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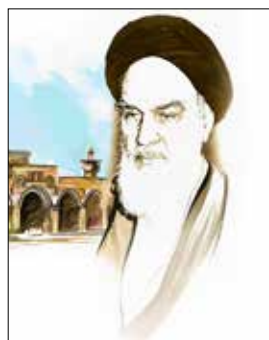
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Al-Quds Day from the International Perspective	4
The Message of Grand Ayatollah Khamenei...	6
How Did Palestine Come to Be Occupied?	11
The Importance of QUDS from the Viewpoint of Imam Khomeini (R.A.)	16
Quds Day and the Awakening of the Islamic World	20
An Analytical Glance at the Conspiracy of Normalization...	24
Jerusalem the Capital of Palestine	28
ISRAEL AND UNITED STATES' CLAIM ON AL-QUDS!!!	30
The Importance of Islamic Unity in the Liberation of Al-Quds	33
International Quds Day: An African Perspective	36

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Towards Quds

Al-Quds Day from the International Perspective

وَمَنْ ظَلَمَ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ خَصْمَهُ ثَوْنٌ عِبَادِهِ وَمَنْ خَاصَمَهُ اللَّهُ أَحْضَنَ حُجَّتَهُ وَكَانَ لِلَّهِ حَرْبًا حَتَّى يَنْزِعَ أَوْ يَتُوبَ

“And when a person oppresses the servants of Allah then Allah becomes his opponent, on behalf of His servants, and when Allah is the opponent of a person He tramples his reason and logic and he will remain at war with Allah until he gives it up and repents and returns to the path of Allah.” Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter No. 53. Imam Ali’s (as) letter of appointment to Malik al-Ashtar Nakah’i, appointing him as the governor of Egypt)

One of the most important and outstanding crises in the Middle East, at the moment, is the issue of Palestine, Holy Quds, and the constant war of the Zionist regime against the oppressed Palestinian people who are being subjected to different forms of atrocities. This prompted the Great Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the late Imam Khomeini (ra), to name the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan as the Quds Day, and with this enlightening action, he shone the light of hope in the hearts of the oppressed Palestinians and made millions of freedom-loving people of the world determined and resolute to face the conspiracies of the occupying Zionist regime.

It would not, thus, be out of place to say that the issue of Pal-

estine and Quds, is surely the most important concern of the Muslim World and should be regarded as the symbol of solidarity as well as the focal point of unity of the Muslim World against the Zionist usurpers of Palestine.

Imam Khomeini (ra) said: “Quds Day” is an international day, it is not a day that is only dedicated to Quds, it is a day marking the struggle and confrontation of the oppressed people against the arrogant powers and re-

gimes.” In other words, Al-Quds Day is not just the day of Palestine, it is the day of Islam. It is the day of the Islamic government. It is a day when the Muslims of the world are increasingly declaring their solidarity with the Palestinians, and it is a day when all the superpowers must be warned to stop their oppression and destruc-



tive moves against the oppressed people of the world. What a beautiful legacy had the late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran left behind with regard to Quds and Palestine by declaring the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan as the International Day of Quds and tying the sanctity of the last Friday of this holy month of Ramadan with the sanctity of the first qibla of Muslims and the third holy city of Muslims (after Mecca and Medina); especially, since as testified by the Surah al-Isra of the Holy Quran, it was the place of the heavenly ascension of the Holy Prophet of Islam (pbuh).

Thus, the declaration of the Al-Quds Day put the issue of the occupation of

Palestine at the forefront of the issues concerning the Islamic world and mobilized all Muslims and the oppressed people of the world in a great union to save the land of the olive groves in order to help each other and end the occupation of Palestine and bring independence, security, and independence to the oppressed people of that country.

It is for this very reason that the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, gives a speech on this occasion every year in the blessed month of Ramadan about the importance of Al-Quds Day, the importance of solidarity with the defenseless people of the occupied territories (on the part of people of the world and especially Muslims), and the need to support the oppressed people of Palestine, providing certain guidelines that can serve as the roadmap for Muslims in helping the real and rightful inhabitants of Palestinian territories.

