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The stances of various geographical groups concerning the war on Gaza

Following the Israeli occupation authorities' assault on the Gaza Strip in the operation dubbed "Iron Swords," which resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives and left thousands of Palestinian civilians wounded, various international responses and stances emerged. The global community found itself divided into three distinct categories.

Firstly, there was a faction that endorsed Israel and its military actions, with notable supporters including the United States of America, the European Union, and Canada. They aligned themselves with the Israeli offensive.

A second group advocated for de-escalation, asserting that Israel's response had surpassed the bounds of self-defence. They urged restraint and a more measured approach to the situation.

A third faction strongly denounced the Israeli aggression, condemning the warfare and crimes committed in Gaza. Countries like Iran, Colombia, and several others expressed solidarity with the Palestinian cause, calling for international action and support. The reactions varied based on geographical divisions:

The European Union:

On 15 October 2023, the Council of Europe issued a statement addressing the situation in the Middle East. The Council emphasised Israel's right to defend itself in compliance with international law, particularly in response to violent and indiscriminate attacks by the Hamas movement. The statement strongly condemned Hamas and its attacks, characterising them as brutal and indiscriminate terrorist acts. It explicitly stated that there is no justification for terrorism.

The Council called on Hamas to release all hostages immediately without any preconditions. Additionally, it advocated for providing humanitarian assistance to Gaza, with a commitment from Union countries to support civilians. The statement underscored the importance of preventing terrorist organisations from diverting aid.

The European Union reiterated its commitment to a lasting and sustainable peace based on the two-state solution. This involves mobilising efforts in the peace process and engaging with the legitimate Palestinian Authority, as well as collaborating with regional and international partners to prevent escalation.

In a related context, on 13 October 2023, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, visited Israel. President Von der Leyen described Hamas' attack as the most heinous against Jews since the Holocaust. She affirmed Europe's solidarity with Israel, recognising its right and duty to defend its people. She urged close monitoring of those benefiting from the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, specifically mentioning Iran and Russia.

Latin American Countries:

The countries affiliated with the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) have expressed profound regret over the escalating violence in the Gaza Strip, recognising its threat to international peace. In a collective statement published on their official page, member nations, including Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, underscored their solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The ALBA nations deplored the intensification of violence in the Gaza Strip, considering it a violation of international law and contrary to the principles and objectives outlined in the United Nations Charter. They urged strict adherence to UN resolutions advocating for the establishment of two states along the 1967 borders and the recognition of East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine.

Expressing concern about the potential threat to regional stability if a prompt negotiated solution is not achieved, the organisation emphasised the critical importance of finding a lasting resolution to the conflict. ALBA participants reiterated their call for the United Nations and the international community to actively engage in dialogue and adhere to the provisions of international law in the pursuit of a sustainable solution. The following outlines some of the noteworthy statements and positions taken by Latin American countries within this context:

Brazil:

On 7 October 2023, the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement expressing its commitment to preventing the escalation of the conflict between Israel and Hamas. The statement condemned Hamas' attacks and reiterated Brazil's support for the "two-state solution," advocating for peaceful coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis within agreed-upon and internationally recognised borders.

Emphasising the government's position against resorting to violence, especially against civilians, the statement urged all parties involved to exercise utmost restraint, with the aim of preventing the situation from further escalation. Brazil's stance aligns with a diplomatic approach, stressing the importance of dialogue and restraint in resolving the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Argentina:

Following the Hamas attack on Israel, the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the incident, categorising it as a terrorist act. In response, Hamas promptly called for an end to the violence, emphasising the need to ensure the security of civilians, and expressed solidarity with the Israeli people.

Notably, Argentina is home to the largest Jewish community in Latin America, as stated by Argentine authorities. The attack had a direct impact on Argentina, resulting in the loss of at least seven Argentine citizens in Israel, with 15 others reported missing. In response to these developments, the Argentine president issued orders to strengthen the security of Jewish institutions within the country and placed law enforcement agencies on high alert along the national borders.

Mexico:

Following the Hamas attack on Israel, Mexican President Andres Manuel López Obrador reaffirmed his government's foreign policy of "non-interference, self-determination of peoples, cooperation for development, and peaceful resolution of disputes." President López stated, "We do not want to take sides to any party because we want to be a factor in the search for a peaceful solution."

