

Prospects for Peace: Opportunities and Obstacles in Israel- Palestine Conflict

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ABSTRACT:

The Israeli Palestinian conflict has persisted over seven decades which characterized by recurring violence, fail peace negotiation and profound humanitarian crises. Despite many international efforts to maintain peace a sustainable violence remain elusive. This research paper examines both the obstacles impeding peace and opportunities that foster a viable resolution. Core challenges include the unresolved status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank, the right of return for Palestinian refugees and internal political division within both Israeli and Palestinian leadership. These factors continue to fuel mistrust and violence, undermining dialogue and diplomatic efforts .However, there are emerging opportunities that could contribute to renewed peace efforts. Recent regional developments including normalization agreements between Israel and several Arab countries which reflects shifting geopolitical dynamics that may open doors for broader engagement .International advocacy for two state solution along with civil society and grassroots initiatives also play a crucial role in promoting mutual understanding and reconciliation. This article argues that while significant obstacles remain but genuine political commitment, respect for international law and inclusive dialogue are essential to overcoming these barriers. Peace is attainable if both parties are supported by international community; prioritize justice, security and dignity for all people living in the region.

INTRODUCTION:

The Israel Palestine conflict stands as one of the most complex and enduring conflicts of the modern era which deeply entrenched in historical, religious, political and socio economic cultural dimensions. Since the early 20th century the region witnessed repeated cycles of violence, displacements and failed negotiations which render the prospects for a sustainable peace tenuous and often elusive. Despite numerous international efforts and peace accords ranging from Oslo Accords to more recent Abraham Accords the fundamental issues that underpin the conflict remain unresolved. Understanding the dual nature of the conflict including the deeply rooted obstacles and the overlooked opportunities for peace. Obstacles to peace are formidable and multifaceted. They are not limited to geopolitical disputes but extend to psychological and ideological factors such as collective trauma, national identity, and asymmetric power dynamics. The political fragmentation within both Israeli and Palestinian leadership further complicates the path forward. In particular, the internal division between Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza creates a fractured Palestinian front which weakens the diplomatic coherence and reducing the effectiveness of peace initiative .Yet, amidst these

daunting challenges there are some emerging opportunities with genuine political will and international support could lay the ground work for sustainable resolution. The recent normalization of relations between Israel and several Arab states as United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan has reshaped regional geopolitics and opened new channels of dialogue. While these agreements are criticized by some as sidelining the Palestinian cause and they offer indirect leverage and incentives for renewed negotiations. Furthermore, global civil society movements, international legal frameworks and grassroots peace building initiative continue to foster intercommoned dialogue and challenge official narratives of intractability. The study aims to explore both the obstacles and opportunities that define the current and future prospects for peace in the Israel Palestinian conflict. By analyzing the political development, socio cultural dynamics and international interventions, the study seeks to provide the nuanced understanding of the conditions that hinder peace and the possibilities that remain. Unlike policy oriented assessments that often prioritize state centric views this article adopts a multidisciplinary approach helps to analyze the international relations, conflict resolution theory which provide a compressive analysis of peace prospects in the region. The urgency of this topic is underscored by the humanitarian crisis resulting from recent escalation in violence, the increasing alienation of youth on both sides and the waning global commitment to a two state solution. As a conflict continue to affect the millions of lives and destabilize the broader Middle East which examine the possibilities for peace remains not only a scholarly necessity but also a moral imperative. Therefore, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse by identifying both the entrenched barriers and overlooked openings that could potentially guide the region toward a just and lasting peace.

