Israel-Hamas War: Protracted Social Conflict and Challenges for Conflict Resolution

Syed Adnan Athar Bukhari,[1] Hira Tariq,[2] and Jinsar Ali[3]

Article Information

Abstract

The ongoing Israel-Hamas war, an off-shoot of the broader Israel-Palestine conflict led to widespread violence, displacements, and destruction in Gaza and Lebanon. The overall conflict has witnessed the recurrence of violence and armed confrontations since its origin. Israel with support from the United States and like-minded states resorted to unabated violence to suppress the genuine calls for the right of self-determination and independence of Palestinians. The Al-Aqsa flood launched by Al-Qasam brigades of Hamas on October 7, 2023, revived and galvanized the movement of Palestinian liberation but invited a ruthless response from powerful Israel that has repudiated the international humanitarian and human rights laws through indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force resulting in thousands of Palestinian killings. The fundamental question is whether the military solution that conflicting parties resort to would bring a lasting peace in Palestine? The research, therefore, tries to explore critical questions of what causes the recurrence of violence within the Israel-Palestine conflict? What efforts have been taken to resolve the conflict? Why have these efforts broken down and could not yield peace? While finding answers to these questions, we try to find the best possible way(s) to address the longstanding-unresolved issue of Israel-Palestine conflict by applying Edward Azar's Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) model and Abraham Maslow's model of hierarchy of needs. The paper is divided into four sections. First, a brief historical background of the conflict is given to assess the origins and identify the root causes of the conflict. Second, we analyse international efforts to resolve the conflict. The third section identifies why peace efforts broke down leading to the ultimate recurrence of violence (particularly, the contemporary Israel-Hamas war). Fourth, we apply Azar's PSC and Maslow's needs models to assess causes of the recurrence of violence and provide credible, compelling and critical recommendations for conflict resolution and bringing sustainable and lasting peace in Palestine.

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[1]Assistant Professor at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: syedadnanathar@qau.edu.pk
[2]MPhil scholar at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: hiratariqfaisal@gmail.com
[3]MPhil scholar at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: jamrojinsar102@gmail.com

1   Introduction

The ongoing Israel-Hamas war has reignited another cycle of violence in the Middle East and rejuvenated the debates on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The war has resulted in devastating numbers of deaths and unmatchable destruction in contemporary international conflicts. The war was initiated as a consequence of militant activity when *Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades*, military wing of Hamas, a Palestinian organization launched a deadly attack, known as *Al-Aqsa flood* on Israel on October 7, 2023, killing around 1200 Israelis and taking more than 250 hostages in custody. (BBC, 2024) Around 800-1000 militants belonging to Hamas along with Islamic Jihad group tore away the Gaza fence border in 119 places, entering Israeli-occupied lands by flying powered paragliders and firing around 5,000 rockets. Around 6,000 people crossed into Israel from Gaza, a tiny territorial enclave where 2.3 million Palestinians are locked up since the Hamas coming to power in Gaza in 2007. (Israel, 2023), (Goldenburg & Shurafa, 2023)

The attacks were carried out in the backdrop of the developments in the last couple of years including increased Israeli settlements in Palestinian lands, displacements of hundreds of Palestinians, (Wong & Nereim, 2023) and intermittent clashes between Israel and Palestinians around the Al-Aqsa Mosque between 2021-2023. (Gritten & Lukov, 2023) The attacks aimed to trade the Israeli hostages as a bargaining tool to get free thousands of Palestinian prisoners, including women and children, captured in Israeli jails without a trial or charges. (Cook, 2023)