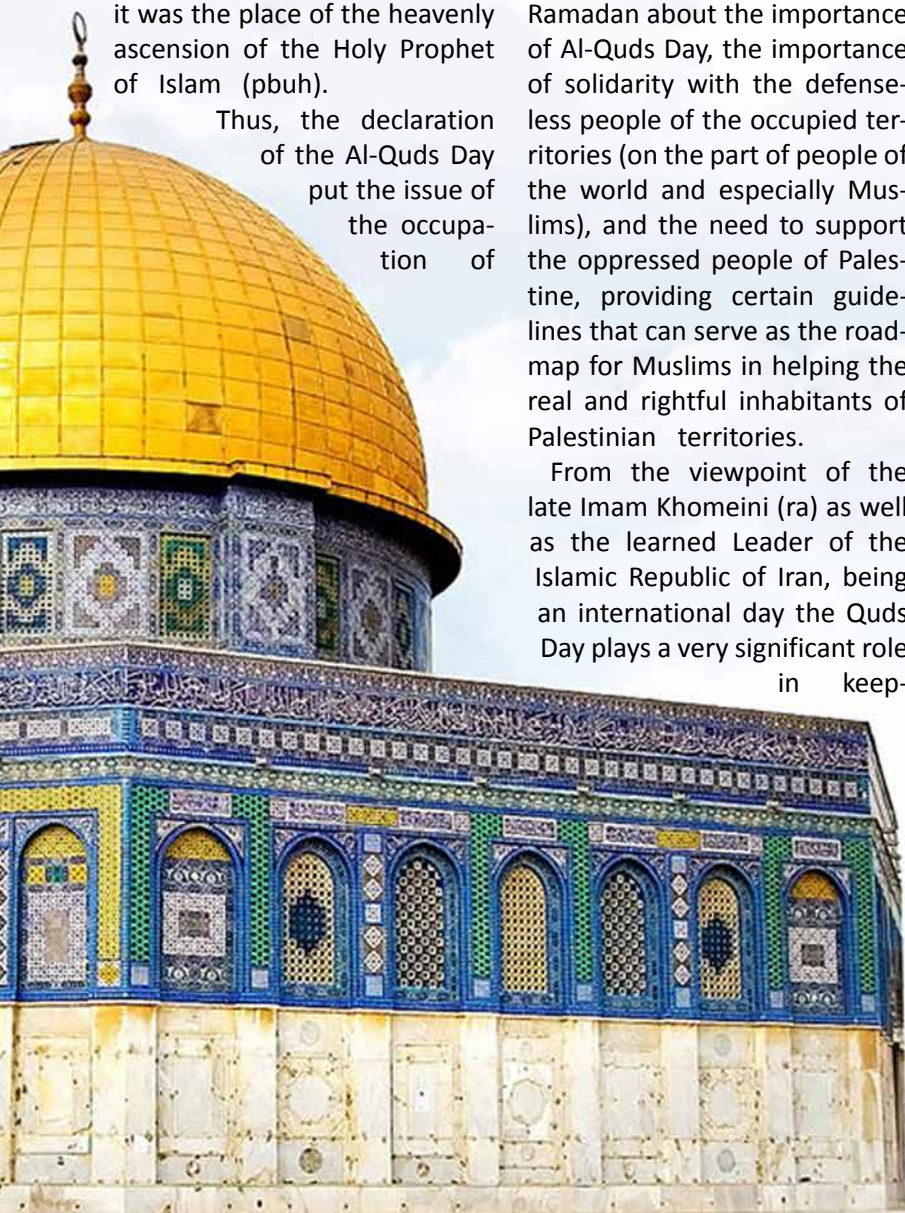
From the viewpoint of the late Imam Khomeini (ra) as well as the learned Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, being an international day the Quds Day plays a very significant role in keep-

ing the Palestinian issue alive and preventing this ideal from being forgotten, in spite of the conspiracies of the enemies. Moreover, the expansion of its global aspects has resulted in strengthening the option of resistance vis-à-vis compromise and has put the Zionist regime on a downward trajectory in recent decades.

From this perspective, as long as the option of armed resistance is in place inside Palestine and for the Palestinians, the Zionist regime will go through a downward and declining path in an erosive battle, in which case it will either disappear or the path will be paved for a referendum with the presence of all Palestinians inhabitants of this land from different religions and the end result would be that the oppressed people of Palestine will get back their right and witness the liberation of the Holy Quds.

Al-Huda International Cultural, Artistic and Publishing Institute has, in alignment with its cultural mission and nature, published this special issue on the occasion of International Quds Day with the hope that this work will be a major step towards enlightening the world's public opinion, especially the Muslim youth, regarding the blessings of this great day and its importance in furthering and strengthening the essence of unity in the Muslim world vis-à-vis the conspiracies hatched by the enemies of Islam.

Muhammad Assadi Movahed



The Message of Grand Ayatollah Khamenei on the Occasion of the International Quds Day (2020)

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and His peace and greetings be upon Muhammad, upon his pure Household, upon his chosen companions and upon those who follow them until the Day of Judgment.

I extend my greetings to all the Muslim brothers and sisters throughout the world and I congratulate them in advance on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr. I also pray to God to accept their worship acts and servitude in this Holy Month of Ramadan, and I thank the Benevolent Creator for the blessing of being present in this

month of this divine banquet.

Today is Quds Day, a day created - thanks to Imam Khomeini's (r.a.) intelligent initiative - to unite Muslims on the issue of Holy Quds and in support of the oppressed people of Palestine. It has played an important role in this regard for several decades now, and God willing, it will continue to do so in the future as well. Nations welcomed Quds Day and considered it to be a religious obligation to hold up the flag for Palestine's liberation. The main policy of the Arrogant Powers and Zionism is to push aside the issue of Palestine in the minds of Muslim commu-

nities and to cause it to fade into oblivion.

The most urgent responsibility in this regard is fighting this treachery, which is conducted by the enemy's political and cultural mercenaries in Islamic countries. The truth is that an issue as important as Palestine is not something that the pride, self-esteem and increasing intelligence of Muslim nations will allow to sink into oblivion, even if the Americans, other domineering powers and their regional minions use all their money and power to achieve this goal.

First, I would like to highlight the magnitude of the tragedy of the occupation of Palestine and the formation of the Zionist cancerous tumor in that country. Among crimes against humanity in recent times, there is no crime that equals this crime in terms of scope and gravity. Occupying a country, permanently driving its people out from their homes and their fatherland, and continuing this historical oppression for decades using the most horrifying forms of murder, crime, destruction of farmlands, and genocide – this is indeed a new record in brutality and wickedness.

