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Global Diplomacy at Crossroads: Analyzing the Global Impact of Israel-Hamas Discourse

October 7 - Introduction

The terrorist attack on October 7 2023, was a shock and horrifying event for many, but on the other hand celebrated by others. Approximately 1.200 civilians were killed and around 240 people, including children, women and elderly were taken hostage on the festival, where the terrorist attack did occur. An event that is intended to disseminate happiness, joy and love, ended in a massacre and hostage situation (AP News 2024). It marked the commencement of a war between Israel and Hamas, where multiple nations and groups are now directly or indirectly involved. In addition to countries and states that have clearly been for, against or wanted to be neutral of this crisis, the UNSC (United Nations Security Council) have raised the issue of a ceasefire several times. ICJ (International Court of Justice) addressed the claim of Israel carrying out a genocide in Gaza, stating that the court did not find evidence supporting allegations of genocide by Israelis but on the other hand, gave Israel the order of utilize all available resources to prevent acts of genocide against the Palestinians, and to help civilians with humanitarian needs. The court's response on January 26th did not incorporate a cessation of the military offensive, as requested by South Africa (Retuers, 2024).

Hamas point of view

In various interviews and videos with Palestine sympathizers, we can see that they are happy and see this act of Hamas as a freedom auction that took place (Youtube). That we, as humans, can witness something so divergent, as the most grievous events unfold, to some waving flags and celebrating that children, young people and the elderly have been brutally murdered, for me is outrageous. Of course I can understand two sides of a coin, I can understand that there are different opinions in a very difficult conflict, perhaps the world's most difficult diplomatic task for the world's leaders. The line has definitely been crossed when you celebrate the death of innocent people, regardless of whether Hamas sees "everyone" in Israel as their enemy, and not solely the Israeli government.

Israel & Netanyahu's answers since October 7

Since the carnage at the festival, there has been harsh and clear language from Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. The speeches on TV, and the messages that he has brought forward, everyone at this time knows. This quote strongly signals what the Prime Minister is saying: "We are continuing the war ... until we achieve all of our goals: eliminating Hamas, returning all of our hostages and ensuring that Gaza will never again constitute a threat to Israel," (The Guardian, 2024). Many do believe that Israel's right to defend itself has gone too far, as it has resulted in approximately 27,000+ civilian deaths in Gaza since October. It has been difficult for many leaders around the world, as they are hesitant to involve themselves in the "wrong side" of what countries are entitled to, while at the same time contemplating about the humanitarian situation where civilians are harmed. Should one, as according to international law, let Israel defend itself, or should one draw a line for when it no longer goes under "defend itself" when a certain proportion of civilians have lost their lives? According to Netanyahu, like the quote above, I conclude that, outside pressure, *nothing* could stand in the way of Netanyahu's Israel to ensure that Hamas can never harm the citizens of Israel again.

The line of defending itself

Previous times in recent history, countries have faced terrorist attacks resulting in attacks on their sovereign territories. What have been major controversial topics have been the US's entry into Iraq and Afghanistan. In Iraq, about 200,000 civilians died, between 2003 and the end of 2011, when America left Iraq (NBC News, 2023). And in Afghanistan, during a two decade war, approximately 46,000 civilians died, however it is believed that this figure is an underestimation (USIP, 2022). The question is a topic that is discussed in various scenarios and situations worldwide, if the line has been broken or if "defending itself" still is a secure position for them to take advantage of.

Antony Blinken mediator attempts

The U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, will be on his fifth trip to speak with leaders in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Israel, and the West Bank between February 4-8. This will be another attempt to get a hostage and prisoner swap between Israel and Hamas. Additionally, what would be encompassed in the potential agreement is a humanitarian pause in the violence, so that necessary medicines and healthcare reaches the wounded civilians. When the current U.S. administration refuses to call for a ceasefire in the UNSC, it is due to the fact

that they believe in practice, it would mean a win for Hamas (Al Arabiya, 2024). I find it highly unlikely that a fifth round of talks for the Foreign Minister would contribute to resolving this conflict. This is evident from Netanyahu's response to external reactions calling for a ceasefire, as he emphatically expressed his stance on television: “No one will stop us, not The Hague, not the axis of evil and not anyone else,” (CNBC, 2024).

Today on February 7th, Hamas has presented a three-step process regarding a ceasefire plan, that exchanging various prisoners / hostages, making sure that food and fuel will be available for Gaza, as well as how Palestinians will get access to their homes and how 60,000 temporary homes and 200,000 shelter tents will be allowed to be constructed on the strip (Al Jazeera, 2024). Although this news comes as quite a shock, I do believe the chances of their plan going through with Israel is close to zero. It is expected that there will be information during the day about how the Prime Minister of Israel stands on this, as Blinken, U.S. The Secretary of State, is expected to have talks with Netanyahu during the day of February 7th.

Conclusive analysis

Despite attempts at mediation led by Qatar and Egypt, which have now come up with a "proper" proposal for how the process should be ruled out, I believe there is a high possibility that the situation will remain tense for a long time. The U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, is supposed to deliver this message to Israel today on February 7th. Netanyahu has made it clear that this conflict will persist until Hamas is defeated, and all the hostages are safely returned to Israel. His plan for securing the release of the remaining hostages, amidst the possibility of rejecting the deal, remains uncertain. He faces domestic pressure from the families of the hostages still held by Hamas. Netanyahu might make an unexpected decision this afternoon, the world is waiting for an answer that could change the region dramatically.

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