



MIDDLE EAST WEEKLY

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Middle East in a Week

Regarding international relations and world politics, the Middle East may be the most controversial region in the current times. On the one hand it sits on most of the world's oil reserves, while on the other hand, it inhibits the followers of the most controversial religion in the world, Islam. These matters combined have created a region filled with drastic events. Every day, there are new wars erupting in the region and every day, there are new ways through which the west and the far east try to increase their influence in the region. This region inhibits 411 million people out of which 28 % are under the age of 25 years old. This newsletter tries to give weekly updates on the important issues in the Middle East and combining them with some analysis, hopes to have a role in changing the region's situation to the better.

Inside This Issue

AN ENDLESS GAME OF TIT FOR TAT

WORLD SOLIDARITY FOR ENDING THE WAR

THE EU LIMITING PALESTANIANS' OPTIONS

ISREAL KEEPS PUSHING PALESTANIANS OUT

ONE ISRAELI FOR ONE PALESTANIAN

AN ENDLESS GAME OF TIT FOR TAT¹

Once more the conflict between Hamas and Israel has escalated; leaving behind a heavy body count. Hamas, the group that rules the Gaza Strip, launched a new barrage of rockets into Israel after Israeli missiles destroyed a third tower in the besieged coastal territory. Heavy bombardment on the Gaza Strip continued into Wednesday as Israeli forces continued to launch intensive raids on various locations. Hamas confirmed that its Gaza City commander, Bassem Issa, was killed in an Israeli air attack along with other senior members of the group. Gaza's Ministry of Health said the overall death toll since the start of the latest offensive stood at 67, including 16 children. More than 300 others have been wounded. At least six Israelis, including one child, have also been killed. The Israeli army said about 1,500 rockets have been fired from Gaza towards various locations in Israel and they have added reinforcements near the enclave's eastern lands.



WORLD SOLIDARITY FOR ENDING THE WAR²

This time around, not only the humanitarian activists, but also the world leaders are showing strong concerns for the recent escalation between Hamas and Israel. The Israeli army has launched hundreds of air strikes on the Gaza Strip since Monday, while Palestinians have launched more than 1,000 rockets. The escalation has seen at least 56 Palestinians in Gaza – including 14 children – and six Israelis die in a matter of days, and hundreds wounded, in the most intense flare-up since the seven-week 2014 Israeli war on Gaza. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Wednesday reiterated his urging for a halt to violence between Israel and the Palestinians in a call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. “The secretary reiterated his call on all parties to de-escalate tensions and bring a halt to the violence,” said a State Department statement. “Serious concern was expressed about the continuing clashes and the growing number of people killed and wounded,” the Kremlin said in a statement on Wednesday.



THE EU LIMITING PALESTANIANS' OPTIONS³

A few days ago, the EU court ruled against Import from the Israeli settlements in fear of offending a third country. A European Union court on Wednesday ruled in favor of litigants seeking to ban the import of goods from Israeli settlements on occupied land, rescinding a decision by the bloc's executive branch in 2019 not to register a petition submitted by citizens. The European Commission – the EU's executive arm – failed to adequately state the reasons for its decision not to register the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) proposal, the Luxembourg-based General Court said in a statement. The Commission's explanation for refusing to register the ECI proposal was that it would disrupt economic and financial relations with a third country. "A citizen presenting such a proposed initiative must be given the opportunity to understand the Commission's reasoning," the court ruled.



ISREAL KEEPS PUSHING PALESTANIANS OUT⁵

Israel keeps forcing Palestinians out of their homes. Such actions do have repercussions; the ever-increasing conflict between the two sides being the least. What started out as protests against forced expulsions in a Palestinian neighborhood have turned into an Israeli crackdown that has engulfed much of occupied East Jerusalem, including holy sites like Al-Aqsa Mosque. But Sheikh Jarrah is just one neighborhood, and displacements are unfolding across the occupied territories. As the reverberations in Sheikh Jarrah spread beyond the neighborhood, how will it affect the future of Palestinians in Jerusalem? This is a question which is answered differently in each corner of the world. It all began in 1948 when the settlers established the state of Israel. Since then, each side has pushed the other into a corner through violent attacks. After decades of conflict, peace is still far away. On one side, there is Hamas who believes Israel to be an illegitimate state. On the other side, there is Israel who claims to be the true owner of the land it occupies. No matter who wins, the people were, are and will be the real losers.



ONE ISRAELI FOR ONE PALESTANIAN⁴

The recent escalation between Israel and Hamas has increased the death tolls on both side. Palls of grey smoke rose in Gaza on Wednesday, as Israeli air attacks struck apartment towers and blasted multiple Hamas security installations. In Israel, hundreds of rockets fired by Gaza's Hamas rulers and other groups at times overwhelmed missile defences and sent air raid sirens and explosions echoing across Tel Aviv, Israel's biggest metropolitan area, and other cities. Gaza's Ministry of Health said the overall death toll since the latest offensive began stood at at least 65, including 16 children. At least 365 people have been wounded. Six people have been killed on the Israeli side by rocket fire, including the first death of an Israeli soldier in this round of conflict. The other deaths have been that of civilians, including three women and two children, one of them a six-year-old wounded in a rocket attack on an apartment building in the city of Sderot. Dozens in Israel have been wounded. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the brigade commander for Gaza City was among 15 other Hamas members who had been killed on Wednesday.



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