

## Title: War in Gaza: a reflection of international chaos from the realistic perspective

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### Abstract

This article attempts to analyze the war in Gaza from a lens of realist theory, which has contributed to glorifying military force in international relations, and to examine the moral aspect of the most important theory in international studies. Based on contextual analysis and a case study approach, the article provides a theoretical framework for understanding the complex dynamics of war. It offers insights into the application of realist thought to the war in Gaza and its regional and international implications.

The war in Gaza has affected many aspects of military, political, economic, and perhaps geographical reality. It will certainly be recorded as one of the most important historical turning points in the course of the Palestinian cause and the region. The article concludes that realism explains the behavior of actors based on their desire to maximize their power, in the context of a chaotic international system. When the realistic assumption that the concept of power affects the direction of foreign policy, and that the pursuit of survival is a central concept in guiding the foreign behavior of different actors is dropped, on Israel's war on the oppressed people of Palestine, and how the former exercises its influence, including absolute Western support, it appears that it chooses an aggressive foreign policy based on interests that culminated in full-fledged genocide.

**Keywords:** War, Gaza, Realist theory, ethics, power.

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### Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has so long been an international focal point. In fact, since the establishment of the UN after World War II, the bilateral struggle was part of its agenda. Despite the UN issued hundreds of decisions, it failed to resolve the conflict, proving that in an international unfair environment, conflict cannot be resolved by the international decisions due to the power mechanisms and big states' interests on the detriment of the human considerations and historical entitlement. In this regard, we need theoretical frames to analyze the issue. Therefore, this paper examines the interest and commitment of the realist theory, which sees that the international order is chaotic by nature, by tackling the ethical effects of the conduct of the states, which may lead to a human sufferance and violations of the

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international law. In addition, we shall cover the Israeli efforts to maximize its force and make coalitions with the main international actors to achieve political goals regardless the ethical considerations, such as the case of targeting civilians in its war on Gaza since October 2023.

Based on the contextual analysis and the case study, we shall discuss the realist analysis of the Israel war on Gaza by projecting the main principles of the realist theory on the war that witnesses a terrible violence. In so doing, we raise the following question, “in a chaotic world order, how do the realists view what the Israel consider as the right to war on Gaza?”

As a primary answer to the question, we hypothesize that the realist perspective analyzes the Israel war on Gaza from the power dynamics and the states’ interests, what limits its analytical abilities in studying an unethical war between two inequivalent parties.

To answer the problematic and test the hypotheses, we divided the study into two axes. The 1<sup>st</sup> is titled “war in Gaza: the most brutal war in the 21<sup>st</sup> century” while the 2<sup>nd</sup> is “the analysis of war on Gaza in the light of the basic principles of the realistic perspective”.

### **Axis one: war in Gaza: the most brutal war in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Since October 2023, the world has been witnessing the most brutal wars launched by Israel and backed by USA against Gaza; a 360 Km<sup>2</sup> region that includes al Balah, Gaza, Khan Yunis, North Gaza, and Rafah provinces. Its inhabitants were estimated at 2.1 million before the escalation, including 1.7 million Palestinian refugees. The Israeli pretext to invade Gaza is based on historical narratives, security threats, and political considerations. However, controlling Gaza is vital for the Israeli security. The civil losses require a high interest in the related contexts and declarations, as the Israeli leaders expressed their will to cause the most damage and genocide in Gaza.<sup>1</sup> Under these declarations and extensive bombarding, UN genocide experts and scientists launched alerts, fearing another holocaust in Gaza to serve the Israeli colonial plans.

#### **1.1 Al Dahya doctrine:**

Historically speaking, Israel has launched different attacks on Gaza. In 2014, when the world witnessed a brutal attack on Gaza, the Historian Rachid al Khalidi discussed the question of whether Israel is trying to limit the civil losses, stating that that belief implies a deliberate ignorance of the nature of weapons used and the Israeli military doctrine. In this regard, the head of the army and Alan Ghadi, one of the Israeli MPs, revealed the Dahya doctrine, which implies destroying al Dahya district in Beirut by the Israeli army in 2006, and stated it was an approved plan, not a recommendation. Despite the Dahya doctrine and the declared wills of the Israeli leaders during the current attacks, questioning the Israeli behavior against the civilians is still under debate. Regardless the legal issue of whether the Israel has the right to defend itself against the people it colonizes, the most important question is targeting the civilians and the civilian infrastructure, including the hospitals, the houses, the schools, etc.<sup>2</sup>

