

# Conflict in the Middle East and ceasefire explained

BY ALEX LINDBERG  
STAFF WRITER

For the better part of a century, two sides have been fighting for land in the Middle East: Palestine and Israel. Recently, the violence between the two escalated for eight days, with airstrikes yielding destruction on both sides.

The conflict began in the 1920s when hundreds of thousands of Jews moved to Palestinian land. Tensions grew between the arriving Jews and the native Arab people. In 1948, the U.N. formally recognized Israel as a state. After this establishment, the Arab League (Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iraq) joined in Palestine's opposition of Israel.

"The U.N. Partition Plan of 1947 recognized both Israel and a Palestinian state," said senior Tali Raphael. "However, no Palestinian state was created after the war, as the Arab states took the land. Egypt took Gaza (and Jordan took the West Bank."

## Palestine

Israeli forces built a 25-foot wall around the West Bank and surrounded major cities with a police force to limit any uprisings against Israeli rule. In some places, the wall crosses Palestinian land, including Jerusalem — a holy city for both the Jewish and Islamic faiths. Locals on either side know this barrier by different names.

"The 'security fence' to Israeli Jews is an 'apartheid (or) annexation wall' to Palestinians," said Director of Friends Center and Campus Ministry Coordinator Max Carter.

Palestinian refugees call their state an "apartheid state," as they are segregated from the rest of the community and surrounded by a militant force. Israeli forces control their water supplies, roads and markets. This oppression

created another anti-Israel force known as Hamas, which currently governs the Gaza Strip.

The most violence occurs on the Gaza Strip, currently under blockade by Israeli troops who allow limited supplies and relief into the Palestinian territory. Because Gaza citizens oppose the regulations issued by Israel, Hamas has launched thousands of rockets across the border since 2006.

## Israel

Israelis believe they have only exercised self-defense as Palestine and various Arab nations have attacked them throughout the years. Israeli forces claim to occupy Palestinian zones to foster peace, not cultivate war.

Were Israel to provide for the 1.5 million refugees in the Gaza Strip, they would risk becoming a minority within their own state and watching their democracy crumble.

The blockade still allows relief efforts into the territory, but prevents Arab nations from smuggling weapons for terrorist cells in the area. Israel has successfully stopped much of the illegal arms trade into Palestine, though they continue to struggle with this issue. Israel's primary concerns include defending their homes, nation and culture from invaders and uprisings.

## Most Recent Conflict

In November, both sides fired rockets for eight days.

More than 90 rockets were cast from Israel and rained on the Gaza Strip, killing Hamas leader, Ahmed al-Jaabari.

In retaliation, Gaza specifically targeted Tel Aviv and Jerusalem for the first time.

"The attack on Jerusalem was especially audacious, both for its symbolism and its distance from Gaza," reported Aron Heller for the Huffington Post. "Jerusalem had previously been considered beyond the range of Gaza

rockets and an unlikely target because it is home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, Islam's third-holiest shrine."

Because of these high profile targets, Israeli forces responded with extreme air-strikes on sections of Gaza.

"A large part of the mid-range rockets were destroyed," President Barack Obama told Reuters. "Hamas managed to hit Israel's built-up areas with around a metric ton of explosives, and Gaza targets got around 1,000 metric tons."

## Efforts Toward Peace

The eight-day air-striking dissolved when a multi-party ceasefire was enacted. In addition to this, the U.N. has recognized Palestine as a non-member observer state after more than 60 years of effort by the West Bank. Palestine's new status offers more rights and acknowledges the unrest in the borderlands. Many in the Arab world view the U.N.'s decision as a victory for Palestine, but others see it as a temporary solution to an enduring problem.

"The resolution enshrines the 2002 Arab peace initiative, which speaks of a 'just and agreed upon' solution for the Palestinian refugees," Director of Al-Shabaka Nadia Hijab told Al-jazeera. "This effectively reaffirms Israel's control of any solution."

Palestine's new status also works to move the region toward a "two-state" solution, a concept proposed to end the ongoing conflict.

The conflict between Palestine and Israel is complex and ever-evolving. There are a multitude of perspectives in the region, all contributing equally to both the existing violence and peace in the Middle East. Moving forward, compromise and understanding will be critical factors in resolution of grievances. At this time, much of the region is in a state of unrest and looks to quell the violence and destruction that has been present for nearly 90 years.

## Dangerous working conditions kill hundreds

BY JORDAN SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

Unsafe working conditions and meager wages seem like a distant U.S. memory of the 1900s, but in other parts of the world, these poor conditions remain a reality.

In the global market, various regions contribute to the products for sale and trade. Among those regions are working environments that hold the potential for injury or even death.

