

Israeli Violence Amid US Embassy Move

The recent events on Gaza border that have been continuing since March 30, 2018, came as a reaction to the expression made by the US Department of State which projected the relocation of the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem on May 14. Although Donald Trump had announced their determination to move the embassy on December 6, 2017, the time accord which coincided with the 70th anniversary of the Israeli occupation and Nakba exacerbated the issue. The Palestinians who decided to continue their protests till the Nakba Day under the name of "Great Return March" were systematically targeted by the Israeli snipers using real bullets killing approximately 50 Palestinians including women, children and journalists, and injuring more than 5,000 in bloody clashes. Despite the fact that the protests were purely civil and peaceful, and no Israeli was injured, Israel attacked and killed the civilians without any hesitation claiming that it defended the borders of its country which they gradually stole from and at the expense of the Palestinians.

14 May 2018 was the bloodiest day for the Palestinians since 2014. Only on this day, Israeli forces created another Nakba killing more than 60 and injuring more than 2,500 Palestinians. While the Palestinians were protesting the systematic denial of their human and national rights, and the US decision which was to change the status of Jerusalem in favor of the colonizer-occupier state of Israel, Trump's daughter Ivanka and her Jewish husband Kushner were celebrating the festive inauguration of new American embassy in Jerusalem with Netanyahu who never mentioned what was simultaneously going on the border regarding the Israeli terror saying "What a glorious day. Remember this moment. This is history."

What do the Palestinians want?

The main demand of the Palestinians is the application of their right of return to their homeland, which was granted under international law. Their country including the region what is now called Israel was taken from them by the Zionist Jews in 1948. Depopulation and de-Arabization of Palestine were on the Zionists' agenda even before that year, especially since the 1930's. Hence, seventy years of sustained violation of rights, exclusion, and ethnic cleansing caused the misery of millions of Palestinians. Palestinian refugees and their descendants which number more than 7.5 million people throughout the world comprise one of the largest and longest-standing unresolved refugee crises in the world.

Amid the Zionist occupation and terror, the Palestinians either left out of fear or forced to leave their homes before and after 1948 due to the operations of Jewish terrorist organizations, Hagana and Irgoun. Within the context of plans such as Plan Dalet, the Palestinian towns, villages, and urban centers were destroyed and the local Palestinians were massacred by the Jewish military forces. The Palestinians who had to leave their homes especially before and after 1948 and in 1967 have the right to return their homes under international law. They are also ensured the restitution of their properties which the occupier state of Israel harmed or seized.

What is the right of return?

International law guarantees the civilians who flee and leave their homes the right of return which is embodied in:

- **UN Resolution 194/11** (passed in 1948 and reaffirmed every year since):^[1]

"...the [Palestinian] refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible."

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights-Article 13/2:**

"Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country."^[21]

The right of return is guaranteed under a number of other international documents such as International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European, the American and the African Conventions on Human Rights.

As all these international law documents grant, the right of return is a fundamental and an inalienable universal right which is valid for the Palestinians. This right is also about the sacredness of private property that the new sovereign or occupier cannot have any control on. The Jews claimed and demanded the restitution of their lost properties in the Second World War with no UN Resolution about it. However the two rights —namely the right of return and the right to restitution— are not dependent on each other. Even though the Palestinians do not return their homes, they have the right to restitution of their properties according to international law.

Despite the existence of all these international law clauses, Israel, as an occupier, colonial and racist state, refuses the rights of the Palestinians to return since seventy years. By using different tactics, Israel has continued to violate its obligations under international law and United Nations resolutions while enjoying full impunity from the international community.^[3]

Deadly silence of the regional powers

After the official relocation of the US Embassy to Jerusalem on May 14, many world leaders and a number of spokespersons from different non-governmental institutions all over the world censured the US move and simultaneous Israeli bloody violence towards the civilian Palestinians.

Nonetheless, it is quite obvious that the censures of a number of countries are not sincere. For example, Saudi Arabia, which is very well known with its close relationships with the US, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt playing a facilitator role in the US decision to relocate the embassy remained silent. As many said, without their help, neither the US nor Israel could dare to take this kind of a decision. Even the UAE declared Ramallah as the capital city of Palestine in the elementary school books. The Egyptian government remained silent as well whereas Ezher expressed its regrets due to the recent events.

Among the Muslim countries, Turkey is the only one which reacted to the events most. The Turkish foreign minister reportedly advised the Israeli envoy Eitan Naeh to leave the country for "an undetermined period of time". This move was replied by the Israelis ordering the Turkish consul in Jerusalem to return home. President Erdogan also accused Netanyahu of being the PM of an apartheid occupying state and having the blood of Palestinians on his hands. Erdogan will again host the OIC leaders in Istanbul on May 18, to hold a meeting about the killings of more than 60 Palestinians and injuring over 3.000 protesting the relocation of US embassy to Jerusalem. The OIC, which never reached a concrete solution for the sake of Jerusalem, can come with a concrete development this time.