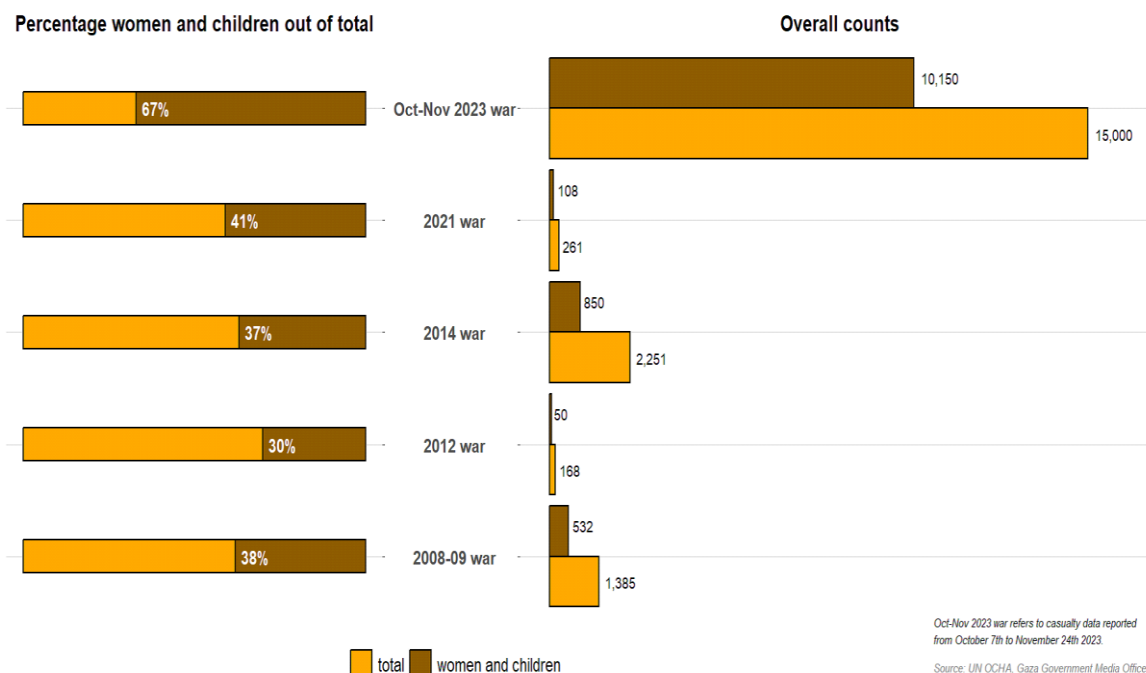
#### **1.2 The civil buildings and facilities: military goals for the Israeli army:**

The Israeli army did not speak much about the bombs used against Gaza. However, the wrecks and the footage analysis show that most of the bombs are US made and include bunker-buster bombs of 900 Kg that killed hundreds of people in overcrowded regions. The Israeli attacks destroyed more than 2/3 of

<sup>1</sup>Julia Frankel, Israel’s military campaign in Gaza is among the most destructive in history, experts say (Dec 21, 2023) (<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israels-military-campaign-in-gaza-is-among-the-most-destructive-in-history-experts-say>)

<sup>2</sup>Wispelwey B, Mills D, Asi YM, et al. Civilian mortality and damage to medical facilities in Gaza. *BMJ Glob Health*. 2024.1-3.

the buildings in North Gaza and ¼ in Khan Yunis. According to the analysis of Copernicus Sentinel-1 by Corey Scher, from the CUNY graduate center in New York University, and Jamon Van Den Hoek of Oregon State University, the damaged buildings in Khan Yunis redoubled in the 1<sup>st</sup> week of the Israeli western attack. Based on some scales, the damage in Gaza was faster than that caused by the allies in Germany during WWII. In this context, Robert Pape, a US historian, states that between 1942 and 1945, the allies attacked 51 German cities and village and destroyed almost 40 to 50% of their urban zones; this equals 10% of total German buildings, compared to more than 33% of the different regions in Gaza. Pape adds that the attack on Gaza is one of the most extensive civilian torture campaigns in history and ranks in the top of the most destructive attacks in the world throughout history.



#### Source:

Poole DN, Andersen D, Raymond NA, *et al.* Damage to medical RAISES concern for lack of protection in Israel-Hamas.3. war:

In 2024, the UN Human Rights Office issued an evaluation of 06 symbolic Israeli attacks on Gaza, which killed many civilians and widely destroyed civilian regions, and expressed serious concerns about violations of the war laws. The report evaluates the attacks that used GBU-31 (2000 pounds), GBU-32 (1000 pounds), and GBU-39 (250 pounds) bombs from 09 October to 02 December 2023 against houses, a school, a market, and a refugees' campus, causing the death of 218 civilians and more. The report concludes that the Israeli attacks show that the army has violated the main war principles and that the illegal targeting of civilians marks human crimes.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.3 The deliberate targeting of civilians and children:

Children make up 47% of people in Gaza. However, since 07 October to 24 November 2023, 41% of them were murdered. The parentages of the primary phase of the attacks until January 2024 are very high,

<sup>1</sup>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN report: Israeli use of heavy bombs in Gaza raises serious concerns under the laws of war. Geneva. 19 June 2024

as shown in figure 01. In this context, women and children represented 30 to 41% of the casualties in Gaza attacks in 2008-2009, 2014, and 2021. However, from 07 October to 24 November 2024, they represented 67%. This massive increase shows an arbitrary method against the civilians, according to surveys and the study of Paul et al., who proved the absence of protection of hospitals.<sup>1</sup>

Antonio Guterres,, the UN secretary, stated that the war on Gaza is a human crisis, as until October 2024, the civilians, mainly women and children, witnessed war and more than 42000 were killed and 96000 were injured. In addition,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of people in Gaza rely on the food aids and many vulnerable people died of hunger<sup>2</sup>. In this context, the death toll until April 2025 has increased to 51000 because Israel violated the cease-fire, according to the statistics of the Health Ministry in Gaza.<sup>3</sup>