However, the Israeli counter-offensive strikes to dismantle and disrupt the Hamas inflicted terrible damage on innocent Palestinians. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have launched an urban warfare to root-out the Palestinian militants (mainly Hamas and Hezbollah) once and for all. Israel's retaliatory strikes have involved ground offensives, aerial strikes, bombing of hospitals and schools, target killings of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees, humanitarian aid workers and journalists. Israel has been not only using conventional use of force but also involved in pager attacks (McKernan & Davies, 2024), using an AI-based Lavender system and carrying out intelligence-based operations to target the top leadership of Hamas and Hezbollah. Notably, Israel's counter-offensives led to the killing of the top-tier leadership of these organizations including Hasan Nasrullah, Ismail Haniya and Yahya Sinwar (Sewell, 2024). The Israeli offensives resulted in more than 46,000 Palestinian deaths and more than 107,940 reported injuries as of late December 2024, massively affecting the women and children of Gaza. (Aljazeera, 2024) The war has spilt out into Lebanon with intermittent fights between Israel and Hezbollah. The recent US-brokered Israel-Hezbollah 60-day ceasefire deal in November 2024 is under stress as both sides resort to violence (Reuters, 2024). The war continues with no end in sight in the near future.

The research is significant as it tries to explore critical questions of what causes the recurrence of violence within the Israel-Palestine conflict? What are the reasons for hindrance of conflict resolution? What are possible implications of the Israel-Hamas war for the prospects of Middle Eastern peace? While finding answers to these questions, we try to find the best possible way(s) to address the longstanding-unresolved issue of Israel-Palestine conflict by applying Edward Azar's *Protracted Social Conflict* model and Abraham Maslow's model of *hierarchy of needs*. We believe that these models if deliberated and taken into account in the policy matrix have great potential to address the underlying causes of the overall Israel-Palestine conflict. An immediate ceasefire followed by implementation of a two-state solution can bring genuine and lasting peace in Palestine. The calls for Palestinian statehood cannot be suppressed by force for long. Authoritative and arbitrary use of force is the breeding ground for another manifested conflict in future, therefore, conflict resolution needs to be adopted through meeting the genuine human needs of the Palestinians as indicated in Azar's PSC and Maslow's needs. The research is carried out by using qualitative research methods. Descriptive and analytical research techniques have been employed to make propositions, provide analyses, and test hypothesis.

2   Origins and Background of the Conflict

The genesis of the Israel-Hamas war can be found in the overall Israel-Palestine or Arab-Israel conflict. The conflict is a complex and multifaceted struggle with deep historical, religious, and political roots. However, the origins of the contemporary conflict can be traced back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and involve competing national aspirations, territorial disputes, and external influences. (Neal, 1995)

Religiously, the land of Palestine has been a sacred and holy place for the people of three Abrahamic religions, Jews, Muslims, and Christians. The Jews consider Jerusalem as *Promised Land*, where Judaism began. It holds significant value in biblical narratives and Jewish history. (AJC, 2024) The Muslims place high reverence to Jerusalem, popularly known as Al Quds, due to existence of Al-Aqsa mosque, their first *qibla*. (Hoyland, 2018) Muhammad (PBUH) also visited the place during his famous night journey and ascension (*Mira'j*). (Huda, 2017) As per the Christian belief, Jesus was crucified and ultimately rose in Jerusalem; therefore, they pay respect to the place. (BBC, 2014)

The Jews were dispersed out of Jerusalem after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE and started living as migrants around the world. Persecution of Jews, particularly, the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, (including the Holocaust) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries led to the foundation of the Zionist movement in 1896-97, by Theodor Herzl. He first established a political movement calling for a separate homeland for the Jews in Palestine, their *Promised Land*. This resulted in the immigration of scattered Jews in Palestine who started purchasing land from absentee landowners, large resident landowners, government, churches, foreign companies and *fellaheen* (farmers), and building settlements in 1920s and 1930s. (Halbrook, 1981)

This influx of Jews further increased with the result of the Belfour Declaration in 1917. Under this declaration, the British pledged the Jews to carve out a separate state for them in Palestine. Conversely, the British had also made a parallel pledge to the Hussein of Makah. As per the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, the British assured Hussein of his rule in Palestine in exchange for support against the Ottomans during the World War I (Zipperstein, 2020). In 1916, the British, in connivance with France decided to alter the geographic configuration of Palestine as per the Sykes-Picot agreement that crated resentment in the Arab world. (Aljazeera, 2008)

