

The effect of conflict on the gaza strip politics essay



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The small strip of land between Egypt and Israel known as the Gaza Strip has been a combat zone in the ongoing Arab-Israeli Conflict since the 1940s.

After the 1st Arab-Israeli War ended in 1949, Egypt annexed Gaza. In the 1956 and 1967 wars between Israel and Egypt, Israeli forces under enemy control the crowded urban Gaza area, returning it to Egyptian control after the 1956 war, but keeping it after the 1967 war. The peace treaty between Egypt and Israel effectively ceded control of Gaza to Israel, but Gaza became a theatre of war in the Palestinian rising against Israel known as The Intifada in the late 1980s. This uprising led to the peace agreement known as the Oslo Accords. Under this treaty, the Palestinian Authority (Palestinian government dominated by the Fatah movement), took over the organizational authority of the Gaza Strip (other than the established Israeli settlements and military areas) in 1994.

In the summer of 2005, Israel unilaterally evacuated its last military outposts in the Gaza Strip, hoping that would simplify ongoing tensions with the Palestinian forces in Gaza. On June 25, 2006, Palestinian militants crossed from Gaza into Israel, kidnapping an Israeli soldier. Israel responded on June 29 with an invasion of the Gaza Strip. This campaign continued until Nov. 26, 2006, with a cease-fire. Despite the cease-fire, Palestinian rockets have been launched with some regularity into Israel, with Israel often responding with air and missile attacks on Gaza targets.

2007 Palestinian Civil War in Gaza

In June of 2007, a short civil war between the two main Palestinian factions, Hamas and Fatah, resulted in the expulsion of Fatah forces from Gaza.

Hamas is well thought-out the more militant of the two groups, and Hamas

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does not recognize Israel's right to exist and seeks to reclaim all Palestinian lands from Israel.

2007-2008 Gaza Conflict

This stage of the ongoing warfare in Gaza consisted of a series of battles between Palestinian militants and the Israel Defense Forces beginning in Mid-May of 2007. Palestinian forces fired more than 220 home-made Qassem rockets at the Israel town of Sderot and the western Negev region over the span of a week. The Israeli warplanes responded with air-to-ground missiles and bomb, targeting Hamas military and political infrastructure targets. On February 29, Israeli ground forces entered Gaza, killing nearly 100 Hamas militants. Israel also halted the transfer of electricity, fuel, and other supplies into Gaza in an attempt to weaken Hamas. Despite all attempts of controlling the violence, Hamas forces continued to launch missile attacks at Israel. It must be noted that Hamas, like the Hezbollah army in Lebanon, is allied with, and supplied by, Iran, which is a declared enemy of Israel. In June of 2008, Egypt, acting as the go-between, managed to put together a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas. This cease-fire was broken several times by both sides, but largely brought a measure of peace to the Israel-Gaza border. Israel maintained closed borders with Gaza, hoping to pressure the Hamas regime economically. While Israel indicated a willingness to extend the cease-fire, Hamas began increasing its Qassem rocket attacks on Israel, forcing the Israeli government to make a decision on how to respond.

2008 Gaza War: Airstrikes and Ground Invasion

On December 27, 2008, Israeli forces launched a major air attack on Hamas political and military targets in Gaza. Reports indicate that between 200 and <https://assignbuster.com/the-effect-of-conflict-on-the-gaza-strip-politics-essay/>

255 Palestinians died on the first day of the attacks. Reports also indicated that Israeli ground forces were moving toward the Gaza border. Hamas forces responded with more Qassem rocket attacks, with some newer, longer-range rockets reaching the Israeli cities of Ashkelon and Ashdod.

Mid East analysts view the massive Israeli response as a means of showing its enemies that Israel is still a military force to be reckoning with. After losing the Second Lebanon War in 2006, Israel felt that Hezbollah, Hamas, and their Iranian patrons no longer fear Israel. Ever since independence in 1948, Israel has existed surrounded by enemies and literally has fought nearly continuous wars along its borders ever since. Too many Israelis, appearing fragile, or acting fragile in front of its worldly foes only invites additional attacks. Thus, while the Qassem rocket attacks are a real danger to the quarter-million or so Israelis within range of the Gaza border, these Hamas rockets create no imminent danger to Israel's existence. By responding so forcefully, Israel hopes to ward off other enemies whose attacks could be more deadly, in particular, Iran, who is on the rise of nuclear ambition.

The timing of Israel's attacks is rather interesting, but actually somewhat unsurprising. It is no secret that President George W. Bush is a enthusiastic supporter of Israel, and the Dec. 27 attacks began as President Bush had only 24 more days as President of the United States. Both in the media and in the United Nations, the United States under the Bush Administration has been an firm supporter and ally of Israel, blocking key votes in the UN, which called for a cease-fire. Unsure of how the incoming Obama Administration may perceive an attack on Hamas, Israel likely determined to act to secure <https://assignbuster.com/the-effect-of-conflict-on-the-gaza-strip-politics-essay/>

its southern border while their good friend George W. Bush was still in office and able to provide proper and diplomatic assistance.

As of January 5, United Nations officials, as well as media outlets estimate that the Gaza War has seen 524 Palestinians killed and 2,600 wounded since the Israel began "Operation Cast Lead" on December 27, the majority of these casualties among members of Hamas security forces, but at least 200 of the dead were civilians. Israel reports one soldier and three civilians killed since December 27, with 30 civilians wounded by Hamas rocket attacks. Israeli artillery joined in the attacks on January 3, 2009. Despite the massive air attacks, Hamas was still able to launch over 400 rockets and missiles into southern Israel. It became apparent that air power alone would not accomplish the affirmed Israeli goal of halting the cross-border attacks by Hamas upon Israel's civilian people.

On January 3, thousands of Israeli troops, in three brigade-size formations, backed by tanks and attack helicopters, launched the expected ground invasion of the Gaza Strip in what Israel calls the "second stage of Operation Cast Lead." The Israeli military reported 30 soldiers received wounds in the opening hours of the offensive, and also reported "dozens" of casualties among the defending Hamas forces. It was also reported that Israeli naval vessels assisted with the invasion, providing fire into the Gaza Strip in support of ground troops.

Go here to see Ehud Barak Announcement about the start of the Israeli ground offensive.

By the end of the first day of the ground offensive, Israel announced that its forces had bisected the Gaza Strip and surrounded the city of Gaza. Heavy combat war also reported near the northern Gaza towns of Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanun and Jabaliya.

On January 6, Israeli forces fired mortar rounds at what they say was a launching area for Hamas rockets. The Israeli mortar shells struck a United Nations-run school at which hundreds of Palestinian civilians had taken shelter. The UN reported approximately 40 dead civilians in this attack. The bombing of the school brought a large amount of criticism on Israel from around the world. Though Israel justified the attack by claiming Hamas launched rockets from that area, Israel took a hit in terms of world public opinion.

On January 8, Hezbollah forces launched rockets into Israel from Lebanon, raising the possibility of a second front in the new war.

Israeli troops pushed into a heavily populated area of Gaza City from the south on January 11 in hard fighting, in which Israeli and Hamas forces engaged in vicious unconventional asymmetrical warfare house to house, and street by street.

On January 17, Israeli announced a unilateral ceasefire, deciding to halt operations without first securing an agreement with Hamas.

The next day, January 18, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian militia groups declared they would halt the launching of rockets into Israel for one week, while demanding that Israel withdraw from Gaza within the week.

May 31, a deadly predawn Israeli raid on ships off Gaza has sparked international outrage, following the deaths of international activists who say they were trying to transport humanitarian supplies.