The main agents and criminals behind this tragedy are the western governments and their satanic policies. The day when the governments who had won the war in the First World War were carving up West Asia – namely, the Asian territories of the Ottoman Empire – among themselves at the Paris Conference as spoils of war, they felt

the need for a safe stronghold in the heart of this region more than ever in order to guarantee their permanent hegemony. Years earlier, through the Balfour Declaration and conspiring together with Jewish plutocrats, the British had prepared the ground for the innovation of Zionism to carry out this role. And now the practical groundwork was in place. During those early years, they gradually prepared the preliminaries, and finally, after the Second World War, they used the opportunity created by the negligence and problems of the regional countries and dealt their blow. They announced the creation of the bogus regime, the nationless Zionist state.

The primary target of this blow was the Palestinian nation and secondarily all the other nations in the region. A look at the events that followed in the region shows that the main, short-term goal that westerners and Jewish company owners pursued by creating the Zionist regime was to build a stronghold for their permanent presence and influence in West Asia and also to gain easy access for the opportunity to interfere, coerce and dominate over the regional countries and governments. Therefore, they equipped the bogus and occupying regime with various kinds of military and non-military tools of power, even with atomic weapons, and their plans included the growth of this cancerous tumor from the Nile to the Euphrates.

Sadly, after their initial struggles of resistance, some of which

were praiseworthy, the majority of Arab governments gradually succumbed. Particularly after the United States took charge in this matter, they forgot their human, Islamic and political responsibilities and their Arab pride. With delusional hopes they contributed to the enemy's goals. The Camp David Accord is a clear example of this bitter historical fact.

After brave sacrifices and struggles in the early years, resistance groups were gradually pulled to the path of unsuccessful negotiations with the occupier and its supporters. They abandoned the route that could have led to the realization of the Palestinian dream. Negotiations with the United States and other western governments, and also negotiations with useless international groups, were bitter, unsuccessful experiences for Palestine. Holding out an olive branch at the United Nations General Assembly had no result other than the injurious Oslo Accords, and it led to the eye-opening fate of Yasser Arafat.

The dawn of the Islamic Revolution in Iran opened up a new chapter in the struggle for Palestine. From the first steps – namely, driving out the Zionist elements who considered Iran of the Pahlavi period to be one of their safe strongholds – to delegating the unofficial embassy of the Zionist regime to the Palestinian representative, stopping the flow of oil, other great achievements and widespread political activities. All of these measures brought about

the emergence of a front of resistance in the entire region. The hope of solving this issue flourished in hearts. The emergence of the resistance front presented the Zionist regime with increasing problems. God willing, the Zionist regime will encounter even more problems in the future.

However, the efforts of the supporters of that regime – with the U.S. in the front – increased sharply in order to defend the Zionists. The emergence of the faithful, young, self-sacrificing force of Hezbollah in Lebanon and the formation of highly-motivated groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad within the Palestinian borders unsettled and alarmed not only the Zionist ringleaders but also the U.S. and other aggressive western powers. After and in addition to their support of the occupying regime with weapons and propaganda, they added recruiting from within the region and from within Arab society to the top of their agenda. Today the result of their voluminous work is obvious and in plain view, revealing itself in the actions and words of certain leaders of Arab governments and certain treacherous political and cultural Arab activists.

Today, both fronts engage in various activities in the arena of struggle. The difference between them is that the resistance front is moving with increasing power and hope, and it marches on by increasingly attracting elements of power, while the opposing front of oppression, unbelief and arrogance is growing more hollow, hopeless and powerless by



the day. A clear manifestation of this assertion is the fact that the Zionist army—which was once considered to be invincible and lightning fast, one that would stop the aggression of two great armies in a matter of days— is currently forced to retreat and accept defeat against popular forces in Lebanon and Gaza.

Nevertheless, the arena of struggle is volatile and full of dangers. It requires constant vigilance, and the objective of this struggle is very important, fateful and vital. Any kind of negligence, inattention or mistakes in fundamental calculations will inflict heavy damage.

Therefore, I would like to offer some advice to all those who have strong feelings for the issue of Palestine:

1- The struggle to liberate Palestine is Jihad in the way of God, and it is an obligation and an Islamic goal. Victory in such a struggle has been guaranteed, because the person who is fighting, even if he is killed, will receive “one of the two excellent things; (Quran 9:52).” Apart from this, the issue of Palestine

is a human issue. Driving out millions of human beings from their homes, farmlands and places of business, and doing so through murder and crimes, troubles everyone’s conscience and it inspires opposition in everyone who enjoys courage and determination. Therefore, restricting this to be merely a Palestinian issue, or at best an Arab issue, is a grave mistake. Those who consider the concessions made by a few Palestinian elements or rulers of a few Arab countries as a license to sidestep this Islamic and human issue are making a grave mistake in understanding the matter, and perhaps they are guilty of betrayal for distorting the truth.

2- The aim of this struggle is the liberation of all the Palestinian lands – from the river to the sea – and the return of all Palestinians to their homeland. Reducing this struggle to the formation of a government in a corner of the Palestinian lands – particularly, in the humiliating way that is mentioned in the discourse of shameless Zionists – is neither a sign of righteous

struggle nor a sign of realism. The truth is that today millions of Palestinians have achieved a level of thinking, experience and self-esteem such that they can focus their efforts on this great struggle in the way of God and be certain of divine assistance and the ultimate victory. “Surely God will help him who helps His cause; most surely God is Strong, Mighty; [22:40].” Undoubtedly, many Muslims throughout the world will support them and share in their struggle, God willing.

