



# 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.

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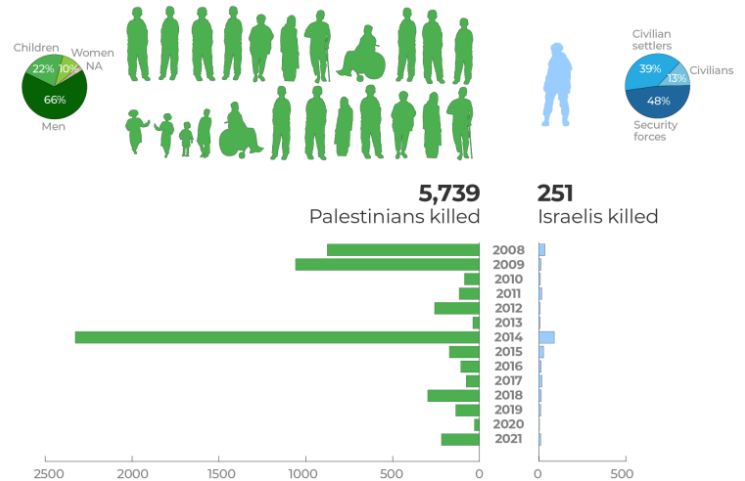
## ISRAEL AT PALESTINE'S THROAT ONCE MORE<sup>1</sup>

Since May 10<sup>th</sup>, Israeli forces have been bombarding the Gaza Strip for the fourth time in 13 years. At least 220 Palestinians, including 63 children, have been killed in Gaza. At least 12 people have died in Israel, including two children. According to Human Rights Watch, Israel is “committing crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution” against the Palestinians. Between 2008 and 2021, at least 5,739 Palestinians and 251 Israelis were killed. The conflict has killed 23 Palestinians for each Israeli, according to the United Nations. Over the same time period at least 121,438 Palestinians and 5,682 Israelis were injured. Of those killed on the Palestinian side at least 1,255 (22 percent) were children and 565 (10 percent) were women. On the Israeli side 121 (48 percent) of those killed were security forces as categorized by the UN.

### ISRAEL/PALESTINE

#### The human cost

Between 2008 and 2021, the conflict has killed **23 Palestinians for each Israeli** according to the UN.



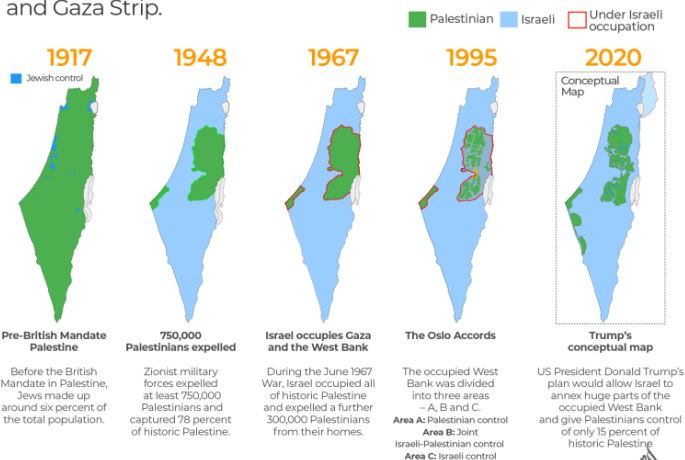
Categories for fatalities as defined by the UN  
Source: UN OCHA | May 18, 2021

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### ISRAEL/PALESTINE

#### Palestinians expelled

In 1948, Zionist military forces expelled at least **750,000 Palestinians and captured 78 percent of historic Palestine**. The remaining 22 percent was divided into the West Bank and Gaza Strip.



Source: UN OCHA

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## ISRAEL PUSHES THE PROTESTS BACK BY FORCE<sup>2</sup>

While many Palestinians decided on showing their unease with the recent Israeli violations of human rights by public protests, the Israeli government thought it best to respond with more violence. One Palestinian has been killed and dozens wounded by Israeli gunfire during clashes at the Beit El military checkpoint near Ramallah in the occupied West Bank. Muhammed Ishaq Hamid, 25, was critically wounded during the clashes and was pronounced dead upon arrival at a hospital in Ramallah. On Tuesday morning, hundreds of Palestinians gathered in Ramallah's Manara square, waving flags and singing patriotic songs before marching towards the Beit El military checkpoint, in Al Bireh. “My family is originally from Haifa but were driven out by the Israelis during the first Arab-Israeli war and were forced to flee abroad,” Randa, who took part in the demonstration with her children and grandchildren, told Al Jazeera. “The situation is very miserable. Palestinians have the right to fight the occupation because Israel kills many of our people and drives people from their own land.”

## ISRAEL: OUTSIDE HELP NOT ALLOWED<sup>3</sup>

According to Israeli officials, mortar attacks were conducted under the cover of foreign aid. Therefore, they are preventing any outside aids from entering the Gaza Strip. A convoy of international aid trucks that started rolling into Gaza through Karem Abu Salem, (Kerem Shalom), a border crossing with Israel, was stopped on Tuesday when Israel closed the crossing, citing a mortar attack in the area. The move on Tuesday came shortly after the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) announced the temporary opening of the border crossing for the delivery of aid. The COGAT said in a statement later that the border crossing was closed after an Israeli soldier was slightly injured in the attack. "After a firing of mortar bombs towards the Kerem Shalom Crossing ... it has been decided to stop the entry of the rest of the trucks," said COGAT. Earlier, Karl Schembri, media adviser for the Middle East at the Norwegian Refugee Council, told Al Jazeera that Gaza would be "suffocated" if the Kerem Abu Salem and Beit Hanoon (Erez) crossings were kept shut.