This stance was criticised by the Israeli ambassador to Brazil. In response, on 9 October 2023, the Brazilian president emphasised his position of non-alignment in the conflict between Israel and Gaza, echoing a commitment to neutrality in the ongoing situation.

Colombia:

After Israel's attack on Gaza, Colombia took a strong stance against Israel. President Gustavo Petro compared Israeli measures in Gaza to actions taken by the Nazis in Auschwitz. He expressed deep concern over a video in which the Israeli Defence Minister discussed imposing a complete siege on Gaza, stating, "This is what the Nazis said about the Jews, and democratic countries cannot allow Nazism to re-establish itself in international politics."

President Petro further criticised what he perceived as hypocrisy in the West's approach, drawing parallels between Israel's occupation of Palestine and Russia's occupation of Ukraine. In response to these statements, Israel summoned the Colombian ambassador to Tel Aviv,

deeming the remarks hostile. Israel decided to halt defence and security exports to Colombia, prompting President Petro to threaten severing diplomatic relations with Israel. He asserted, "If we are forced to suspend relations with Israel, we will suspend them. We do not support genocide." President Petro continued by predicting a future reconciliation, stating, "One day, the army and government of Israel will ask us for forgiveness for what their people did to our country. I will hug them, and they will cry for the killing in Auschwitz and Gaza, and also for the Colombian Auschwitz." In a subsequent political move, on 16 October 2023, the Colombian Foreign Minister requested an apology from the Israeli ambassador for the President's statements, describing them as rude. Failing to receive an apology, the Minister asked the Israeli ambassador to leave the country.

Venezuela:

The Venezuelan government conveyed its "deep concern" regarding the unfolding developments in the Israel-Gaza conflict. In an official statement on its website, Venezuela called on Israel to cease all settlement and occupation activities in Palestinian territories promptly and completely, asserting that this was the sole path to achieving peace.

The statement emphasised that the ongoing conflict was a consequence of the inability to find a peaceful resolution, stating, "The fighting is the result of the impossibility of finding peace." Venezuela underscored the importance of recognising the historical rights of the Palestinian people, asserting that they hold a legitimate place in multilateral international institutions to assert these rights.

Bolivia:

The Bolivian Ministry of Foreign Affairs conveyed its "deep concern" regarding the escalating violence in the Gaza Strip between Israel and Palestine. Bolivia expressed regret over what it perceived as the United Nations' inaction and emphasised the organisation's responsibility in addressing the crisis and finding viable solutions.

However, it's noteworthy that former Bolivian President Evo Morales criticised his own country in response to this statement. On his X social media page, Morales expressed disappointment owing to the statement, saying it did not reflect the real situation the Palestinians are facing. He condemned what he described as the Israeli government's imperialist and colonialist acts.

Chile:

Following the Hamas attack on Israel, Chilean Foreign Minister Van Klaveren expressed his country's deep concern over the terrorist attack. He conveyed solidarity with the Israeli victims and their families, emphasising Chile's strong call for peace in the region. Minister Van Klaveren recognised the right of both states, Israel and Palestine, to exist and the importance of ensuring a dignified and secure life for the people residing in these states.

Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Belize: These countries issued official statements expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people, understanding

the reasons behind their adoption of resistance for self-liberation and the liberation of their land.

Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay: These countries condemned the attack on Israel.

El Salvador (President Nayib Bukele): President Nayib Bukele, of Palestinian origin, criticised the Palestinian cause for aligning with what he referred to as criminals, specifically linking Hamas to gangs in El Salvador. He stated on his social media page, "The Palestinian cause is making a big mistake by siding with these criminals."

The African Union:

In a statement issued by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, and published on the African Union's official page on 7 October 2023, he called for an unconditional return to the negotiating table to implement the principle of two states living side by side. He urged the international community, and major world powers in particular, to shoulder their responsibilities in establishing peace and guaranteeing the rights of both peoples. He underscored the importance of addressing the fundamental issues that deprive the Palestinian people of their rights, particularly those related to an independent and sovereign state, as the primary cause of enduring tension between Israelis and Palestinians.