BACKGROUND OF CONFLICT:

Some writers perceived that the Israel Palestine conflict started to World War II. They saw atrocities that led to death of six million Jews and also a mass migration of Jews in 'Zionist' movement. This mass movement saw the repatriation of occupied by Palestinian under the colonial rule of British. This led to a bitter struggle between Israel and Palestinians as they embroiled in one of the most tragic and intractable conflict in the world today (SBS News, 2019). However, the conflict between both is traced back to half a century prior World War II. The area known as Israel today was officially Palestinian starting in 1917 as they made majority of the populace in the area with a few Jews and Turks were also resistant there .Between 1882 to 1948, there had been large scale movements of Jews into the area in several regions which result in surges in number of Jews then residing in the region and making it a major attraction for other Jews around the world want to return home. These movements were sparked by embittered Jews who were fleeing oppression in Eastern Europe around 1881 especially from Russia. They promote Zionism and building a national home for Jews in Ottoman ruled Palestine. This Zionist movement was a planned strategy that emanated from the first Zionist

congress that was held in Basel, Switzerland in 1897. The meeting had purpose to repatriation of Jews to their home which was inhabited by Palestinians. This move was later supported by a British Deceleration in 1917 affirming Palestine to be a national home for the Jewish returnees despite apprehensions and rebuffs by the Palestinians after they had taken over the area as a colony with the defeat of Ottoman empire in the first world war .For the Jews, it marked a return to their ancestral home while for Palestinians it was an incursion into their land ensuing resultant violence between Jews and Arabs and also between the Arabs and British against the Arabs and later a refusal by the British of more Jewish immigration in favor of Arabs. The hitherto peaceful coexistence that existed between the Jews, Turks and Palestinians slowly gave way to conflicting relationships. These conflicts saw the more displacements of Palestinian populations and more competition over scare resources. This led to further discussions by British colonialist and an onward proposal to the League of Nation in 1937 for ratification which led to a subsequent postponement on any decision with regards to partitioning. After second world war, The British relinquish their colonial obligation over Palestine leaving the UN with the task of finding a solution to the statehood and governance debacle inherent in the region especially with the conflicts that have arisen due to Jewish population surge as most Jews that were displaced during second world war were afraid of moving back to their old habitations because of anti-Semitic fears leaving the UN with obligation to find a place to repatriate them(United Nations, 1947). The 1947 report of UNSCOP stated that despite offering to resettle the displaced Jews in other countries, They were met with stiff resistance as a majority of them affirmed they were not going to settle in any other country except Palestine. The Arabs wanted a unitary Palestinian state as some members of the UN Committee advocated for a federal state with shares powers which was rejected by both Jews and Arabs and other part of committee opted for two independent states which was accepted by Israel to the disgust of Palestinians. This led the UN under the auspices of the UNSCOP to come up with a partition plan that opted for both states.

The purpose was to made economic union between both states. Due to refusal by Arabs the partition plan of UN was not implemented. The conditions for partition was not favorable for Israel but was acceded to by the Jewish leadership then because their desire for statehood .So despite the omission of Galilee, winding boundaries, not enough agriculture land, rises of population due to return of more Jews, proximity to large Arab population and high propensity for conflicts with its Arabs neighbors, Israel was happy with partition deal. Israel was given as de facto recognition by some nations while others gave it de jure recognition.

Israel and Palestine always remain a serious issue for world peace and security, since seven decades. This region is a home of Muslims, Christians and Jews that becoming problem for international world to find the root causes and obstacles that hinder the peace between both

states and also it become a great challenge for world peace actors to find the possibilities and opportunities which can bring peace among Palestine and Israel.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