The policies of the regional powers which have close ties with the US provide Israel a great mobility. For years, the US wants to sustain the balance of power in the region, precluding none of the regional powers to become more powerful, allowing Israel a space to continue. Especially the Saudi Arabia, Egypt and UAE having the same perspective with Israel towards Iran. The hostility towards Iran brings these three countries together, while also bringing them on the same side with Israel. Although there are other factors such as US support behind their corrupt governments persevering to remain in power, this basic fact could explain the pro-Israeli attitude of especially these three countries. Their commitment to the other side of the Palestinian cause will become more crystallized in tomorrow's meeting of OIC in Istanbul.

Trump's religious war?

Jerusalem has always been in the center of the struggles of the local and international powers to have

control over the region with nested and interpenetrating political, economic, strategic and religious reasons. It is quite possible to see the events from religious perspective nowadays.

Jerusalem is the holy city both for Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Belonging the same family of religions, all believe that Jerusalem will witness some events in the End of the Days. The Jews claim rights over the region asserting that the region are their ancient homeland. And many of them believe that the existence of a Jewish state on the holy lands will speed up the process and facilitate the coming of the Messiah which will end up with the real complete redemption of the Jews leading the establishment of a world empire. Although there are many Jews especially Haredim who blame Israeli state of being a sin and a disobey to God's commandments due to the 'Three Oaths' in Talmud. This is not to say that Netanyahu acts in accordance with the religious teachings. What is true for almost all the Zionists is to abuse and make use of the religious texts and elements to reach their secular aims.

For the Christian part, the Evangelical Christians —more than 50 million in the US— are the ones who are very much interested and pleasant with the existence of the Jewish state in these lands. According to their faith, Jewish control of all Jerusalem and a war between civilizations which will end up with the embracement of the Jews the Christianity. They are the most important component of Christian Zionism which emerged much before the Jewish Zionism. It is also very well known that the Israeli lobbies and Evangelical Christians have very much impact on the Congress of the US, which has always had tendencies to pass pro-Israeli laws. Today's embassy move also conducted under the framework of a law passed by the Congress in 1995. Their obvious impact on Trump facilitated the application of this law which was waived by the previous presidents since 1997. It is reasonable to say that the US policy towards the Palestine-Israel issue have absolutely become pro-Israel, although it had this tendency before. The US violates the decisions of the UN which itself is one of the five members of the Security Council. Once the mediator between Israel and Palestine, the US itself destroyed the already vandalized peace process.

Concisely, the Evangelicals in the US use Trump's insanity as a tool to realize the pro-Israeli steps which are all against the international law and come at the expense of Palestinian people. They believe that the existence of a Jewish state here will end up with the second coming of Jesus, the final judgment and the end of the world. Jesus will return and rule as the king. That is, for them, Jerusalem is about prophecy, not politics.

Conclusion

Israel has been violating the international law, the Geneva Convention, human rights and UN resolutions, while obstructing the peace in the Middle East for 70 years. In addition to the suffering of a people whose lands were taken over, Netanyahu's policy of engulfing the Palestinian state and the recent U.S. support for it have become a threat to the security and stability of the region and the world.

The inaction of the international community has been continuing for 70 years. The killings and sufferings of millions of Palestinians are not enough for them to take action. What adds more to the problems is the traitor countries such as Saudi, UAE, and Egypt's collaboration with the perpetrators. Despite all the unlawful actions taken by them, the right of return of Palestinians is still inalienable universal right which was applied in many cases such as Bosnia, East Timor, Kosovo, and Rwanda.

Israel must immediately be sued for the sake of the peace in the region. It consistently commits war crime in West Bank with its illegal settlements according to the International Criminal Court. It also commits genocide according to the International Court of Justice. It precludes the application of the right of return the Palestinians and right to restitution of their properties. All these crimes and others have remained unpunished for decades. All hopes are for the unity between the countries which take side with justice.

^[1] 194 (III). Palestine-Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator, UNGA.

<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DP/UNISPAL.nsf/0/C758572B78D1CD0085256BCF0077E51A> (17 May 2018)

^[2] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html> (17 May 2018)

^[3] Negotiations Affairs Department, State of Palestine, Factsheets, “70 Years of al-Nakba - In Focus: The Illegality of Moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem”.
<https://www.nad.ps/en/publication-resources/factsheets/70-years-al-nakba-focus-illegality-moving-us-embassy-jerusalem> (17 May 2018)