3- Although using any halal and religiously permissible means, including global support, is allowed in this struggle - it is absolutely essential to avoid trusting western governments and international groups that are covertly or overtly dependent on them. They are opposed to any effective entity of an Islamic nature. They have no regard for human rights. They themselves are the cause of the worst harm and crimes against the Islamic nation. Which international entity and which criminal power is currently being held accountable

for the assassinations, the mass murders, the warmongering, the bombings and the human-made famines in many Islamic and Arab countries?

Today, the world is counting one by one every victim of the coronavirus across the globe, but nobody has asked who is responsible for the hundreds of thousands of martyrdoms, imprisonments and disappearances in countries where the U.S. and Europe have waged wars. Who is responsible for all the unlawful bloodshed in Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Syria and other countries? Who is responsible for all these crimes and for the occupation, destruction and oppression in Palestine? Why didn't anyone count the millions of oppressed children, women and men in the world of Islam? Why doesn't anyone extend their condolences for the mass murder of Muslims? Why should millions of Palestinians spend 70 years away from their homes and in exile? And why should Holy Quds, the first Qiblah of Muslims, be desecrated? The so-called United Nations is not fulfilling its function and the so-called human rights organizations are dead. The slogan of defending the rights of women and children excludes Yemeni and Palestinian women and children.

This is the current condition of the oppressive western powers and dependent global organizations. The disgrace of certain regional governments that follow them is beyond words.

Therefore, a proud and pious Muslim society must rely on it-

self and its internal forces. It must raise its powerful hand and remove obstacles by relying on and trusting in God.

4- The important point that must not be ignored by the political and military elites of the Islamic world is that the policy of the U.S. and the Zionists is to transfer conflicts to behind the frontlines of the front of resistance. Staging civil wars in Syria, the military siege and constant killings in Yemen, the assassinations, the destruction, the creation of ISIS in Iraq and other similar things in some other countries in the region are all machinations to divert the attention of the resistance front and to provide opportunities for the Zionist regime. Some Muslim politicians knowingly, and some others unknowingly, have contributed to these machinations of the enemy. The main way to prevent these machinations is for the proud youth throughout the world of Islam to seriously

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make this demand. Young people in all Islamic countries, particularly in Arab countries, must pay attention to this advice from Imam Khomeini (r.a.), "Vent all your shouts on the U.S." and of course, on the Zionist enemy.

5- The policy of normalizing the presence of the Zionist regime in the region is one of the main policies of the United States of America. Certain Arab governments in the region, which act as the minions of the U.S., have been preparing the ground for this normalization by establishing economic ties and the like. These efforts are completely vain and futile. The Zionist regime is a deadly, cancerous growth and a detriment to this region. It will undoubtedly be uprooted and destroyed. Then, the shame will fall on those who put their facilities at the service of this policy of the arrogant powers. To justify such disgraceful behavior, some people argue that the Zionist regime is a reality that the region must come to terms with. They forget that it is necessary to fight and destroy fatal and harmful realities. Today the coronavirus is a reality and yet all wise people agree that it is necessary to fight it. Undoubtedly, the long-lasting virus of Zionism will not last much longer, and it will be uprooted thanks to the determination, faith and pride of the youth.

6- My main advice is to continue this struggle and to better organize the organizations for Jihad work, their cooperation and to expand the areas of Jihad inside Palestinian territo-

ries. Everyone must assist the Palestinian nation in this holy struggle. Everyone must contribute to the Palestinian fighters and stand behind them. We will proudly do everything in our power on this path. One day we came to the conclusion that the Palestinian fighters had piety, pride and courage and their only problem was that they had no weapons in their hands. With divine guidance and assistance, we planned and the result was that the balance of power was transformed in Palestine, and today Gaza can stand against the aggression of the Zionist enemy and defeat it. This change in the equation in the occupied lands will bring the question of Palestine closer to the final steps. The Palestinian Authority has a great responsibility in this regard. One cannot communicate with a savage enemy except through force and from a position of power. Thankfully, the ground has been prepared for the brave and resistant people of Palestine to gain this power. Today, the Palestinian youth are yearning to defend their dignity.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon have been a proof for everyone. The world has not forgotten and will not forget the day when the Zionist army broke through the Lebanese borders and marched to Beirut or the day when a criminal murderer by the name of Ariel Sharon caused a bloodbath in Sabra and Chatila. It has not forgotten and will not forget the day when the same army pound-

ed by Hezbollah had no choice but to retreat from the borders of Lebanon and beg for a truce after sustaining heavy casualties and admitting defeat. This is what full hands and a position of power means. Now let that European government, which should be eternally ashamed for selling chemical agents to the regime of Saddam Hussein, designate the devoted honorable Hezbollah as illegal. Illegal is a regime like the U.S. that creates ISIS and a regime like that European government whose chemical agents caused the death of thousands in the city of Baneh in Iran and the city of Halabja in Iraq.

7- My final word is that Palestine belongs to the Palestinians; therefore, it should be run as they wish. The referendum - with the participation of all Palestinians of all religions and ethnicities, this is what we have been suggesting for almost two decades - is the only solution for the challenges which Pales-

tine is facing at the present time and in the future. This proposal shows that the western accusations of anti-Semitism which have been repeated time and time again are completely unfounded. On the basis of this proposal, Jewish, Christian and Muslim Palestinians will determine together the political system of their country by participating in a referendum. That which should definitely go is the Zionist regime since Zionism is a bizarre innovation which has been fabricated in the name of Judaism and is totally alien to that religion.

