocating for a just and lasting resolution will remain essential for fostering a more peaceful and equitable world for all.

### **Recommendations**

The research study thereby makes the following recommendations on mitigation of the Isreal-Palestine conflict:

1. **Two-State Solution:** One of the most widely endorsed solutions is the establishment of two separate states for Israelis and Palestinians, with defined borders based on the pre-1967 lines, also known as the Green Line. This solution involves the creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, allowing each people to govern themselves.
2. **Negotiation and Dialogue:** Diplomatic negotiations and dialogue between the Israeli government and Palestinian leadership are essential for finding a mutually acceptable resolution. Direct talks mediated by neutral parties, such as the United States or the United Nations, can help facilitate constructive discussions.
3. **End Settlement Expansion:** Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, considered illegal under international law, are a major obstacle to peace efforts. Halting the expansion of settlements and dismantling existing unauthorized outposts can build trust and demonstrate a commitment to a negotiated settlement.
4. **Security for Israelis and Palestinians:** Ensuring security for both Israelis and Palestinians is crucial for any lasting peace agreement. Effective security measures, including border controls, counterterrorism efforts, and confidence-building measures, are necessary to address the legitimate security concerns of both sides.
5. **Humanitarian Assistance:** Addressing the humanitarian needs of Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip and West Bank is essential for fostering stability and improving living conditions. Providing humanitarian assistance, including access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities, can alleviate suffering and promote peace.
6. **Recognition and Respect for Rights:** Recognizing and respecting the rights of both Israelis and Palestinians is fundamental for building trust and reconciliation. This includes respecting the



right to self-determination, freedom from violence and discrimination, and access to land, water, and other resources.

7. **Regional Cooperation:** Engaging neighboring countries and regional powers in peace efforts can help create a conducive environment for resolving the conflict. Regional cooperation on security, economic development, and diplomatic initiatives can strengthen peace initiatives and foster regional stability.

8. **International Involvement:** International involvement and support are indispensable for advancing the peace process. The international community, including the United Nations, European Union, Arab League, and other stakeholders, should actively support peace efforts and help bridge gaps between the parties.

9. **Promotion of Reconciliation:** Promoting reconciliation and fostering a culture of peace and coexistence among Israelis and Palestinians are essential for building sustainable peace. Educational initiatives, people-to-people exchanges, and grassroots peacebuilding efforts can help bridge divides and promote understanding.

10. **Long-Term Vision and Commitment:** Achieving a lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict requires a long-term vision and sustained commitment from all parties involved. While progress may be incremental, maintaining a steadfast commitment to peace and justice is essential for overcoming obstacles and achieving a just and comprehensive solution.

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