

Middle East Peace Process

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### Abstract

The duration of the conflict in the Middle East suggests that the term 'peace process' may not be entirely accurate. Further, it appears that process has been longer than the genuine peace. Nowhere is this better illustrated than the apparent standoff between Israel and Palestine. Evidence suggests that the term stalemate should now be used to describe the situation in the area. The Arab spring that engulfed parts of the Middle East and Africa only showed the world that the region is still volatile; however, it is not all war and chaos, as there are plenty of positives about the seemingly ever-warring continent. There is a lot of diversity, culture, and innovation, which provide a ray of hope for the Middle East. This paper will discuss the conflict that has existed between Israel and Palestine, the support that has been given by countries such as the United States of America to bring peace to the region, and what may be done to end the stalemate.

*Keywords:* Middle East, Peace Process, Stalemate

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The Israeli-Palestine conflict is as old as civilization. Just whose fault it depends on who you ask. Pose that question to devoted Zionists, and you will surely be informed that the annexation of the land acquired by Israel was done to reclaim ancestral land. Contrastingly, ask a Palestinian, and he or she will tell you they only retaliated against the indiscriminate compulsory acquisition of their territory. Whatever the case, a thorough investigation of the historical injustices that exist is needed to comprehend the situation fully. The following paper will highlight the origin and effects of the conflict, what the rest of the world has done to put an end to it, and what solutions lie ahead.

There has been significant civil strife in the Middle East, which has resulted in numerous casualties, the displacement of millions, and some of the direst humanitarian situations ever seen. Nowhere has this been more apparent than the seemingly never-ending war between Israel and Palestine. Anyone who has been around for long enough is aware of the current conflict. All the conflict arises from a perceived sense of entitlement to the land that each country believes is their ancestral home. To provide the situation some perspective, Leech (2014) puts the number of Palestinians killed from 2000 to 2014 at 8,701. By contrast, about 1,138 Israelis were killed over the same period. This sets the ratio of Palestinians to Israelis at 8:1 (Leech, 2014). As is the natural way of things, each side has garnered supporters who believe that it is the other party who is at fault. Several western states, such as America and Canada have openly supported Israel for the simple reason that there is a large population of Jews in those two nations. Further, because Jews own a significant share of the communication and media industry, there has been a massive distortion of the facts of the conflict. The rest of the world has mostly sympathized with Palestine's plight.

Various measures have also been taken to place an end to the decades of fighting between the neighboring states. For instance, in 1967, after six days of continuous fighting, the United Nations Security Council through Resolution 242 asked Israel to withdraw its troops from areas that were considered sovereign. It was one of the first steps taken in what has now been dubbed as the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). Another significant milestone in the peace process were the talks mediated by Henry Kissinger, the then U.S. Secretary of the State. The mediation talks held with the belligerents of Yom Kippur helped to diffuse a potentially deadly situation. Although the talks had stalled for some time after Richard Nixon's resignation, they eventually proved to be successful (Friedman, 2012). 1975 is the year that the two states came closest to a peace deal. After the Kissinger-led talks, the peace process seemed like it would finally bear fruit. There was the suggestion that Israel would permanently withdraw its soldiers, and that settlements would be as they were before 1967. Peace talks were also organized by former United States President George Bush Sr., which included Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Syria in 1991 after achieving success at the Gulf War. The talks did not produce much, but provided a framework that had been missing. Although America has been a strong backer of Israel, as recently as 2012, President Obama angered the Israeli Prime Minister by suggesting that negotiations begin afresh. It is apparent that negotiations have yielded mixed results and varying degrees of success.

It is in the best interest of the world to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. America certainly tried its best before Obama left office (Borger, 2016). Only a two-state solution is acceptable where both nations will benefit, and Palestinians live side-by-side with Israelis. Economic blocs such as the European Union (EU) are willing to assist based on some conditions. One such condition is an agreement of the borders to those that existed pre- 1967. It is imperative that the

new frontiers be agreed to by both parties. Both nations should also take the necessary measures while withdrawing their respective troops to prevent continued warfare. Palestine should take note of the fact that the occupation is now over, while Israel should do everything in its power to prevent the resurgence of terrorism while safeguarding its borders. Another condition that should be agreed on is how to settle the thousands of refugees. The solution, which ought to be just and fair, should be accepted by both parties (European Union External Action, 2016). The city of Jerusalem also presents a contentious issue. It is, therefore, imperative that both states resolve that the city could be a capital for the two nations.

#### Conclusion

In summary, Israel and Palestine have been at war over the changing of borders and annexation of ancestral land. Both countries have played a significant part in the deaths and displacement of many of the inhabitants. Therefore, only solutions that have been mutually agreed upon will solve the conflict that has plagued the region for so long.

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