In front of this massacre, the UN Human Rights Office confirms that the souls of civilians and infrastructure are protected by the international human law, which identifies the very clear commitments of the armed conflicting parties and puts the civilians in the top of priorities. However, Israel failed in choosing the methods of managing the aggressive attacks on Gaza since 07 October 2023, as it used wide-range explosives in populated regions without discrimination between civilians and soldiers.<sup>4</sup>

### Axis two: the analysis of war on Gaza in the light of the basic principles of the realistic perspective

The emergence of the international relations as an academic field brought about the need for studying the international reality using tools different than in the legal studies. For realism, it appeared in the between wars period due to fact that:

1. WWI caused material and human losses.
2. The myth of the civilizational task of the West declined.
3. The change in the power balance in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century imposed the need to review the historical causes of wars.
4. USA left its isolationism and got into war in 1917.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, it was necessary to investigate the role of power and the goals of the diplomatic work, which shaped the direction of the international relations as an international field of study, independently from the domestic policy, to take into account the chaos of the international order. Since the end of WWII, realism was the dominant paradigm in the international relations. Despite that the other intellectual trends criticize realism for being limited to investigating the causes of wars and the conditions of stability in the international order, most scholars base on it in building their perceptions, as Barry Buzan puts it, "this success undoubtedly and wisely explains this perception".<sup>6</sup>

The realists agree on the theories of the nationalistic state as a main factor in the international policy, the national sovereignty, the security, the survival, and the state interests, and insist on the balance of powers and coalitions in chaos to manage wars. The basic assumptions for realism state that the international order is chaotic and dangerous to an extent, the states are united, rational, and the main actors in this order, and that the states that fight for survival-self help- must follow the subjective aid principle, what makes cooperation unstable and less likely to take place<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Wispelwey, „Asi YM, *et al.* Civilian mortality and damage to medical facilities in Gaza. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup>Antonio Guterres, WAR In GAZA .United Nation Development Programme(<https://www.undp.org/war-gaza>)

<sup>3</sup>Poole DN, Andersen D, Raymond NA, *et al.* Damage to medical RAISES concern for lack of protection in Israel-Hamawar:

<sup>4</sup>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN report:Israeli use of heavy bombs in Gaza raises. Opcit.

<sup>5</sup>Jean-Jacques Roche, *Théorie des relations internationales* (Paris: LGDJ.1994)11.

<sup>6</sup>Dario Battestella, *Théories des relations internationales*(Paris: Presse de sciences po,2003)p111.

<sup>7</sup>Oghenerioborue Christopher, David Lawson, REALIST THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, The International Scholar Journal of Arts, Vol. 1, Issue 1, May, 2018.p9.

Realism is the most prominent school in the international relations. It justifies the states' conducts based on the national interests and power dynamics. In addition, it prioritizes the maintenance of state survival and independence. In his regard, Kenneth Waltz stated, in 1979, that the states are the main actors in the international policy and that their main focus is survival, and added that the structure of the international order obliges the states to behave in a way that maximizes their security.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the Palestinian struggle, many believe that the reliance of realism on power and security hides the tyranny and oppression faced by the Palestinians, what enshrined a dual understanding of the struggle and ignored the complexities of the historical injustice and the legal Palestinian struggle for auto-determination. There is a common belief that realism does not focus on ethics in its view to the world, and that it cares only about the material interests of states in a world governed by power. However, Mearshamer adopts an ethical attitude towards Gaza and against Israel, and criticized USA in an interview with Oxford Student, where he declared that Israel is in a deep crisis and faces harsh criticism due to three competing struggles, namely Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and a direct struggle with Iran. Besides, he described the Israeli policies in Gaza and the Western Bank as apartheid.

He adds that what Israel ultimately wants in Gaza and the Western Bank is genocide. Besides, he criticized the Israeli land penetration to Lebanon and argued that it is escalating the crises and getting into more struggles to drag Iran and USA to a war to destroy the Iranian nuclear facilities and change the Iranian regime. Moreover, he described the Israeli ultimate goal of establishing a new Middle-East that is friendlier to Israel and USA as an allusion. As for the defensive realism, it sees that the extensive illimited expansion of the state weakens it, as the case of the Nazi Germany.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the ethical dimension, the realists specialized in the international issues see that the support to Israel does not serve the US interests and believe that the Israeli violations against the Palestinians do not serve it either. In this regard, in his interview with TRT World Channel, the US politician, John Mearshamer, stated that what happened in fact was that Israel imprisoned the Palestinians in Gaza in a big open prison and mistreated them, and that what happened on 07 October was an escape from prison that was faced by Israeli invasions.<sup>3</sup>

In the same vein, Stephan Walt pointed that the Israeli brutal method in Gaza is not rare, as the realists always confirm that in a decentralized world, the governments will take off the gloves if they believe they can get benefits. In this regard, we can go back to the US reaction to Pearl Harbor attacks, or to how Russia behaved in Ukraine, or to how the conflicting parties act in Sudan. Walt confirms that the realists specialized in the foreign policy, including Charles Fredmen and John Mearshamer, had strongly criticized the Israeli actions in Gaza and the support of Biden. One can wonder how the supporters of the strict unemotional current in dealing with the international policy suddenly speak about ethics. Walt confirms that some confusion results from a common misunderstanding of realism and that its supporters believe that the ethical considerations must play a little to no role in managing the external policies; this is a silly accusation as the realists' writings show.