- a. Jeff Halper's article "Obstacles to Peace" offers a provocative and deeply critical perspective on structural and ideological foundations of ongoing conflict. Halper's writes from both an academic and activist standpoint. His central thesis contends that the failure of peace process lies not in inability to negotiate a fair agreement but in the very framing of the conflict and the deliberate creation of a system designed to prevent a viable Palestinian state. Halper introduce the concept of "Matrix of Control". It is multifaceted mechanism of occupation that include not only the visible elements such as settlements, military check points , Bypass Roads and the Separation Wall but also the less tangible elements like bureaucratic permits, legal constraints, and economic dependency. According to Halper matrix is not accidental or transitional but a long term strategy designed to make Israel's control over Palestinian land irreversible while maintaining the illusion of peace process. This reframing challenges mainstream narratives that treat the Israel occupation as temporary or an unfortunate consequence of security concerns. This work critique the Oslo Accords and broader two state frameworks by arguing that these initiatives serve more as tool for managing conflict rather than resolving it. In Halper's view, the two-state solution structurally undermined Israeli policies aimed at fragmenting Palestinian territory into disconnected enclaves, much like South African Bantustans under apartheid. He also identifies the role of international community, particularly the US, as complicit in perpetuating this imbalance by consistently supporting Israel diplomatically and financially, regardless of its violations of international law Halper analysis is unique because he reframes the conflict from human rights and anti- colonial perspective rather than one based solely on national interest or diplomacy. His work aligns with critical theories in conflict studies. In his work he uses the qualitative approach combining with critical discourse analysis. Despite Halper critical analysis his study lacks the quantitative socio-economic data on the cumulative occupation which limits the policy application. His study needs more systematic study of grassroots resistance movements which help to deepen the picture more.
- b. Maia Hallward's 2011 article "Pursuing Peace in Israel-Palestine" critically examine the efficiency of international diplomatic efforts in resolving the Israel Palestinian conflict, particularly focus on US led initiatives such as Performance based Road Map to Peace and 2007 Annapolis Conference. Hallward argues that these efforts have often circumventive core issues, delaying substantive negotiation by emphasizing provisional solutions and fact on the ground which undermines the prospects for final status

agreement. She highlights the failure of military strategies, citing the humanitarian crises in Gaza and disproportionate casualties during Operation Cast Lead as evidence of ineffectiveness of force in achieving peace. Hallward analysis provides a critical perspective on limitation of top down diplomatic approaches and military interventions. Her work provides alternative strategies that address the underlying structural inequalities and power imbalance inherent in the conflict. In her work she utilizes the case studies of specific diplomatic initiatives and military operations to assess their impact on peace process. While Hallward's work need for further research which need to explore the perspective and experiences of local communities affected by conflict. Moreover, this article needs to examine the effectiveness of alternative conflict resolution model by comparative studies as bottom up approach which offers new avenues for understanding and addressing the complexities of Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- c. Elie Podeh's *"Chances for Peace"* provides an invaluable contribution to the field of Middle Eastern studies and conflict resolution. In his seminal work he offers a compressive analysis of about two dozen pivotal movements in Arab Israel conflict where peace was within reach but ultimately unachievable. Drawing from diverse array of primary and secondary sources in English he meticulously examines historical events spanning from the early 20th century through the early 21st century. His work encompasses a wide range of diplomatic initiatives, including the Faysal-Weizmann Agreement (1919), the UN Partition Plan (1947), the Rogers Plan (1969), the Camp David Summit (2000), and the Arab Peace Initiative (2002), among others. Podeh's analysis challenge prevailing narratives by highlighting instances where both Israeli and Arab leaders missed opportunities for peace due to various factors like lack of trust, political constraints, and external pressures. A significant contribution of Podeh's work is that he identifies the legitimacy of political involvement in conflicts, the willingness of parties to take bold steps for peace, examine the level of trust among the parties and role of involvement of credible third party .Overall, Podeh provides the nuanced into the complexities of peace negotiation and the multifaceted reasons behind their failure. Podeh employ the systematic study of diplomatic efforts and peace initiatives over a span of nearly a century. While his work miss the role of non-state actors and civil organizations in influencing peace process. Furthermore, his studies lack the understanding of impacts of geopolitical shifts which occur after the end of cold war and also the Arab Israel peace efforts are not discussed. Future research building upon Podeh's methodology and addressing the identified gaps could further enrich the discourse on conflict resolution and contribute to the development of more effective strategies for achieving lasting peace.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the research is to explore and analyze the obstacles hindering the peace in Israel Palestinian Conflict and also identifies the possible opportunities and regional developments that could contribute to a viable peace process. Furthermore, this research also evaluate the effectiveness of past peace initiatives and diplomatic efforts including those led by US and international actors to assess the role of international law, civil society and grassroots movements which foster the dialogue , promote the justice and facilitate the reconciliation between two sides. The purpose of this research is to adopt multidisciplinary approach that integrates conflict resolution theory, the political analysis and international observation for understanding the nature of conflict.