In the post-WW-II, as per the promise of Belfour declaration and Sykes-Picot agreement, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 181 in 1947 which proposed division of Palestine into two separate states of Israel and Palestine and keeping Jerusalem as an international city. The plan was acceptable to the Jews; however, the Arabs refused the proposal considering it unjust and disproportionate favour to the Jews. Amid these tensions, Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948. Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt along with Saudi expeditionary forces launched aggression the very next day leading to the first Arab-Israeli War, 1948. (The Arab-Israeli War of 1948, n.d.) The war stopped with unabated suffering known as *Nakba* (catastrophe) with a huge refugee crisis that resulted in the displacement of 700,000 Palestinians (Krauss, 2024). With the creation of Israel, the conflict saw intermittent cycles of violence between Israel and neighbouring states in 1956, 1967, 1973, and 2006 and within Palestine with provoked fighting of Intifada-I (in late 1980s), Intifada-II (in early 2000s) and the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, 2023 to date. (Action, 2024).

The recent episodes of violence can be conceptualized as the looming Israel-Hamas war, Gaza crisis or the Red Sea crisis, with different actors involved including Israel, Hamas, allegedly Iran (that alledegdly support Hezbollah), Houthis in Yemen and other militant groups such as Islamic Jihad, etc. (Amy Mackinnon and Jack Detsch, 2024); (Week, 2024).

Israel's illegal occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem created lasting tensions and led to intensified violence intermittently. Given this condition, the underlying causes of the conflict are the status of Jerusalem, refugees, borders, security and above all, the recognition of Palestinians' identity and their statehood. Israel's resort to violence and continued settlement exacerbates the tensions and results in sporadic and periodic violence, destruction, loss of lives and insecurity. (Jensehaugen, 2023) The struggle of Palestinians and Arabs for their right of self-determination continues so as Israel's

aggression. Nonetheless, there had been several efforts to resolve the conflict that is discussed in the next section.

2.1 International Efforts for Conflict Resolution

Many efforts to bring peace to Palestine witnessed moments of rapprochement which underscored the potential for conflict resolution through diplomatic endeavours. For instance, the UN General Assembly Resolution 181, adopted in 1947 was the first attempt to achieve peace. It proposed to end the British Mandate into Palestine; partitioning the Palestinian territory into two independent states, a Jewish state and the Arab state and an international regime for the city of Jerusalem. The partition plan of Palestine was rejected by the Arabs since it was mainly favourable to the Jews. However, the Jewish groups adopted the plan and declared independence into the areas under control of designated British mandate as per the Resolution 181; but, a war broke out between the Arabs and newly established Israel, leading to the ultimate failure of the peace process. (CFR, 2024)

After the Six-Day War of 1967, the UN Security Council Resolution 242, passed in November 1967 called for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories (the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights) but to no avail. In the post-Yom Kippur War of 1973, Egypt altered its relations from competition to cooperation. The 1978 Camp David Accords, brokered by the then-US President, Jimmy Carter led to the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. (Brian Murphy, Adam Taylor, Bryan Pietsch and Andrea Salcedo, 2023)

The Oslo Accords (1993-1995), a remarkable peace initiative called for establishing the Palestinian Authority (PA), thereby, providing limited self-governance for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. (Brian Murphy, Adam Taylor, Bryan Pietsch and Andrea Salcedo, 2023) However, it failed to address key issues such as the status of Jerusalem. Later, an extremist Jewish assassinated the then Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin in November, 1995, putting a blow to the peace initiative. The prospects of peace in Palestine remained low since Benjamin Netanyahu, a critic of the Oslo Accords and peace initiatives assumed Israel's premiership in 1996. (Miller, 2023)