H. Morgenthau wrote a book on the tensions between the political efficiency and the ethical principles and confirmed that the ethical issues in politics call for an answer. Edward Carr was not a strong realist; however, he wrote a classical realist book to show that it is not possible to exclude the ethical considerations from the political life. All the writings of Kenneth Waltz on the international politics focus

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<sup>1</sup>Syeda Fatima Shuja, Realism and the invasion of Gaza: Critiquing Israel's Zionist agenda (<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20241121-realism-and-the-invasion-of-gaza-critiquing-israels-zionist-agenda/>).

<sup>2</sup>Doaa Mohamed, What Political "Realism" Says About The Gaza War (<https://worldcrunch.com/focus-israel-palestine-war/israel-gaza-political-realism>).

<sup>3</sup>Ibidem.

on peace and the conditions or policies that undermine or underpin it. Besides, they criticize the inclination of the strong states to committing evil actions in pursuing ideal goals. Nevertheless, the realists like George Kenan, Walter Liberman, Morgenthau, Waltz, and others opposed many optional wars made by USA in the late years based on ethical and strategic bases. The realists have ethical convictions, too, and want life in a world that abides by the principles. In fact, they focus on the ethical dimensions of the international politics in particular because they are aware about the easiness of committing unethical actions. In fact the realists are not surprised by what happens in Gaza, as many other states committed cruel actions when they felt that their vital interests are threatened. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the realists agree with what Israel and USA do.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.1 The war In Gaza and the power logic:

According to realism, the international relations are a place for the states logical interactions based on their national interests, mainly survival and national security.

In achieving these goals, the states need more power because it is the ultimate goal for the classical realists. Since the power is decisive, the state behaves based on power. When projecting the realistic thought on the Palestinian issue, we find that Israel and the Palestinian militias use a realistic perspective to possess and spread the military power with its different aspects, as Suilo declared in 2018, stating that the achievement of the national interests requires power.<sup>2</sup>

The geography and territory are a long-term basis for the state, as is the case for Israel that launched war to ensure sovereignty, invade lands, and maximize power. Besides, its ultimate goal that is about militarily competing Hamas cannot be achieved without maximizing the military power.

Mearshamer confirms that the state that attempts to maximize its power must develop its powers to attack. Therefore, Israel tries to strengthen its army to get a relative stance or another advantage to be more secure and maintain the self-defense tools. In this context, the brutal murders against Hamas and the eradication of the military and economic administration mark the Israeli irrational behavior under the pretext that eradicating Hamas helps achieve the stability and security in the region. The main declared Israeli goal helped Israel maximize its military power thanks to the US support. Despite that Israel has one of the world strongest armies, it receives 3.8 million USD aids from USA, in addition to missile launchers, F-35 fighters, and other military tools. Besides, it launched the Iron Dome, which is an air defense system that destroys the short-term missiles using radars. Within months, Israel launched wide military operations in Gaza using this Dome and targeted the tunnels of Hamas, known as Gaza Metro, and the other military infrastructure. These sophisticated tunnels have been designed under Gaza, parts of the lands colonized by Israel, and Egypt to make secret operations and launch sudden attacks.

The military wing of Hamas, al Kassam brigades, that includes about 50000 soldiers and have a big stock of guns, handmade bombs, and missiles. Besides, al Kassam Brigades is equipped with anti-tank guided missiles and anti-aircraft missiles, making it the most equipped army in gangs wars.<sup>3</sup>

The criticisms of realists to war in Gaza partially stem from their estimation of the limitation of the military power and the importance of nationalism. Besides, they are fully aware of the difficulties faced by the foreign invaders when they try to control another people and destroy it with weapons. Therefore, they concluded that the Israeli attempt to destroy Hamas by bombarding Gaza shall fail. In this regard, Hamas

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<sup>1</sup>MairaSafdar, ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR IN GAZA: REARRANGEMENT OF REGIONAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST 161 Margalla Papers-2024 (Issue-I).170.

<sup>2</sup>HaikalKurniaMaulanaRitonga, The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict as The Analysis of Realism Theory in The International Order. Airlangga University June2021.

<sup>3</sup>MairaSafdar, ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR IN GAZA: REARRANGEMENT OF REGIONAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST 161 Margalla Papers-2024 (Issue-I).11-171.

shall survive the Israeli attacks and even if it will not survive, new resistance organizations shall emerge as long as the Palestinians are colonized and deprived of their political rights and lands.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.2 Therealistic analysis of struggle between Israel and Hamas:

Power is the ultimate goal for the classical realists. Since it is decisive, the states act based on it. Israel and the Palestinian militias use a realistic perspective to possess and spread the military power with its different aspects, as Susilo declared in 2018, stating that the achievement of the national interests requires power.<sup>2</sup>

The logical and realistic methods had been adopted from 1988 to 2013 in the Palestinian struggle in the context of power and interest. The realists refused the one-state solution that was suggested by the Communist Party and the Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1944 and 1964. Then in 1988, the two-states solution had been proposed by Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Organization. The classical realists saw this as a compromise while Israel did not support it. However, in 1993, the proposal was the basis of negotiation with the Palestinians at that time despite it was refused by both parties. The failure of this proposal left the one-state proposal as the only solution, mainly that, in 2005, the Palestinian civil society called for boycotting the Israeli policies and establishing one democratic state for both parties; however, this was refused.<sup>3</sup>

Ben Gourion supposes that the main issue in the Palestinian case is that both parties want Palestine, and that the struggle is nationalistic with a very clear goal that is about establishing a territorially secure state. However, Israel and Hamas see that the negotiations are the ultimate tool to achieve the national goals, and that while waiting for the negotiations to begin, both see that the military development and armament are necessary. Thus, the ideological belief that the military power leads to negotiations and security is the motif behind the military race. Therefore, since the establishment of Israel, the prevailing belief was the iron curtain, as Vladimir Jabotinsky put it for the first time.