I would like to close this speech by remembering the martyrs of Quds, including Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, Fathi Shaqaqi, Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi, Martyr Soleimani, the great Muslim commander and the unforgettable face of resistance, and also the great Iraqi Mujahid Martyr Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. I extend my greetings to the soul of the great Imam Khomeini (r.a.) who opened the path of dignity and Jihad for us. I also ask God the Exalted to bestow His mercy on our late brother, Hussein Sheikh al-Islam who for years worked diligently on this path.

In the end, I would like to remind all dear viewers and listeners that this year's Quds Day is the first Quds day in which our dear Qasem Soleimani is not present. Please recite the chapter "The Opening" (Al-Fatiha) and the chapter "The Unity" (Tawhid) for him one time.

May God's greetings and mercy be upon you.

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How Did Palestine Come to Be Occupied?

Palestine is one of the lands that housed one of the earliest human civilizations. This ancient land also houses many sacred places of the three Abrahamic religions, which adds to its importance. Based on available historical evidence the earliest communities that lived in different parts of this land included: Amorites, Arameans, Canaanites, etc.



The children of Israel came to settle in some parts of Palestine much later than the above-mentioned tribes and simultaneously with the Hebrew tribes (Israelites) other tribes such as the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, etc., too, lived in Palestine; the fact that makes the claim of historical right over Palestine by the Israelites invalid.

It was about 150 years ago that the Zionists began a movement to unite Jews around the world and talked about a Jewish homeland. Their initial choice was today's Argentina or one of the African countries (the focus was mainly on Uganda). However, as time passed for a while they began to speak of Palestine as the Jewish Promised Land!

Until the time of the Second Caliph of Islam, this land was under

the rule of the Roman Empire, which was then handed over to Muslims with a treaty of peace and without any bloodshed, and remained part of the Islamic territories until the end of the Ottoman Empire and the majority of its population were Muslim who peacefully coexisted with the minorities from other religions.

The important question here is that why did the Zionists choose the Middle East? There were several factors contributing to this decision.

The first reason was that many divine prophets had been born, preached monotheism, invited people to the path of God Almighty, and martyred in the Middle East.

The second reason giving rise to this decision was the abundance of oil and gas resources in this

region. As per the available estimates, about 75 percent of the energy resources of the world are located in this part of the world.

The third contributing factor was that the Middle East was the heart of the Islamic world and a great majority of Muslims live in the Middle East and since the West had always wanted to dominate all the people of the world including the Muslims it was so decided that in order to have maximum domination and control over Muslims the Jews should be settled in this area.

The fourth factor was the geographical location of the Middle East. The geography of the Middle East is such that it is the crossroads of several continents of the world and is, in fact, the heart of Asia, Africa, and Europe. One cannot speak of power (in its differ-

PALESTINIAN LOSS OF LAND 1946-2010



ent senses) today but ignore the Middle East.

Based on these factors the process of the occupation of Palestine by the Zionists may be divided into four stages.

1- Before the occupation of Palestine by the British the number of Jews in Palestine did not exceed 56,000 (equivalent to 8%), holding about 2 percent of the total land, while the number of Muslim Palestinian population stood at 644,000 (equivalent to 92%).

The first wave of Jewish emigration began in 1882 C.E. and the number of immigrants reached about 20,000 by 1903 (1272 AH). After the British occupation of Palestine, in April 1917 (1286 AH) Balfour (British Foreign Secretary) promised the Jews the creation of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine.

After the First World War I in 1919 and following the defeat of the Ottomans and the disintegration of this vast Islamic land, Palestine came to be under the mandate of the British.

Mandate means that the people of the land are so backward that they cannot govern themselves and, therefore, a country that is capable enough begins to rule that land in the name of helping its people until they are competent enough to govern their own affairs.

Being under the influence of the Jewish Zionists, the British handed over the Palestinian lands to the Jewish Agency during their guardianship. In the meantime, In the meantime, the agency was trying to - in addition to the land given to them by the British - strike deals with

the Muslims and buy their land. Realizing the evil intension of these Jews, while informing the Muslims, the religious scholars of the time had issued a verdict of apostasy who sold their lands to the Jews and deserved to be killed. The Zionists then bought the lands they wanted from Muslims either under the guise of being Muslim or through their Christian agents. Nevertheless, by 1948 C.E. when the British left the Palestinian territories in favor of the Zionist and declaration of Israel as an independent country, Jews owned about 6.6 percent of the total territory of present-day Palestine, while before the occupation of Palestine the Jews held only 2 percent of Palestine.

Meanwhile, a series of events took place as a result of which



Israel managed to occupy more areas of the territory, the most important of which were the 1948 and 1967 wars.

The 1947 UN Resolution

Following the British announcement that it would end its authority over Palestine, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) recommended the division of the British Mandate-controlled area of Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish, with Jerusalem to be an “international” city. According to the plan, the two states, roughly equal in size and natural resources, would cooperate on major economic issues, sharing their currency, roads, and government services over the territory. Thus, on 11/29/1947 the United Nations Organization adopted Resolution 181 recognizing the partition of Palestine into two Palestinian and Jewish states.