Research Questions:

What political development can bring the chance for peace between Israel and Palestine?

What nature of obstacles reduces the chances of peace between both nations?

Which opportunities bring peace in future between both nations?

What are the possible solutions for bringing peace in region?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This data is basically taken from various databases and websites both mostly using secondary sources. This data collected from different books, articles, journals, news and magazines related to Palestine conflict. This research study adopts a qualitative interdisciplinary methodology by combining the critical discourse analysis of academic literature and peace proposals inspired by Halper and Hallwards approaches and Podeh's model provide the historical analytical review of missed diplomatic opportunities. This methodological approach provides an in depth understanding of both the structural barriers to peace and underexplored opportunities that may yet guide future efforts.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE:

This research study helps to explore the underlying issues which prevent the peace movement between both states and also provide necessary and helpful insights which may help to develop peace in future. It also provides the understanding of possible opportunities and ways which should be adopted for possible peace in any region.

Section I:

Peace remains elusive between Israel and Palestine:

In the past three decades we see different flashpoints discussed below that hinder the peace development between Israel and Palestine and make the situation tenser.

The battle for Jerusalem Holy Sites: For both Israeli and Palestinian people, and billion around the world, the religious sites hold extraordinary religious and cultural significance. The old city of Jerusalem which was a home to the western wall, the AL- Aqsa Mosque, and the Church of Holy Sepulchre is revered by adherents of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and making it a focal point of contention. Dispute over control and sovereignty around these sites have historically triggered tension, violence and unrest and exacerbating the already complex dynamics of the conflict .For example, Hamas named its October 7 attack Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and claiming that the holy site dispute was partial impetus for its attack. The security Minister of Israel, Itamar Ben Gvir frequently referenced the Haram al- Sharif in his political rhetoric. Beyond the city religious and cultural significance, West Jerusalem also serve as Israel's governing Capital, and home of people of diverse identities in close proximity. Efforts by actors to push the boundaries of established religious and sociopolitical norms threaten the stability of Jerusalem and beyond .Minimizing friction around these sites is necessary for stability to maintain and precede the political process in the region.

Settlements: As the conflict has stagnated, the growth of Israeli settlements has significantly excreted frictions, tensions and a sense of peace may be unachievable. As the settlements around the Jerusalem has fragmented Palestinian territory and impeded the viability of a future Palestinian state. The accompanying architecture like checkpoints, road, walls, utilities, movement of people creates frictions that regularly lead violence between groups. The fate of any future diplomatic process and prospects for any solution are inextricably tied to the trajectory of Israel settlement enterprise. The settlement issue between both hinders the peace development.

Gaza Containment Strategy: Since the Palestinian civil war in 2007 and resulting division between Palestine control of West Bank and Hamas control of Gaza there have been multiple round of violence between Hamas and Israel across in period from 2008 to 2023 and also in current war. Over the time a cycle developed which Israel security termed as "mowing the grass" which include the periods of establishment of modus vivendi with Gaza's de facto government and interrupted by wars which diminish Hamas capabilities and reestablished deterrence. Ultimately, this approach did not maintain stability and achieve sustainable security as evidence of Oct 7 attacks. Altogether, Israel containment strategy of Gaza has not proven to be a sustainable model for peace.

Maximalist and Binary Choices: In 2024, maximalist narratives in conflict have come to the fore. The discourse has moved from determining solutions to the problem created in 1967, to litigating the issue created at Israel's founding in 1948. Both people historic traumas and

concerns around ethnic cleansing, displacements, and discrimination have been reawakened. The political discourse has moved from debating political rights to historic rights with little room of nuanced. This polarization makes this political and diplomatic compromise even more difficult and obscures the issue to addressed and resolved. For many Palestinians and Israeli the “Oslo”, “Peace process’ and “Two nation concept” have become a dirty words.