What distinguishes the states that have similar structures is the relative abilities; the ability to gain war is the standard on which the states are classified. The distribution of abilities, despite the difficulty of their measurement, explains how the states behave internationally. Similarly, Sheikh Ahmed Yacine, one of Hamas founders, sees the need to make a military power to reach negotiation. He states that what we get from any person in negotiations must be in correspondence to our power. Thus, since its establishment, Israel and Hamas kept on gathering violence tools for purposes outside the international frame. Nevertheless, there is another core issue about the concept of power as a material resource.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.3 The analysis of reordering the regional powers from the structuralist realistic perspective

The war between Hamas and Israel destabilizes the region and affects the positions of the big powers in the regional policy. To understand war from all the sides, it is necessary to analyze the issue that has been existing since 70 years. In this regard, Palestine is divided into two regions, namely the Western Bank and Gaza. They are both managed by the Palestinian authorities dominated by Fatah and Hamas and are subject to the Israeli illegal colonization.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Stephen M. Walt, Why Realists Oppose the War in Gaza (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/05/21/why-realists-oppose-the-war-in-gaza/>).

<sup>2</sup>Haikal Kurnia Maulana Ritonga, The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict as The Analysis of Realism Theory in The International Order. Airlangga University June 2021.

<sup>3</sup>Yousef M. Aljamal, Tarek Ladjal, Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor, PALESTINE-ISRAEL CONFLICT: RATIONALISM VS REALISM 1988-2017 Jurnal Al-Tamaddun, Bil. 13 (1), 2018, 37-44

<sup>4</sup>Tom Thornley, Realism, Military Power, and the Conflict Between Israel and Hamas. AUG 2 2011 (<https://www.e-ir.info/2011/08/02/realism-military-power-and-the-conflict-between-israel-and-hamas/>).

<sup>5</sup>Maira Safdar, ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR IN GAZA: REARRANGEMENT OF REGIONAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST 161 Margalla Papers-2024 (Issue-I).170

The Palestinian authority has been internationally recognized while Hamas refused to recognize the so-called "Israel" since it is a colonial entity, as explained by the ex-Information Minister of the Palestinian government, Mustafa Barghouti, in an interview with CNN. Barghouti stated that the political goals expressed by the Israeli prime minister, Netanyahu, in his discourse to the UN in September was provocative, as he declared liquidating the Palestinians' rights and affair through establishing relations with Arab partners, such as KSA. Besides, he went to the UN taking a map of the so-called "Israel", showing the Western Bank, Gaza, and Golan as colonized lands. This declaration started resistance in Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

The big and regional states have overlapping interests. However, the different motives for supporting Israel or Hamas divided them into two parties. The complicated relations as we find in the structuralist realism depict a multipolar world that causes instability and imbalance between the powers and, thus, intensifies wars. The role of the big powers, their complicated coalitions, and their effects on the decisions of the UN shed light on chaos in the world. The Security Council called for a ceasefire and urgent human suspension periods to allow for the aids to enter after 06 weeks of war. Four decisions were passed, but unfortunately, the big powers, mainly USA, UK, France, and Italy, vetoed them all claiming that the decisions do not condemn Hamas in particular.

We can say that the chaos resulting from the policies of the current regional powers and the temporary solutions aspired from subjective interests are the cause for extending the war. As the structural realists put, this identifies the causal relation between the state and the structure that moves from and to the state. Thus, the UN decisions that called for an immediate ceasefire were vetoed. The same attitude was seen in 2024, as USA vetoed the decisions, UK abstained to vote, while Russia and China voted for the ceasefire. Later in March 2024, USA suggested a project for the Security Council calling for an immediate ceasefire to protect the civilians provided that the hostages are released. The vagueness in the US actions and declarations raises doubts about the US political and diplomatic attitude toward war between Hamas and Israel, which included massive violations.

Johan Galtung expressed his belief that security can be established with peace, but peace cannot be achieved through security. In addition, he suggested a multilateral consensual solution because violence is not an option. Besides, he stated that the colonization policy would lead to fewer results in the future and that chaos resulting from the current policies of the regional powers and the subjective interests would extend war<sup>2</sup>.

The last conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and the ongoing military campaign against the Palestinians triggered the international attention towards the regional policy in the Middle East. In this regard, the last regional political changes, such as the Israeli and Arab efforts to establish relations, mainly between Israel and KSA, have been hindered. According to the realists, the ongoing massacre in Gaza shifted the Arab interests far from the peace operations and, thus, the priorities of the regional coalition and of the big powers changed.