From the 1948 War to the 1967 War

The Zionists announced the formation of their government on 5/15/1948, hours after the announcement of the end of the British Mandate, and war between the Zionist terrorist gangs and the Palestinians began. The Arab armies entered into war with the Zionists in support of the Palestinian nation but not being prepared enough for this war, they were faced defeat. Moreover, the dependence of these armies, especially their commanders, on the British was also a contributing factor to their inefficiency in the course of the war.

After declaring its independence by Ben-Gurion, the first war that the Israeli regime launched against Palestine and the Arab countries of the region was what came to be known as the 1948 war. During this war, the Zionists

occupied 78% of the entire territory of Palestine. The war resulted in the first phase of the great displacement of Palestinian Muslims in the course of which about one million Palestinians out of a total of 1.9 million Palestinians were displaced. About 200,000 Palestinian Muslims migrated to the Gaza Strip, 496,000 to Jordan, 100,000 to Lebanon, 85,000 to Syria, and 20,000 to Egypt and Iraq. Thereafter, in 1950 and 1953 the Zionist Usurper regime passed some laws about the confiscation of Palestinian lands.

At the beginning of the 1948 war, the number of Palestinians stood at 2,556,000 versus 650,000 Jews. Much of the increase in the Jewish population was due to the migrations backed by the British forces. The Jews, who controlled only 5.66 percent of the Palestinian territory, forcibly took over 11 percent of the territory, including 191 villages and 7 towns, during



the British Mandate. Eventually, with the occupation of approximately three-quarters of the Palestinian territory in the course of the 1948 war, half of the Palestinians were expelled from their homes and resettled in refugee camps.

The 1967 Arab-Israeli War Known as the Six-Day War

In the June 1967 C.E. war the Zionists occupied the remaining parts of Palestine along with the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt and the Golan Heights of Syria. As a result, the total number of Arab lands under Zionist control reached 89,359 square kilometers, which was four times the areas occupied before the 1967 war. Before the war, the number of Palestinians was about 2.25 million people making 70 percent of the total population of the territories, versus 30 percent of the Jewish population the formation of which was due to the mi-

gration of Jews from around the world to the occupied territories. More than 410,000 Palestinians were displaced during the war and following the war the first Zionist settlement was built in Kfar Etzion in the southern West Bank, which was followed by the construction of 14 other settlements inhabiting 12,270 Jewish immigrants.

The Last Arab-Israeli War and The Beginning of the Reconciliation Process

Anwar Sadat was the first Arab statesman to reconcile with Israel recognize it as an independent state after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, also known as the Ramadan War, which had resulted in a defeat for Arabs. The Camp David Accords with the Israeli regime that was signed by Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin on 17 September 1978, following twelve days of secret negotiations, caused despair and hopelessness in the Arab nation in their struggle against

Israel for the liberation of Palestine. Imam Khomeini (ra) repeatedly condemned this treacherous move towards the cause of Palestine and the Islamic Ummah. In his own words: "I strongly condemn the move made by Anwar Sadat (Camp David Accords). By accepting peace with Israel, Sadat made clear his allegiance to the US imperialist government, and the Egyptian people must renounce this traitor - Anwar Sadat and remove the stigma of submission to the United States and Zionism.

What has been Iran's Role in the Movements of the Palestinian People?

Undoubtedly, the Islamic Revolution of Iran has played a significant role in the Islamic Revolution of the Palestinian people as well as a pivotal role in the awakening of the Islamic world. The Islamic Revolution of Iran has become a model for anti-arrogance and oppressive moves and the ideal of establishing an Islamic government among Islamic nations, posing a challenge to the Western camp and non-democratic Arab leaders.

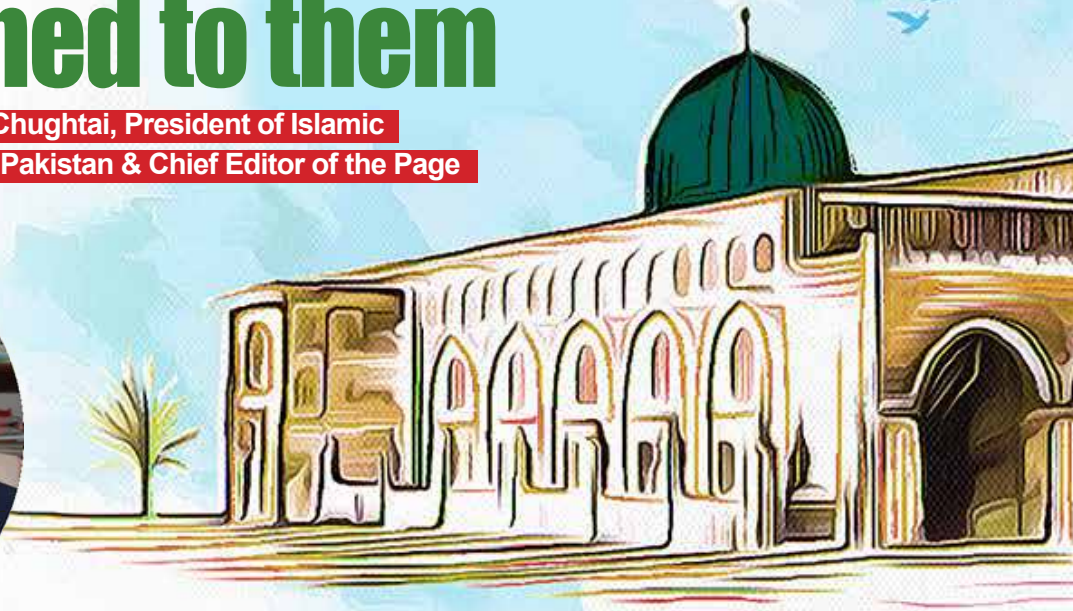
As said by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the very basis of the idea of the resistance movement that started in this country that resulted in the unconditional withdrawal of the Zionist regime from Lebanon in the year 2000 as well as its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005 and spread the idea of revolutionary Islam and struggles for the liberation of Palestine and expanded the flow of Islamic resistance in the region was inspired by Imam Khomeini's thoughts and ideals.