The Roadmap for Peace in 2003 proposed by the Quartet on the Middle East including the United States, European Union, United Nations, and Russia to settle disputes between Israel and Palestinians aimed to stop Intifada-II, establish two states and undertake political reforms. However, violence from both sides and the emerging divide between Hamas and Fatah led to its failure. (ECF, 2003) The Annapolis Conference, backed by the US in 2007 was another effort to maintain peace that aimed to agree to pre-1967 borders and the division of Jerusalem. However, the conference was only a political commitment and no binding agreement was made. Many analysts believed that it was a politically motivated initiative. Internal rifts between the Palestinian Authority including (Mahmood Abbas' Fatah, controlling the West Bank) and Hamas (that won the 2006 elections and mainly control Gaza), failure to address the issues of settlements and division of Jerusalem led to the failure of the process. (Patel, 2007)

Notably, Palestine was granted a non-member observer state status by the UN General Assembly in 2012. The US President-elect Donald Trump, in its first term, recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017, a move that was widely condemned by Palestinians. Trump's *Deal of Century* altered the US support for a two-state solution and supported Israel's annexation of the West Bank and a demilitarized Palestinian state with no borders. The move was overwhelmingly rejected by the Palestinians and the Arab leaders. (Landler, 2017)

In 2020, a new initiative was seen as an omen of peace when relations between Israel and Arab states, UAE, Bahrain and Morocco normalized as a result of the US-led Abraham Accords. The accords were believed to be the greatest diplomatic triumphs and many claimed the extinction of the thesis of Huntington's *Clash of Civilization*. (Jensehaugen, 2023) On the other hand, the Abraham Accords were out-rightly rejected by the Palestinians, as it called for normalization without resolution of core issues, an attempt to legitimize Israel's territorial Judaization of Palestinian land, undermined the right of self-

determination to Palestinians, and more importantly, it sidelined the Palestinians despite being the main stakeholders. (Dawn, 2023)

2.2   Challenges for Conflict Resolution

The unresolved issue of Palestine is a result of breakdown of diplomatic efforts, lack of political will on the part of those who can resolve the conflict and the inadequacies of liberal institutional order. Ironically, the world ignores Israel's repeated violations of international humanitarian law and human rights laws. The inherent structural flaws in the international legal framework and decision-making processes, the Western world's political choices, and power imbalances within international institutions make it difficult for Palestinian people to achieve the status of statehood. For instance, in the post-WW-II order, Palestine, a British-mandated territory was not placed under the UN trusteeship system and thus denied the right to get independence. (Khalil, n.d.) Likewise, Israel's admission to the UN system was subject to its compliance with the UNGA Resolution 194 (1948) which explicitly stipulates that refugees would be allowed to return to their homes and live in peace at the earliest possible date. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has consistently demanded Israel to grant Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes. (Khalil, n.d.) Not only Israel has persistently repudiated the UN resolution 194, rejecting the Palestinians' right to return to their territories but it continuously orchestrated the expanded Jewish settlements in Palestinian territories with impunity. Furthermore, Israel uses the pretext of self-defence of Article 51 of the UN Charter's Chapter VII to curb the legitimate struggle of Palestinians for national liberation, terming it as terrorism. (Khalil, n.d.) The liberal institutional order erected with the establishment of the UN Security Council (UNSC) system to take action against those who threaten international peace and stability, with powers enshrined under articles 39, 41, and 42 of the UN Charter, is based on structural flaws with veto power to five states. The monopoly of the veto system at the disposal of P-5 states and weak enforcement mechanisms have raised questions about its efficacy and effectiveness. Ironically, the UNSC has failed to adopt a decision to pass a resolution to call for a ceasefire four times since the start of the Israel-Hamas war. Mainly, the US has vetoed all these resolutions despite an overwhelming majority of votes calling for a ceasefire. (Al-Jazeera, 2024) Such support for Israel by the US (and its like-minded states such as the UK) in the UN has led to perpetuating war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. (Akram, 2024)