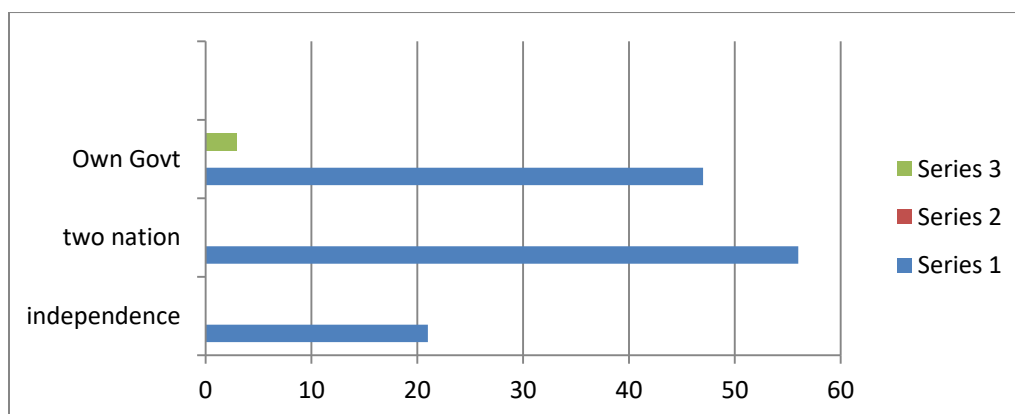
Section II:

Sovereignty, Self-determination and Equal rights:

After the attack by Hamas and Israel ongoing assault on Gaza, The higher bodies call for new approach that can truly lead justice and Peace in region. The time to forge a new pathway to resolve the Israeli Palestinian conflict is now. There is no return to status quo before the attack of Hamas. This promise of status quo shaped by international community to end the Israeli occupation and providing two state solutions by conflict management did not address the root cause of conflict. There is stark choice ahead. The government of Israel continue to pursue an unlawful, permanent annexation of Palestinian territory based on expansion of illegal settlements, systematic discriminating and subjugation of one people by another .International actors must take active and irreversible steps to end Israel’s unlawful occupation and realize the Palestinian people right to self-determination through form of statehood that delivers true sovereignty bon equals terms with Israel.

Views of potential for lasting peace:

According to the PEW Research center survey conducted on Feb to March 11 2025 about a fifth of Israelis 21% are in favor for Israel and independent Palestine state can coexist peacefully. Despite for two state solution 56% Israeli people committed to working for lasting peace in region. When it comes to leadership structure47% says Israeli government committed to lasting peace and 45% feel same about Palestine. So, there is high ratio of lasting peace for both Israel and Palestine which proves that everyone who affected by this conflict want peace.



Survey Results 2025- PEW Research Center

Is it possible to develop peace Between Israel and Palestine?

Despite the decades of entrenched conflict, a path toward peace between both nations remains not only possible but urgently necessary. A renewed commitment to the two state solutions, long supported by international community offers a structured roadmap to sovereignty and mutual recognition but question lies is it possible after such large atrocities. Public support among Israelis for a two nation solution has reached a new low with only 21% believing that a peaceful coexistence between Israel and future Palestinian state is possible according to dramatic new poll by Pew Research Center .Among Jewish Israelis; only 16% believe peaceful coexistence is achievable. Most of survey from Israel hopes for 40% of possible two states solution. A dominant theme emerging from the data is a deep and widespread mistrust between Israelis and Palestinians with 75% of respondents identified a major obstacle to lasting peace.

A roadmap toward lasting Peace:

More than one year from appalling and unjustifiable attacks and Israel's ongoing disproportionate military assaults and atrocities in Gaza, the whole Middle East is on the brink of a catastrophic regional war. The most urgent priorities are to secure a full and immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon and release of all remaining hostages held by Hamas as well as arbitrarily detained Palestinian prisoners. But beyond these bold and principal actions are needed to bring a permanent end to the Israeli Palestinian conflict that has regard over 75 years and remains at the heart of regional tensions and instability. The best way to achieve is still a two nation solution based on self-determination, sovereignty and security for both peoples. The Elders, of which we are the members, have published the guiding principles that we believe should underpin the pathway toward sustainable peace between Israeli and Palestinians. Moreover, both the states should exercise full security control over their respective territories and borders with monopoly over the legal use of force. All non-state armed groups and civilians militias will need to disarm or be disarmed and bringing an end to unlawful attacks against civilians by Palestinians armed groups as well as by violent Israeli settlers. The ICJ has ruled that Israel is obliged to end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible. Security assurances provided by countries in the region and the wider international community especially during a short transition phase following the end of hostilities in Gaza, will need to respond to the legitimate security concerns of Palestinians and Israelis. The security of both states should give the equal weightage. For too long, the security of occupying power, Israel has been prioritized over the security of Palestinians. This is been continuous flow of US arm in Israel violate the international law. The Biden Administration in August advanced plans for a further sale of 20 billion dollars' worth of