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The Importance of QUDS from the Viewpoint of Imam Khomeini (R.A.)

Quds belongs to the Muslims and must be returned to them

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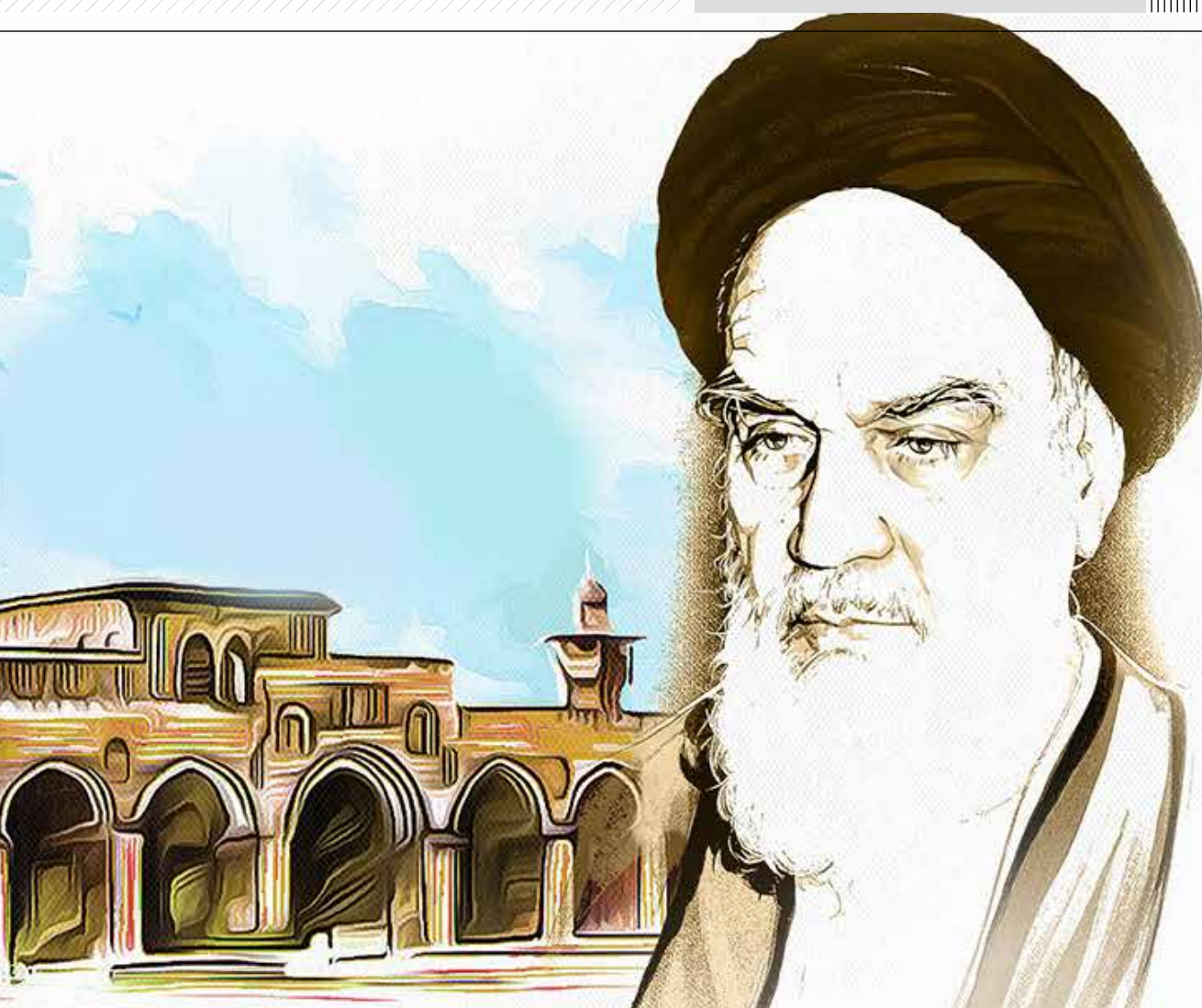
International Day of Al-Quds is an annual event opposing Israel's control of Jerusalem, (Al-Quds in Arabic). Anti-Zionist demonstrations are held on this day in some Muslim and Arab countries and by Muslim and Arab communities around the world, but especially in Iran where the occasion was first suggested. It is held each year on the last Friday of Ramadan. Quds Day is not an Islamic religious holiday but a political event opened to both Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and thus observance is not obligatory in Islam, The importance

of Quds in the eyes of the late Imam Khomeini as his messages reveal

"For many years, I have been notifying the Muslims of the danger posed by the usurper Israel which today has intensified its savage attacks against the Palestinian brothers and sisters, and which, in the south of Lebanon in particular, is continually bombing Palestinian homes in the hope of crushing the Palestinian struggle. I ask all the Muslims of the world and the Muslim governments to join together to sever the hand of this usurper

and its supporters. I call on all the Muslims of the world to select as Quds Day the last Friday in the holy month of Ramadan - which is itself a determining period and can also be the determiner of the Palestinian people's fate - and through a ceremony demonstrating the solidarity of Muslims worldwide, announce their support for the legitimate rights of the Muslim people."