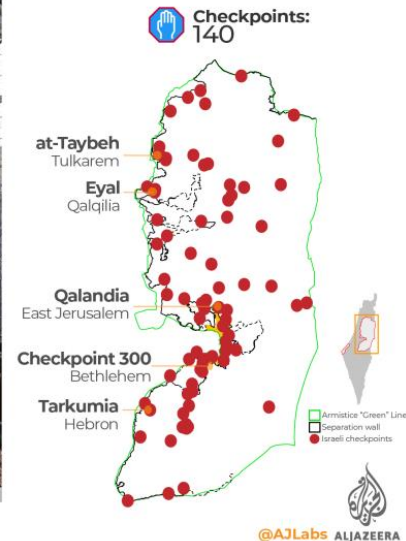
### ISRAEL/PALESTINE

#### Israeli checkpoints

There are over **700 road obstacles across the West Bank including 140 checkpoints**. These checkpoints severely limit Palestinian movement. **About 70,000 Palestinians** with Israeli work permits cross these checkpoints in their daily commute.



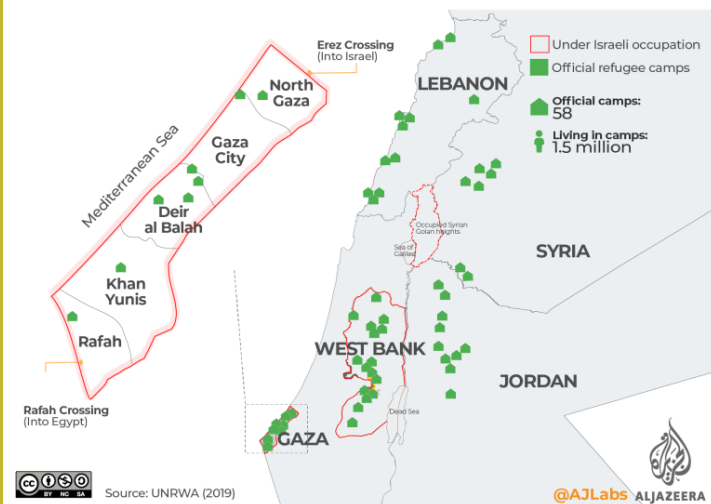
Source: OCHA (2018)



### ISRAEL/PALESTINE

#### Palestinian refugee camps

There are **1.5 million Palestinian refugees** living in 58 official camps located throughout Palestine and neighbouring countries. **The plight of Palestinian refugees is the longest, unresolved refugee problem in the world.**



## THE US PUSHING FOR SEIZE FIRE<sup>5</sup>

The US president, Joe Biden, has joined the advocates of de-escalation in Gaza Strip. "The two leaders had a detailed discussion on the state of events in Gaza, Israel's progress in degrading the capabilities of Hamas and other terrorist elements, and ongoing diplomatic efforts by regional governments and the United States," White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters on Wednesday. "The president conveyed to the prime minister that he expected a significant de-escalation today on the path to a ceasefire," Jean-Pierre added. It was the fourth call in the past week between the US and Israeli leaders. Citing an unnamed official, The Associated Press news agency reported that Biden and administration officials have been encouraging Netanyahu and other top Israeli officials to wind down the bombardment of Gaza. Palestinian medical officials said 219 people have been killed in 10 days of aerial bombardments which have destroyed roads, buildings and other infrastructure, and worsened the already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza.



## NOT EVEN JOURNALISTS ARE SAFE<sup>4</sup>

Yusef Abu Hussein, a Palestinian journalist, was among the victims of Israel's bombardment of the Gaza Strip. Hussein, a broadcaster for the the local Voice of Al-Aqsa radio station, was among the four Palestinians killed in the early hours of Wednesday as Israel continued its relentless bombardment on the besieged enclave. The journalist's father, Muhammed Abu Hussein, said the family home in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood was targeted by a missile, followed by two more strikes. "We were able to get out of the house. But my boy, Yusef ... was killed," he said. The news of Hussein's killing sparked an outpouring of grief and calls for the Israeli government to be held accountable. The Voice of Al-Aqsa radio station said in a statement it mourned the loss of its "son and employee" and called for a vigil at 5pm at al-Shifa hospital. "We also document, in front of the world, this heinous crime committed by the Israeli enemy, including targeting civilians in their homes and attacking the press and media personnel," it said. Salama Maarouf, head of the ministry of government information in Gaza, offered "warm condolences" to Hussein's family, loved ones and colleagues.

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### ISRAEL/PALESTINE

## Assaults on Gaza



Source: Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor

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## References & Further Readings

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<sup>2</sup>Israeli forces kill Palestinian protester in occupied West Bank, Mel Frykberg, ALJAZEERA, 18-

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<sup>3</sup>Israel closes Gaza border crossing again, halting aid deliveries, ALJAZEERA, 18-MAY-2021,

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<sup>4</sup>Israeli air raid kills Palestinian journalist in his Gaza house, ALJAZEERA, 19-MAY-2021,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/19/israeli-air-raid-kills-palestinian-journalist-in-his-gaza-house>

<sup>5</sup>Biden pushes Netanyahu for a 'path to a ceasefire' in Gaza, ALJAZEERA, 19-MAY-2021,

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