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), formed in 1969 in response to an Israeli attack on Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem failed to convince the world for conflict resolution. Moreover, the Arab states which used to vehemently support and even fight for the cause of Palestine are currently appeasing and some even recognised and softening relations with Israel. (Javed, 2023) The Muslim states rejected Israel's aggression in pretext of self-defence. They called Israel to end war in Gaza in extraordinary summits in November 2023. (Dawn, 2023) Türkiye's President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan lamented the Muslim countries' inaction in the Israel-Gaza war at an extraordinary joint summit of the OIC and the Arab League in Riyadh in November 2024. (Seda Sevencan and Serdar Dincel, 2024)

Interestingly, in an authoritative judgment by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in July 2024, Israel's occupation of the Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem was declared "unlawful, along with the associated settlement regime, annexation and use of natural resources." (UNOHCHR, 2024) In September 2024, the UN Secretary General called for ending the atrocities being committed by Israel's unlawful actions in the ongoing war as identified in the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ and release of hostages. He urged the UNSC to yield support of an immediate ceasefire leading to a viable two-state solution, as the only way to end cycle of violence. (Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council - on Gaza, 2024) Despite persistent calls for ceasefire, the US has vetoed the Resolution in 15-member UNSC for fourth time in November 2024 despite 14 votes in favour. (US vetoes another UN Security Council resolution seeking Gaza ceasefire, 2024) Such actions, reactions and inaction on the part of those who can positively play role to resolve the conflict contribute to the perpetuation of the conflict.

In the next section, we argue that that Edward Azar's model of *Protracted Social Conflict (PSC)* and Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* model provide a compelling conceptual lens to evaluate the recurrence of violence as a result of longstanding unresolved conflict between Israel and Palestinians.

3   Application of Edward Azar's model of *Protracted Social Conflict* and Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* model

The *Protracted Social Conflict* (PSC) model holds that intra-state social conflicts get prolonged due to four clusters of variables leading to high levels of intensity. The four determinants of the PSC identified by Azar include communal content, deprivation of human needs, governance/state role, and, international linkages. (Azar, 1990); (Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, 2016)

The existence of *'communal content'* is the first underlying feature of the PSC. The most effective unit of analysis is the identity group, defined by racial, religious, ethnic, cultural, and other factors. In our case, this identity group is Palestinians who share history, religion and ethnicity. The core problems lie within the relationship between the identity group and the state which Azar described as the "disarticulation between the state and society." Within this matrix, it is significant to assess how societal needs including physiological needs, security, identity, recognition and others are mediated through membership of social groups. In many post-colonial multi-communal societies, the state apparatus is often controlled by a single communal group or a coalition of a select few communal groups. In overall Palestinian territory, the Zionist Jewish government in Israel is the dominant group that holds relatively greater power than its competitors. The unresponsiveness of this dominated group to the needs of other groups in the society "strains the social fabric and eventually breeds fragmentation" and, ultimately results in protracted social conflict. (Azar, 1990); (Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, 2016) The disarticulation between the identity group (Palestinians) and dominant group (Israel) resulted in a prolonged conflict with recurrent cycles of violence.

Second, Azar identified *'deprivation of human needs'* as the underlying source of the PSC. If human needs collectively articulated as societal needs are persistently deprived by the dominant group cultivates a niche for a PSC. Human needs are non-negotiable and uncompromising. Conflicts originating dues to the human needs' deprivations will be intense and vicious, he argued. Azar identified "security needs, development needs, political access needs, and identity needs (cultural and religious expression)," which Henry Shue referred to as the first three 'basic rights' of security, subsistence and freedom may be breeding grounds for the conflict. In our case, Palestinians are struggling hard to attain their fundamental societal needs of sustenance, security, returning to their original lands, ending refugee status and, above all, getting recognition of their identity. Importantly, conflict resolution can only occur when "satisfactory amelioration of underdevelopment occurs." (Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, 2016); (Azar, 1990)

Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* model provides an understanding of assessing human needs, which if deprived may lead to conflict. Maslow categorized human needs in a hierarchal pyramid of pre-potency in which human needs are viewed from bottom to upward. The physiological needs (lie at the bottom of the pyramid) include food, water, air, clothing and all related essentials to live, are the most potent needs. Safety needs are followed by physiological needs. They stand for being secure, not fearful and unthreatened to live on. The next tier is love and belongingness; followed by self-esteem or (self-respect). The top of the pyramid showcases self-actualization (realization of the meaning to live on). The lack of provision for these needs (starting from bottom to top) may generate a psychological thrust (of frustration and anger), ultimately leading to a conflict. Following is an illustration of Maslow's *hierarchy of needs* model. (Abraham Maslow)

Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

If Maslow's model of hierarchy of needs is applied to the Israel-Palestine Conflict, it appears that Palestinians face deprivation of all tiers of needs. They have been denied the most basic needs like food, water and shelter. Their sense of security and high-valued feelings of love and belongingness have become only aspirations and yearnings. Due to Israel's continued violence in Palestine in the ongoing war, children are being orphaned, entire families disappeared, parents lost children and are forced to live with this grief forever. The higher-tier needs of self-esteem and self-actualization are struggle for recognition, going back to their lands, ending their refugee status and acceptance of their statehood. The Israel-Hamas war is, therefore, much more than the feud over territory. For Israelis, Jerusalem and Palestine were their promised land; while for Palestinians, it is their home which got not only colonized but they became refugees. Throughout the history of the conflict, emotional value and attachments were not brought into consideration during the negotiations. Rather, the conflict was handled with perceptions that actors had, following realpolitik. Israel has cornered Palestinians into a small strip of Gaza and the West Bank through repeated military actions and forced settlements into Palestinian lands. The decreasing territorial spaces create huge socio-economic pressures for Palestinians. The emotions of Palestinians attached to their land and sacred city are oppressed by the Israeli's hard-headedness who believe it is their legitimate right to exercise authority over their *promised land*.

A win-win situation can be attained through the provision of human needs to the Palestinians including their right to self-determination and statehood. This win-win situation lies in the two-state solution. For Israel, recognition of Palestine and provision of their societal needs would ensure the sustainable peace. The physiological needs which include the basic needs such as food, water and shelter must be met first of all. For the potential resolution of the conflict, the agrarian land rights across the fence from Gaza once belonged to the Palestinians, the Kibbutz and Moshav must be cultivated jointly by Israel and Palestinian farmers or distributed in shares. The first requisite for fulfilling the safety and security needs is to hold a ceasefire. Cities like Bait-ul-Muqaddas (Jerusalem) which are equally respectable should be open to both nations. The area shall be controlled by the United Nations Peacekeeping forces rather than the Israeli or Palestinian Authority. Palestinians have lost thousands of loved ones in the conflict and so did Israelis (comparably very less than Palestinians).

Forgiveness, an under-researched and less focused area can play a significant role in diminishing the divide and cleavages between the Israelis and Palestinians but that can only work out with political will from all sides. A compromise of mutual recognition of Israel and Palestine will help fulfil the self-esteem needs of the Palestinians and even Israelis. The fundamental question is whether the military solution that Israel, Hamas and Hezbollah resort to would bring peace. Violence breeds more violence and spirals into unabated cycles of aggression, deaths and destruction. Israel sooner or later has to realize that its only military approach cannot bring peace and stability for long. Self-actualization, a distant objective to be materialized would require both nations to show political will, readiness to compromise and will to cooperate.

Third, Azar identified *governance and the state's role* as determining factor in the satisfaction or frustration of societal needs of the identity group. States which experience the PSC tend to be characterized by incompetent, parochial, fragile, and authoritarian governments that do not fulfil the fundamental human needs.

He argued that that in non-Western societies, political power is often concentrated in the hands of a dominant identity group who exploit the state to advance their interests at the expense of others. In the PSC driven societies, the state's political capacity is constrained by inflexible or fragile authority structures, making it unable to address and fulfil the needs of its diverse constituents. (Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, 2016); (Azar, 1990) In our case study, the dominant identity group, the Zionist Jewish state of Israel's hard-headedness, oppression and indifference to the basic human needs of Palestinians lead to the frustration of Palestinians and thereby, leading to the PSC.