This is the case in several factories in India, particularly in the garment industry. Workers in the region endure low wages, high work pressure, frequent overtime and minimal job security.

"In a place like India, labor conditions are bad, unemployment rates are higher, and people decide they'll just work for themselves, so they won't have to deal with things like money, plans and labor conditions," said Jeremy Rinker, visiting assistant professor of peace and conflict studies.

"When we can't meet the targets, the abuse starts," Sakamma, a woman working for Texport, a Gap supplier in India, told The Guardian. "There is too much pressure; it is like torture. We can't take breaks or drink water or go to the toilet. The supervisors are on our backs all the time," she said.

"They call us donkey, owl (a creature associated with evil), dog and insult us ... make us stand in front of everyone, tell us to go and die," Sakamma said.

A textile factory in Karachi, Pakistan had a similarly unhealthy work environment when it caught fire on Sept. 12, killing 289 people in the flames. This tragedy was named the worst man-made disaster in Pakistan's history by the National Disaster Management Authority.

Survivors claim that the factory's emergency exits were locked, leaving no escape for those working inside. Many workers resorted to jumping from high story windows to avoid death. Dangerous chemicals in the factory were released into the air, making the smoke even more dangerous.

"We as Americans should be concerned about those

kinds of poor labor conditions, but we are so far removed because of the chain of manufactured industry, that it's oftentimes subcontracting upon subcontracting," Rinker said.

More recently, on Nov. 24 a fire swallowed a Bangladesh factory just outside the capital, killing 112 employees.

Though more thorough investigations revealed the fire was arson, many of the deaths were the result of flaws in the factory's structure itself. Much like in Karachi, there were few emergency exits in the building, many fire extinguishers didn't work as they should have, and supervisors urged the workers to stay put, even while alarms were sounding.

"How the factory caught fire, I don't know. But when we heard 'fire,' we all rushed out and we were trying to get out of the factory," survivor Parul Begum told CNN.

The factory made textiles for a number of labels that are well known in the U.S., including Wal-Mart, Sears and Disney.

This raises a question: Why are these events ignored while so many Americans buy products made in faulty factories by underpaid workers?

"There are even a lot of people who work under contract on the supply chain," Rinker said. "Loading stuff, shipping it onto trucks. There's a whole lot of the supply chain that we don't ever see. We just see it on a shelf in Wal-Mart, and we purchase it."

The same issues may have a hold in the U.S. as well.

"Some people would argue that that is a form of forced labor, and these people haven't been able to find work," Rinker said. "The economic downturn has caused more unregulated work and the killing of our labor movement, which has been going on for the last twenty years."

Poor working conditions directly hinder the safety of employees in poorer regions, but the products of these dangerous practices are enjoyed by more prosperous nations every day. To put an end to unsatisfactory conditions and pay, the global consumer market must take control of the problem and become aware of the origin of their products.

## King Peggy: female leader of Ghana

BY EMILY CURRIE  
STAFF WRITER

Otuam is a coastal fishing village situated in Ghana, West Africa. In this village, everyone knows everyone. There is no high school, and teenagers who can't afford secondary school travel to surrounding towns and become street hustlers to survive. Impoverished teenagers also farm or fish to make a living.

At the end of a dusty, rutted road stands the royal palace. Its paint is peeling, windows are broken, and the thirsty ground surrounding it is unkempt.

As a secretary at the Ghanaian Embassy in Washington, D.C. for over 30 years, Peggienne Bartels organized receptions, prepared coffee and answered phones. She followed orders from her male boss, the ambassador. Yet in her work at the Embassy, if people bit her, she would bite back.

But one night, a career-altering phone call awoke Bartels at 4 a.m. Her cousin, Kwame Lumpopo, called from Otuam informing Bartels that her uncle had died and that she had been chosen by the elders and ancestors to be king.

After conferring with the dead ancestors about her new responsibility, she made plans to travel to Otuam and take charge.

In 2008, Bartels took the official title of Amuah-Afenyi VI, and has ruled Otuam as King since 2008.

"This woman here is on a mission, and I'm chosen," King Peggy told CBS News. "I'm not going to allow any male to run me down. I am going to rule you and rule you right."

She politely commanded respect in her interview with Erica Hill and Gayle King of CBS News when she asked to be called "Nana" instead of King Peggy.

"It's (the) name of a woman of stature or a King or a Queen in Ghana," she said. "It's a very powerful name."

King Peggy said that once she sets her mind to do something, she will not let anyone deter her.

"(The elders) chose me as king because they know I have a really strong personality, and I can rule," said King Peggy. "The King is the one who makes all the educated decisions and (does) all the hard work for the town."

To see the full direct interview with King Peggy,  
visit our website at  
[www.guilfordian.com](http://www.guilfordian.com)