Iran, which started making good relations with KSA, warned of a proactive attack against Israel. Most of the world states showed solidarity with Palestine. However, some parties like USA and UK showed support to Israel, as seen in the veto against the decisions of the Security Council. From a constructivist realist view, the international policy can be explained by analyzing the system and shedding light on the cause and effect relations that can be seen between the states, the main units, and the chaotic international structure. If we take this into account, reordering the coalitions in the Middle East shall extend the war and chaos in a multipolar world. Besides, war in Gaza may extend regionally and, in all cases, the realists

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid,p171.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid,pp170-171.



see that the war between Hamas and Israel would continue as long as the main international actors do not shed light on the main cause, i.e., the illegal colonization of Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

#### **2.4 The realists reading of the effect of war on Gaza on the US interests:**

The realists oppose the US support to Israel because it undermines the US international position. The destruction of Gaza is unethical and undermines the US interests. According to Stephen Walt, the polls show that the US popularity has sharply decreased in the Middle East and a little in Europe unlike that of Russia, China, and Iran. After one month of war, a report by Washington Institute for Near East Policy warned that USA is losing because of war in Gaza. The rate of Arabs who believe that USA plays a positive role in war is 07%, while China is gaining more support, as 46% of the Egyptians, 34% of the Iraqis, and 27% of the Jordanian see it has a positive role. Moreover, Iran seems to be the biggest winner from the war, as 40% believe it has a positive role compared to 21% who think the opposite. In Egypt and Syria, 50% and 52% of the populations believe Iran has a negative role.

The realists oppose the behaviors of Israel and the US support. War in Gaza showed that the US commitment to the rules-based system is meaningless and that it is difficult to believe that the US officials still can express this in a serious way. The UN General Secretariat vote for granting new rights and privileges to the Palestinians was the big proof of the US increasing isolationism compared to the recurrent veto against the UN Security Council that calls for the ceasefire. International Criminal Court issued arrest memoranda against the Israeli prime minister, the minister of defense, and some leaders of Hamas for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. However, this was refused by Washington, showing the US contradiction with many states.

Congress agreed to send extra billion USD for Israel to destroy Gaza, in addition to 32 million USD for that floating pier that USA had to build because the ally it supports would not allow the rescue agencies to send trucks to deliver the humanitarian aids. The US military powers used missiles and very expensive bombs against the Huthis in Yemen, who started to attack ships in the Red Sea to express opposition to what Israel does. These sums are not big for a state whose economy amounts up to 25 trillion USD. However, it would be better to spend money on helping the Americans instead of assisting in killing the Palestinians in Gaza. In this context, the realists confirm that in the next time the Congress says it is necessary to cut some local programs, it must be reminded of the money lost in funding the Israeli army.

Besides, war takes much of the big officials' time, energy, and interests. The Minister of the External Affairs, Anthony Blinken, and the director of CIA, William J. Burns, in addition to other known figures such as Biden, visited the region many times and spent much time dealing with such issues. Such time can be spent in visiting main allies in other regions, making a better policy in Ukraine, developing a more effective economic strategy in Asia, handling the climate change, or dealing with other issues. In supporting his stance against war in Gaza and in showing its effects on USA, Pr. Mearshamer analyzed the request of South Africa on 29 December 2023 to the International Court of Justice to push it to declare that the Israel violated the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 and to accuse the Israel of committing a genocide in Gaza, saying that the request perfectly describes what Israel does in Gaza because it is comprehensive, well-written, and supported with strong arguments.<sup>2</sup>

The request is made up of three elements. First, it describes the massacres caused by the Jews since 07 October 2023 and explains the murder and destruction the Palestinians shall face. Second, it provides a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibidem.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen M. Walt, Why Realists Oppose the War in Gaza (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/05/21/why-realists-oppose-the-war-in-gaza/>).

set of arguments that show that the Israeli leaders want to commit genocide against the Palestinians. In fact, the comments of the Israeli leaders are exactly recorded and shocking. Their speeches about dealing with the Palestinians remind us of how the Nazis spoke about dealing with the Jews. The document claims that the Israeli actions in Gaza, in addition to the intentions of the leaders, show that the Israeli policy is designed to cause material damage in Gaza. Third, the document implies big efforts to put the war on Gaza in a wider historical context, stating that Israel dealt with the Palestinians as imprisoned animals, using UN reports as evidences of the Israeli harsh treatment of the Palestinians. In sum, the request shows that what Israel did in Gaza since October is the most extremist version of violence in history.

In his analysis to the issue of genocide at the International Court of Justice, Pr. Mearshamer refers to the brutality of the Israeli defense, the murder of civilians in Gaza, the Israeli will to make genocide, and the participation of the US administration in the genocide;<sup>1</sup> First, the document confirms that genocide differs than the war and other humanity crimes despite the common relation between these acts in most of the time. For instance, targeting the civilians to help gain the war, as what happened when Britain and USA bombarded Japanese cities in WWII, is a war crime, not genocide. Britain and USA did not aim at destroying a big part of the population of the target states. In addition, the ethnic cleansing supported by selective violence is a war crime despite it is not genocide; it is the crime of all the crimes, as Omar Bertov, the Jewish holocaust expert puts it.

