

Is israel the real terrorist state critical thinking

[Society](#), [Terrorism](#)



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For all outsiders who watch with horror the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine, it would really be hard to understand why so many killings happen for a small strip of land. The popular sentiment in the Western countries and most of the non-Arab world is that, Palestine is the perpetrator of the conflict and Israel is doing what any country would do to safeguard its citizens. All the targeted killings, separation barriers and military attacks by Israel are given a single justification – Self defense. So is this the reality? Is Israel really the victim and Palestine the oppressor? Or is there any other angle to this story? This essay aims at discussing whether the above popular perception is correct or is Israel the real terrorist state? To do that first we must understand the history behind all these conflicts.

Origin of the conflict

The Second World War and the holocaust atrocities committed by the Hitler regime, had gained considerable sympathy for the plight of Jews, among the European powers and they were inclined to give a separate statehood for the Jews. Lot of holocaust survivors and immigrants landed in Palestine and though the British (who ruled the land then) had established immigration quotas, the illegal immigration was on the rise.(Sela, 2002 pg. 58) So a 10 member UN committee convened and decided that an independent state for Jews should be created by the name of Israel. The Palestine land was divided into a Palestine state and an Israel state by a UN resolution on November, 1947 (Maoz, 2006, pg. 3)

Maoz says that, with the war ending there was immense pressure on the newly found Israel state economically. There were also social issues, says Maoz, like the people had to be given language training and work. In the war Israel had completely suppressed the Palestinian military and entered into an armistice treaty with the rest of the Arab country. Many Jews saw this as an immaculate victory and thought they had eliminated the Arab threat once and for all and the new boundaries will be accepted by all its neighbors (Segev, 1986).

But David Ben Gurion, the Israel Prime minister, knew that it would not be long before the Arab forces would return to avenge their wounded pride. He knew that next time the Arab nations would not do the same mistake of underestimating Israel and would come better prepared. (Ben-Gurion, 1969, pg. 480-490) And how right he was! Between 1948 till today Israel had fought 6 inter country wars and 2 perhaps 3 civil wars. Besides these, Maoz

says, it was involved in close to 144 militarized interstate battles which involved military action against another state.

So now what are the reasons does Israel provide to the world for launching so many attacks on both military units and civilians and their continued war path? They say they are the victims and they are safeguarding their people against aggression. The Western nations particularly America has supported the Israel stand both politically and economically. Let us discuss the points which support this theory of Israel.

Israel as victims

Yes, the Jews suffered a lot during the Second World War and the holocaust atrocities are still green in the memories of people. Almost 6 million Jews were massacred by the Nazis which was almost two third of the entire Jewish population on earth. Thus, the need to have a separate Jewish state and identity was understandable and the European powers were sympathetic with their cause. Israel had been centre to Jewish faith for millennia and there are many historical documents which supports Jewish existence in the area for many centuries. Israel's argument has always been that it had accepted the two nation solution unconditionally and it is the Arab nations who have trouble in accepting it and are trying to destabilize the Israel state. To be fair to Israel that is true, as most Arab nations were against the creation of the Israel and they have frequently intervened in the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

Various establishments created for the Palestine struggle also did not help the cause with their share of violence and suicide attacks. The PLO or the Palestine Liberation Organization was one such movement organized by

Yasser Arafat in the year 1964 (Noa, 2013). The involvement of Israel in the 1982 Lebanese civil war also had justification as an attempted murder on one of the Israel diplomats by the Palestinians forced Israel to take sides in the civil war. The intervention proved successful as most of the Palestine militants were killed and Arafat had to shift his head quarters to Tunisia (History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, PBS. 2001). Though by February 2009, a peace treaty have been signed by both the parties there has been periodic violence and attacks and retaliatory air strikes been reported on a frequent basis. (Operation Cast Lead - Gaza Facts, 2013)

THE PALESTINIAN WALL

Israel states that many Arab nations are still not inclined to recognize the authority of Israel as a sovereign state. Israel had officially accepted PLO as the leadership of Palestine, but the Palestinians still refuse to accept Israel's claim as a legitimate nation. (Dershowitz. pg. 3) Israel also cites the increasing number suicide bombings organized by the Palestinian groups as another reason for its retaliatory strikes. A statistics shows that almost 84% of Palestinians agree with the tactics of suicide bombing against Israel (Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (27), 2008). The common targets have been Israeli restaurants, buses and malls (BBC News, 2007). In a period of ten years starting from 1993 till 2003, almost 303 suicide bombings have been carried on Israeli targets (Jewish virtual Library). Since 2006, there are an increased number of Qassam rocket attacks by Palestine on Israel. (Amos, 2007)

Israel has adopted many ways in tackling the abovementioned security concerns like using force, diplomacy and erection of security barriers. But

the methods it used to tackle the Palestinian threat is much debated and highly criticized. (Dershowitz, 2005) The dispute is not just over land but it also extends to water resources. In the Middle East water is a rare resource and one which has great political importance. Water sharing between these two states too has been heavily disputed and the interim agreement between the states has quelled the problem a little (The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement – Annex I, 1995). The Palestinians still lack access to the Jordan River water resource. (BBC, 2003)

CIVILIAN DEATHS THAT TOOK PLACE BETWEEN 1987 AND 2010

Source : " Fatal Terrorist Attacks in Israel Since the DOP (Sept 1993)." Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 24 September 2000.