• Asian countries:

Russia and China: The Russians and Chinese are actively involved in resolving issues in the Middle East due to their strong relationships with Israel, the Palestinians, Arab countries, Iran, and groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. The Russians specifically blame the United States for the conflict, holding it "responsible for the war looming on the horizon in the Middle East." China expressed concern that Israel's bombing campaign went beyond self-defence and called for an end to the collective punishment of the people in Gaza. Both Russia and China have emphasised condemnation of the killings, called for restraint, urged a halt to the bloodshed, and advocated for the entry of aid into Gaza.

- On 13 October 2023, the Russian President expressed that Israel had experienced an "unprecedentedly brutal attack" by Hamas activists and acknowledged its right to self-defence. However, he also highlighted that Israel's response had been severe. He further emphasised that any potential civilian casualties resulting from an Israeli ground attack would be entirely unacceptable. The priority at present is to halt the ongoing violence, and Putin drew attention to the possibility of the Israeli blockade on Gaza resembling the blockade imposed by German forces on Leningrad during World War II.

During a meeting held in Beijing on 16 October 2023 between Chinese Foreign Minister Ni Wangyi and Russia's Sergei Lavrov, Minister Ni Wangyi conveyed the following key points:

Urgency of Ceasefire: Minister Ni Wangyi emphasised the immediate necessity of a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, recognising the critical nature of the situation at hand.

Negotiations and Humanitarian Channels: He underscored the importance of urging both conflicting parties to engage in negotiations. Minister Ni

Wangyi also stressed the necessity of establishing emergency humanitarian channels to avert a larger-scale humanitarian crisis.

Condemnation of Harm to Civilians: China strongly condemned any actions that endanger the lives of civilians, aligning with the principle of safeguarding civilian populations.

Opposition to Violations of International Law: Minister Ni Wangyi expressed China's opposition to any actions that violate international law, emphasising the significance of upholding international legal norms.

UN Security Council Action: He highlighted the imperative for the UN Security Council to take action on the issue, calling on major powers to effectively contribute to the resolution of the conflict.

Support for Two-State Solution: Minister Ni Wangyi emphasised the fundamental approach of promoting the two-state solution, aiming to foster a broader consensus among all parties involved.

Timetable and Roadmap: China advocated for the establishment of a clear timetable and roadmap to restore the legitimate rights of the Palestinian nation, emphasising its commitment to finding a just and enduring resolution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

• Turkey:

Turkey maintains robust relations with all parties involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Following the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the loss of civilian lives and expressed its commitment to working with all concerned parties to bring an

end to the conflict. In response to Israel's offensive in Gaza, President Erdogan urged Israel to cease its bombing of the Gaza Strip while also calling on Palestinians to halt their attacks on civilian residential communities in Israel. On 9 October 2023, the Turkish President affirmed Turkey's readiness for any form of mediation, including a prisoner exchange, if requested by the involved parties.

- On 17 October 2023, the Turkish Foreign Minister announced Turkey's intent to make preparations for securing humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza. Emphasising the dual objectives of preventing the escalation of clashes and expediting aid delivery to Gaza, Turkey actively works to prevent the conflict from spreading to Lebanon and other neighboring countries. Turkey also expressed full agreement with the Egyptian position on the Gaza situation, advocating for international action to establish a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital based on the 1967 borders, underscoring the urgency of the matter.

Iran, Pakistan, and Malaysia:

Islamic Asian countries, including Iran, Pakistan, and Malaysia, expressed unwavering support for the Palestinians in Gaza and condemned Israeli aggression. Iran went a step further by issuing a direct threat of intervention in the conflict unless the Israeli attack ceased. Both Malaysia and Pakistan, in separate statements, reiterated their strong solidarity with the Palestinian people in Gaza. They emphasised that Israel's actions amounted to the crime of genocide against the Palestinian population. These countries underscored that the current perilous situation is a direct consequence of seven decades of illegal occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel.

Furthermore, Malaysia and Pakistan insisted that Israel must adhere to and implement international laws and Security Council resolutions pertaining to the Palestinians' right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state.

Japan:

The Japanese Foreign Minister, in a press conference, declared the allocation of \$10 million in aid for civilians in Gaza. She urged all parties involved in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to adhere strictly to international laws. The Foreign Minister underscored that Japan is closely monitoring the unfolding situation in Gaza with deep concern.