Mearshamer believed that Israel was guilty for committing war crimes, not genocide, during the two months of war despite flagrant proofs about the will to commit genocide. However, after the truce between 24 and 30 November 2023 and the Israeli return to attacks, we found out that it was in fact aiming at destroying a big part of Gaza population. Second, despite that the South African request focused on Israel, it has huge ramifications on USA, mainly Biden and his two main counselors. Undoubtedly, Biden administration takes part in the Israeli crimes and must be punished according to the genocide convention. Despite his recognition of the Israeli commitment of a random bombarding, Biden declared that USA will do nothing except protecting Israel. In this regard, he kept his word and had even violated the Congress decisions by supplying Israel with extra weapons. Regardless the legal ramifications of his actions, Biden will always be linked to one of the model attempts of genocide.

Third, Mearshamer wonders how the holocaust survivors face accusations of genocide. Regardless of how this issue is handled in the International Court of Justice, and despite the actions that will be taken by USA and Israel to avoid a fair trial, Israel will always be accused of genocide in the future. Fourth, the document confirms there is no proof that the genocide will end soon if the International Court of Justice does not intervene. It refers to the declarations of the Israeli prime minister on 25 December 2023, stating that they will go on fighting, not stop, and deepen the fight for a long period. Here, Mearshamer hopes that South Africa and the international Court of Justice would stop the fight. However, he confirms that, ultimately, the authority of the international courts in obliging Israel and USA is very limited and one of the assumptions defended by realism in general in its analyses of the relations between the international organizations and the big states.

Finally, Mearshamer points that USA is liberal democratic and full of intellectuals, editors, policy makers, analysts, and researchers who regularly declare their commitment to protecting the human rights all over the world and expressing their views regarding the war crimes, mainly if committed by USA or its allies. As for the genocide committed by Israel, most of the human rights liberal experts did not condemn the Israeli brutal actions in Gaza. Thus, he hopes they would explain their silence and believes that history will disrespect them if they keep silent.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John J. Mearsheimer, Professor John Mearsheimer on Genocide in Gaza, (<http://www.iglobenews.org/mearsheimer-genocide-gaza/>).

<sup>2</sup>Ibidem.

Steven Walt wonders about who the big international benefiter from the US unlimited support to Israel are, and states that Russia and China are. For many people around the world, mainly in the Southern states, the massacre in Gaza confirms the recurrent accusations by Putin and Xi Jin Bing that the US leadership to the world causes struggle and sufferance, and that the world would be better off under a multipolar regime where the authority is divided in a balanced way. In this regard, the Chinese leaders do not waste time travelling to Israel, as they are occupied with fixing the barriers, building economic ties, and strengthening the partnership with Russia.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.5 The Israel lobby from the perspective of neoclassical realism:

The main question for the realists and others is “why do USA and its allies keep supporting Israel?” Some see that this support is the outcome of the activities of the Israeli lobby, as the pressure groups can exercise a big political and financial influence to support Israel even if the support does not serve the strategic interests of USA and its supporters. In their 12000 words article published in London Review Off Box in March 2006 “the Israeli Lobby”, Mearshamer and Steven Walt presented their view of the influence of the pro-Israeli pressure groups on the US foreign policy. The paper is a summary of a longer research and has triggered hot debate.<sup>2</sup>

The authors pointed that during the few last decades, mainly since the 06-days war in 1967, the relation with Israel has been the focal point of the US policy in the Middle East. This steady support to Israel and the relevant efforts to spread democracy in the whole region infuriated the Arab and Islamic world and subjected USA, and the world security, to danger.

Such situation is unprecedented in the US political history. Therefore, we wonder why USA sacrifices its security and that of many of its allies to serve the interests of another people. We may suppose that the link between USA and Israel is based on common strategic interests or urgent ethical obligations. However, these two interpretations do not explain the US diplomatic and material support to the Jews. Instead, the US policy in the region stems from its internal policy, mainly the activities of the Israeli lobby. In this regard, the private interest groups succeeded in influencing the foreign policy. Nevertheless, no lobby has succeeded in deviating it from the national interests and in convincing the US population that the US interests are linked to those of another part; i.e., Israel in this case.

Such exceptional generosity would be understood if Israel had strategic and vital resources for USA, or if there were ethical justifications to the US support. However, both explanations are not convincing. Some may argue that Israel was vital in the Cold War, as it was an agent for USA after 1967, helped contain the Soviet Union in the region, and defeated the Soviet allies in Egypt and Syria. Besides, it protected other US allies, such as the Jordanian King Hussein, obliged Moscow to spend more on its allies, and provided important information on the Soviet abilities.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the US support was not cheap, as it complicated the relations between USA and the Arab states. For instance, the decision to provide urgent military aids estimated at 2.2 billion USD during October war pushed OPEC to impose an oil blockade that harmed the Western economies. The Israeli armed forces were not in a position that allowed protecting the US interests in the region. For instance, USA could not rely on Israel when the Iranian revolution in 1979 raised worries about the oil supplies. The 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf war revealed how Israel was a strategic burden, as USA could not use the Israeli bases to face the anti-Iraq coalition and was obliged to transform its resources, such as the batteries of Patriot missiles, to

<sup>1</sup>Stephen M. Walt, Why Realists Oppose the War in Gaza. Op cit.