Israel as Perpetrators

Though there were varied reasons presented by Israel for its ‘ more than necessary use of force’, the bottom-line is that Israel has time and again used excessive measures to tackle the Palestinian crisis. As mentioned by Zeev Maoz, in his ‘ book defending the holy land’, the strategy of using enormous air power and military aggression by Israel, even to tackle minor threats, points to the Israeli appetite for violence. He questions through his book whether Israel is doing so because it is forced to defend itself or because it wants to use force to prove a point. Many historians see this military obsession by Israel as a diversion tactics to take the people’s attention away from the social problems, it faced during its inception as an independent state.

Israel not just waged military war against Palestine but it also waged a

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collective economic war against its people. The trade ban imposed on Gaza strip resulted in almost 95% of the trade activities of that area being dropped. In place of 35, 000 people who were working in various parts of Gaza, only 3, 900 people were able to retain their employment by 2005 and this number was further reduced by half in 2007 (Oxfam, 2010). From 2008, Israel also reduced the quantity of electricity it gave to the Gaza strip adding to the already prevalent water crisis.

The Gaza blockade established by the Israel Government whereby they blocked every route- air, water and land, had received worldwide criticism. It withdrew its forty years long occupation of Gaza on 2005, but after Hamas occupied Gaza in 2007, it imposed an economic blockade on this area. In fact the U. N. Humanitarian Affairs committee termed this act as a collective punishment on the entire people of that area. Also the Israel law, whereby any Jew living anywhere in the world is invited to get citizenship in Israel, was considered to be discrimination among the Arab population that lived in Israel. Till today various versions are floating regarding the Palestinian exodus that took place during the 1948 war. Israel officials maintain that the refugees fled because the Arab forces encouraged them to do so, but the Arab nations and various historians argue that Israel military expelled the Arabs from their territory. Israel still does not accept these refugees returning to Israel. They maintain that the influx of these refugees would affect the stability of the Jewish state.

Also the public support in America, which is a strong supporter of Israel, is witnessing a major shift in the past few years (Finkelstein, 2012, Pg. xv). Americans want their tax money to be spent on social welfare programs or to

help economically backward countries. Israel is not economically backward and discrimination of the Arabs in Israeli territory is not what a true democratic country would do.

For decades the U. S. media has portrayed Israel to be a victim of terrorism and downplayed the State sponsored terrorism practiced by it. But Israel has an extensive record of State terrorism and there are too many occasions where they have deliberately attacked civilian areas. For instance, in August 1981, Menahem Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister, wrote a letter in response to allegations leveled against Israel for the Beirut bombing which resulted in mass civilian killings. In that letter he openly admits having attacked civilian Arabs and destroying structures such as canals and bridges, ensuring that the civilians there suffer from lack of infrastructure and transport. (Herman, 1982). In fact a partial list of the attacks was released by Begin which shows that there were 30 different attacks aimed at civilian population. The then UN Ambassador of Israel administration Abba Eban, writes that “ the affected civilians would put pressure on the terrorists to stop indulging in hostilities”. One can only interrupt this statement the Israel is practicing a State terrorism to put an end to a retail terrorism.

The Beirut bombings are just the tip of the iceberg. There are many such incidents like the Jordan bombing which cleared all the civilians lived there and the 1970 Suez Canal attacks which made one and half million people leave that place and become refugees (Herman, 1982). The shooting of Libyan aircraft that killed 110 people in 1973, the attack of Cairo in 1954 and the list goes on and on.

Israel has been for decades crying foul of the Palestinian terrorism and its

need to defend its people and the Western media in general supported this theory. But today according to Finkelstein, for every book or blog published by an Israel supporter, you can find a counter argument from people like B'Tselem, Zeev Maoz and organizations like human rights Watch and Amnesty international (Finkelstein 2012, pg. xvii).

Israel has used force to occupy neighboring territory and has always been reluctant to give up those territories. It has not exercised proper caution while targeting civilian areas and in general acted with the aim of demolishing enemy targets, no matter what stood in between. In this process there have been many civilian deaths including women and child.

The treatment of Arabs, war time atrocities and many such human rights allegations, have been leveled against Israel all through these 60 years of conflict. Yes, there is no justification for terrorism. But the point here is, does Israel have the necessary justification using its strong military to gain political advantage? Does an air strike needed to take down a small terrorist unit? Does it have to punish the entire Gaza strip for the actions of a few Palestine terrorists? Have it treated its refugees properly? Has the Israel Arabs been given their due rights? These are some tough questions which Israel needs give answer to. But in the recent wake of events Israel looks more of terror perpetrator than a terror victim.

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