Azar identifies '*international linkages*' as the fourth significant pillar of the PSC model. It refers to the connections between the weak and strong states (in international relations) based on *economic dependency* within the international economic system and *client relationship*. The stronger states influence the decision-making processes and the domestic socio-political and economic structures of weak states. Outside intervention often encourages the discrimination of communal groups in accessibility and prosperity and thus contributes to the perpetuation of the conflict. (Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, 2016); (Azar, 1990) In our case, the Israel-US partnership is an instance of international linkage. There has been a strong Jewish lobby within the US that protect and furthers Israeli interests. (John J. Mearsheimer, 2006) The US backing of Israel throughout its history and, particularly in the current Israel-Hamas war financially, militarily and diplomatically is testimony of the fact that the conflict has international linkage, perpetuating it.

Given four clusters of variables, the actions and events of 'process dynamics' that work through three groups of determinants including 'communal actions and strategies', 'state actions and strategies,' and 'built-in mechanisms of conflict' may activate overt conflict. (Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, 2016); (Azar, 1990)

First, the 'communal actions and strategies' refers to the involvement of the various processes of identity group formation (such as establishment of Fatah, PLO, Hamas and Hezbollah, etc.), organisation and mobilization (through political set-ups, generating funds and yielding support from the Palestinians), the emergence and nature of leadership (for instance, Yasir Arafat earlier, later Mahmood Abbas, Ismail Haniya and Hasan Nasrullah), and the choice of political goals (including provision of basic human needs, freedom from Israeli subjugation and oppression and above all, establishment and recognition of Palestinian state.) These groups strive for the objectives through different tactics (such as political processes and negotiations, guerrilla war, violent tactics and direct fighting). (Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, 2016); (Azar, 1990)

Second, 'state actions and strategies' include either political accommodation (such as a ceasefire, engagement and negotiations) or coercive repression or 'instrumental co-option' (such as resorting to violence, oppression and kinetic use of force: take the Israel-Hamas war as an instance). State's responses are often based on repression rather than accommodation. (Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, 2016); (Azar, 1990)

Third, there are self-reinforcing 'built-in mechanisms of conflict,' once the spiral of conflict escalation is triggered. Such mechanisms can be conceived through ABC 'conflict triangle' i.e. (attitude, behaviour and contradiction), propounded by John Galtung (Galtung, 1997); (Maslow, 1958) and illustrated below;
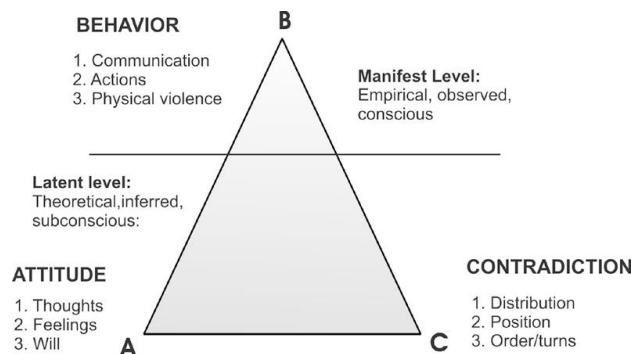
Figure 2. The Conflict Triangle, Galtung J., *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, **Sage, London, 1997, p. 72**

Attitude refers to the thoughts, feelings and desires of the conflicting parties. Palestinians feel and think betrayal, oppression, and frustration due to sad state of affairs over prolonged unresolved issues. Behaviour is translated through what is said (rhetoric) and what is done (any tangible action done), illustrated below. The contradiction in a conflict is the core reason or cause of the conflict. It is the specific issue/s about which the disagreement has taken place. Contradiction in the Israel-Palestine conflict is the one where the goals of identity group (Palestinians) i.e. the right of self-determination, recognition of their identity and call for statehood are being blocked by Israel through aggressive behaviour. (Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, 2016); (Azar, 1990) Israel-Palestine wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, Intifada I & II and the Israel-Hamas war are reflections of aggressive behaviours leading to new contradictions on top of the old ones such as the resurgence of violent armed conflict at intervals, possibly stimulating more aggressiveness and aggression. In our case, in each episode of violent activity throughout the Israel-Palestine conflict, Israel undertakes more aggressive policies, using violence, denying food and medicine access, more Jewish settlement plans in Palestinian lands, resorting to force and violence, killing innocents and occupying lands, pushing one ethnic group (Palestinians) to the wall, and thus violence erupts from all parties concerned. Violence begets violence and turns into an unstoppable fire, ceasing only when the entire house has been consumed. (Galtung, 1997) ; (Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, 2016)