<sup>2</sup>John Rees, The Zionist lobby: myth and reality (<https://www.counterfire.org/article/the-zionist-lobby-myth-and-reality/>).

<sup>3</sup>John Mearshamer and Stephen Walt, “The Israeli Lobby,” London Review of Books, 10 March 2006, pp 84-105. Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Spring 2006), pp. 83-114

stop Tel Aviv from taking any action that may harm the union against Saddam Hussein. Later in 2003, despite the Israel made sure USA faces Iraq, Bush could not ask its help without facing an Arab opposition. Therefore, Israel remained neutral another time.

Since the 1990s, and after 09/11 attacks, the US support was justified claiming that Israel is menaced by terrorist groups from the Arab and Islamic worlds and some states that support these groups and want to possess massive destruction weapons. Thus, Israel is an important ally in the war on terror. Besides, Mearshamer and Walt doubt its strategic importance because it is not acting as a loyal ally since its officials neglect the demands of USA, including the requests to stop building colonies and the assassination of the Palestinian leaders. Israel provided potential competitors, such as China, with sensitive military technology, in a methodological increasing pattern of unauthorized transportation operations.

According to US Government Accountability Office Israel executes the most aggressive spying operations against USA. In addition to Jonathan Polard issue, where Israel was supplied with big secret information in the 1980s, which were later sent to the Soviet Union in return for visa to allow the Soviet Jews to leave the Soviet Union, a new debate sparked in 2004 when Lawrence Franklin, a Pentagon official, sent secret information to an Israeli diplomat. The two researchers see that Israel is not the only party that spies on USA; however, its readiness to spy raises more doubts about its strategic value, which is not the only question, as its supporters see it merits unconditioned support because it is a weak entity surrounded by enemies because it embraces democracy, and because its people had suffered crimes in the past. Besides, its supporters see that its behavior was more ethical than that of its enemies. Nevertheless, reality does not show the truth of any of these claims, as the Israeli present or past behaviors do not show any ethical ground for preferring them over the Palestinians.

Mearshamer and Walt confirm that the interpretation is the power of the Israeli lobby, which is a wide coalition of individuals and organizations that want to direct the US foreign policy to serve the Israeli interests. This does not mean that the lobby is a movement with a centralized leadership and that its individuals do not disagree on given topics. Besides, not all the Jews are part of the lobby because Israel is not an important issue for many of them, as polls in 2004 show that 40% of the US Jews said they were not very, or at all, emotionally attached to Israel. In addition, the American Jews disagree on given Israeli policies, as many of the main organizations in the lobby, such as AIPAC and the congress of the heads of the big American Jewish organizations are managed by extremists who support the expansionist policies of Likoud party, including its opposition to Oslo peace operation. At the same time, most of the American Jews lean to providing concessions to the Palestinians, and some groups, such as the Jewish voice for peace, strongly support such initiatives. Despite these differences, they still provide a steady support to Israel.

On the other hand, the pro-Arab groups are weak. Therefore, the Israeli lobby easily exercises its activities and adopts two strategies. The first is that it exercises its big influence in Washington and on Congress and the executive branch. Regardless the views of the legislator or decision makers, the lobby makes the support to Israel the main decision. Second, it works hard to depict the general discourse in Israel in a positive image by narrating myths about its foundation and fostering the view about the political discussions that aim at banning the critical comments and ensure the US support because the explicit discussion of the US-Israeli relations may push many Americans to support a different policy. In the end, the researchers point that Israel may be in a better position if the lobby was less influential and the US policy was more just.<sup>1</sup>

## Conclusion:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid ,pp89-114.

Based on what was said, we denied the hypothesis, as it was expected that realism would prioritize the role of the active parties in the egoist state that aims at protecting itself, showing its military power, and protecting its interests amid an unethical world order. However, this reading and such discourse were not declared by the realists in their analysis of war in Gaza because the Palestinians do not have an official state. This shows the limitation of realism in predicting the untraditional war where many actors participate. In this regard, realists recognize there are different parties, such as individuals and groups, whose influence is no more limited to peace and war.

The realists' recognize that the radical cause for the problem is the illegal colonization of Palestine, attacking civilians, mainly children and women, causing hunger, banning the entrance of humanitarian aids, and attacking the medical facilities. Thus, it is clear that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza; even if the realists do not completely refuse the Israeli colonization, and even if they insist on Israel to respect the international law to achieve its interests and survival and those of its allies, mainly USA,

The paper stated that realism explains the behaviors of the states based on their will to maximize power under a chaotic international order. The realistic assumption that says that the concept of power affects the direction of the foreign policy and that survival is a central perception in directing the external behavior of states regarding the war on Gaza, and the Western absolute support to Israel, show an aggressive foreign policy based on interests even if resorting to genocide. The new realists have always confirmed that the international law and organizations are tools to serve the interests of the big states.

The genocide led by Israel and supported by the Westerners, mainly USA, shows that the human international law identified the humanitarian behavior that must be respected in war and in peace. Besides, the international organizations are not all subject to USA control, including UN, its agencies, and the International Court of Justice. Therefore, they condemn the Israeli criminal actions and issued a memorandum to arrest the Israeli prime minister and some officials. Nevertheless, reality shows the inability of these organizations to enforce their decisions that contradict with the interests of USA and its allies.

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