weapons. The sale and transfer of arms in this context especially offensive weapon not required for legitimate self-defense, rather signals that there are no red lines when it comes to Israel action. Overall, sustainable peace will require genuine reconciliation between the Palestinian factions and Palestinian people also given the right of self-determination based on international law.

Section IV:

RESULTS:

The whole research unfolds the result that Peace remains elusive due to political rigidity, mutual distrust and asymmetry in power and control. Historically, the roots of conflict traced back to events like Nakba 1948 and 1967 six day war followed by numerous failed peace initiatives, such as Oslo Accords and Camp David Summit. These events leave deep scars, fostering mistrust and hardening public narratives on both sides. The political deadlock is compounded by security concerns, questions of Jerusalem's status, the right of return for refugees and lack of mutual recognition. These issues continue to block meaningful progress. Despite these obstacles, there are tangible opportunities for peace. Public opinion polls often reveal that a significant number of Israelis and Palestinians still supporting a negotiated two state solution under the right conditions. The Abraham Accords and normalization between Israel and some Arab states may also shift the geopolitical calculus, potentially encouraging moderation and dialogue. Ultimately, a peaceful resolution requires courageous leadership, international support rooted in neutrality and justice and investment in people to people reconciliation. Overall, this research provides the results as the road to Peace is fraught with challenges but opportunities still present which will help in future if we prioritize empathy, equality and long term coexistence over short time political gain.

Section V:

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOLUTIONS:

According to Max Lcado "conflict is inevitable but combat is optional" so for the ongoing Palestine and Israel ongoing issue the land of Palestinian people was always home of different empires and they treated according to their own desires and will ,firstly by Ottoman empire , the British and now Israel. The Jews settled in Palestine by the Belfour deceleration given by British for a separate home land of Jews in the Middle East and slowly Zionist movement spread all over Palestine on which the land of innocent people living in Palestine started to fall and taken by Jews. On this the state of Israel was formed after the participation of Palestine and it became a full member of UN.1st intifada and 2nd intifada cannot change the fate of Palestinian people. The non-state actors involved and take charge of free Palestine on which they were involved in terrorist attacks but results were harsh for Palestinian people because the Israeli

forces abducted and killed thousands of Palestinian. Moreover, the issue can be resolved by negotiation, mediation, and arbitration between international actors otherwise the issue of independence of Palestine revolved like a pendulum and future of Palestinian people remain at stake and the World peace organizations work together and should check their previous failure and success. Most importantly, the issue can be resolved by divided the religious areas to the parties equally because Palestine is only part of world where the Jews, Muslims, Christians lived and have major worship places. The place of Palestine is always a full of resources so the world should divide the resources equally. Every member should give equal representation in UN Security Council so the diplomats from both sides can easily present their issues related to economy, politics, military that can be checked and balanced. The issue can be resolved if major powers like US and European states should stop providing military support to Israel and non-state actors like Hezbollah should stop the free independence of Palestine. In a nutshell, above the mention research work concluded that to resolve this conflict it is important to choose the courageous leaders from both sides by people to regain peace and harmony among the region for their people. The peace can only be achieved through trust, goodwill and join efforts from optimistic leaders of both sides. The conflict solution is not a single day activity it has to take time to end up in a peaceful way the road is long and bumpy but the reward is worthy. The peace can only be achieved if micro level issues can resolved at regional level before coming up at state level. If this conflict will not stop it can leave scars not on people of Palestine and Israel but whole world will become the victim of it.

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