Palestine and now Lebanon are burning and if interventions are not made for conflict resolution, it will perpetuate unabated for the unforeseeable future. This study suggests that the core causes of the communal conflicts in Palestine need to be looked at and worked out through provision of the human needs and adopting accommodative and flexible behaviours from Israel. Moreover, conflict resolution requires a willingness from all conflicting parties to negotiate with political will and a willingness to compromise from both sides. This research supports the resolution of conflict through a two-state formula as per the UNGA Resolution 181 (1947) and as per pre-1967 territories as called for the UN Resolution 242 (1967). Israel must undertake its commitments as called for in the UNGA 181 and 194 Resolutions because it was admitted to the UN system on these conditions. (Hey Alma, 2023) The border disputes, refugee crisis and Israeli settlement issues will be settled once the two-state solution is implemented. The grievances of the Palestinians are genuine and they cannot repudiated for long through intimidation and violence.

4   Conclusion

The Israel-Hamas war brought the Israel-Palestine conflict to the international limelight again which some believed has gone to the backburner of the international agenda. The war has resulted in huge destruction and human loss in more than a year of bloody Israeli aggression. The Palestinians are struggling hard to get their identity recognised and realize their dream of statehood without fear and subjugation. In the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestinians, humanitarian crisis and horror plague the theatre to the extent that the price of victory becomes far more than the cost of human lives. The research finds that the Israel-Palestine conflict has not been resolved due to the lack of provision of the human needs of the Palestinians, resulting in a protracted social conflict. Further, it is prolonged

due to the deep-rooted mistrust between Israel and Palestinians that keeps reinforcing throughout the history of conflict. Another reason for the failure of peace processes is reliance on the use of force from both sides (Ben-Ami, 2019). The inadequacies of international institutional framework (such as the veto system of the UNSC) contributed to the perpetuation of the conflict. The US, being a powerful third-party actor into the conflict supports Israel, due to its deep-rooted interests and a strong pro-Israel lobby. It does not only remain oblivious to Israel's violation of international law and international humanitarian law but supports its atrocities by vetoing ceasefire four times in the UNSC to stop the ongoing Gaza war. The structural flaws in the international legal framework, (coupled with some states, particularly the US and its like-minded states such as the UK) only supporting Israel), and power imbalances within international institutions make it difficult for Palestinian people to the realization of Palestinian rights including achieving the status of statehood. (El-Affendi, 2023). The unresolved issue of Palestine is result of non-implementation of the UN resolutions for a two-state solution.

The research finds that despite some diplomatic efforts in the past; the lack of political will and unwillingness to compromise from all sides (including Israel, Hezbollah and Hamas) have hindered the way forward to bring lasting, sustainable and durable peace in the Palestinian conflict. There is a dire need to understand the eruption of conflict from the Protracted Social Conflict, propounded by Edward Azar which this paper tried to identify. The issue of Israel-Palestine is a communal conflict in which the human needs of the identity group (Palestinians) are being deprived by the dominant group (Israelis), leading to refugee, identity and territorial disputes. A two-state formula prescribed by the UN is the only way out of the conflict that will not only provide for the human needs of Palestinians but will be a solution for lasting and sustainable peace. An immediate ceasefire is urgently needed to stop Israel's continued aggression. The world must act now instead of waiting for thousands more families to undergo grief and sufferings of war, thousands more children to get amputated and left orphaned and hundreds more olive trees to be uprooted.

Acknowledgements

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