We witness that thousands of Muslims stage protest against foes of peace, particularly the US and Zionist regime on the last Friday from the holy month of



Ramadan. They display their sovereignty against the worldly material powers through the unity of their expressions.

This is the day when the Muslims put aside all their national and sectarian differences and strongly condemn Zionism and its supporters. We see it necessary to remind the readers the point that the origin of this day can be traced in Imam Khomeini's thoughts. From his very early youth days, Imam used to warn the public and masses of the dangers posed by Zionism.

The Imam hit hard the exploit-

ing and arrogant powers by declaring this crucial day as solidarity with the Palestinians.

We are witnessing how the Zionist regime has imposed security barriers and restrictions on the people's movement in Jerusalem (al-Quds) city and other occupied lands over the past months.

It is the essential point that the Imam by declaring the last Friday from the holy month of Ramadan as the 'Quds Day' had even far-sighted beyond the Palestinian issue. Thus, he wanted to unite all forces and potentials of the Muslim World to form a

united front against the Zionists, World-exploiting powers, and their allies.

Imam Khomeini (ra) and the Palestine Cause

Struggle against Zionism forms one of the crucial pillars of Imam Khomeini's thoughts. His first official stance against Israel came in 1968 when he demanded the then regime of Shah to ban the export of oil to Israel and cut all diplomatic ties with the Zionist regime as other Islamic and Arab countries had done so. Imam said that,

“One of the issues that have placed us against the Pahlavi regime is its assistance to Israel. I have always warned that Shah has been assisting to Israel since it came to power. Moreover, when the intensive war between the Muslims and Israel was at its peak he used to provide the Zionists with oil revenues. Imam said that it was an important factor that contributed to my opposition to the Pahlavi regime.”

Imam set his opposition to the Pahlavi regime's oppression as the pillar of his fundamental domestic policy and made the Palestine issue a top priority of his foreign policy. He measured the struggle against Israel as a religious duty. In order to support his views in this regard, he based his efforts on a jurisprudential ruling that non-believers have no supremacy over the Muslims. For that reason, he always emphasized there should be patronage for the welfare of the Palestinian warriors and defended the Quds cause in its all prospects.

Imam made the best use of all potentials against Israel and he not only raised awareness among the nations but also issued recommendations and pieces of advice for the governments in this regard as well.

“I advise the Palestinian authorities to give up frequent travels to external powers and instead extend the helping hands to the Palestinians. By relying on God, the Almighty, they can undertake an armed struggle against Israel until the demise of this regime. Since these types of travels discourage the people

from the struggle against this brutal regime. I assure you that neither the West nor the East will promote the Palestine cause, but reliance on God, the Almighty, and armed struggle against Israel can defeat this regime.”

Imam Khomeini (s) and Initiative of 'Quds Day'

With a deep analysis of Imam's speeches regarding the 'Quds Day', we can easily come to the conclusion that Imam's views on this issue are massive and of global significance. He has highlighted the points, which are common among all Islamic sects and groups. He underlined the Palestine issue beyond sectarianism or nationalism, as this method itself will guarantee unity among the whole Muslim community. According to Imam's views, nobody is allowed to convert this issue into a local or make it limited to a specific community.

Another worth mentioning point is that Imam was so far-sighted in choosing the timing of the issue. It may be explained in this way. A month of fasting and spirituality brings forth its results in form of piety and piousness, which means the Muslims are now best prepared to listen to the words of the Imam. Obviously, these words will have more influence on their hearts on the last Friday from the holy month of Ramadan.

The last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan is Quds Day and in the last ten days of the month of Ramadan, which in all probability coincides with the

'Night of Qadr'. It is a night the commemoration of which is a practice sanctioned by God. Its value and status are superior to a thousand months under the hypocrites for it is on that night that the destiny of mankind is determined. It is necessary that Quds Day, which falls in close contiguity to the Night of Power, be commemorated by the Muslims, that it serves as the origin of their awakening and vigilance and delivers them from the indifference they have exhibited throughout history, particularly in the last few decades, so that this day of vigilance and awakening will be more valuable than decades under the superpowers and the hypocrites of the world, and the Muslims of the world will take their destinies into their own powerful hands and determine their own fate themselves.

By staying awake through the night on the Night of Power and praying, the Muslims will free themselves from the shackles which bind them to anything other than God - which means demons whether in jinn or human form - and they will come to worship only God. On Quds Day, which falls in the last days of 'the great month of God' (Ramadan), it would be fitting for all the Muslims of the world to free themselves from the shackles of slavery and servitude to the Great Satan and superpowers, to join the eternal power of God, sever the hands of the criminals of history from the oppressed, deprived countries and break off any covetous ties these criminals may have created.

However, the best way to raise awareness about the significance of this day is to review some of Imam's sayings in this regard:

"The Quds Day" is a global day and it is not only limited to only Palestine issue but also a means for oppressed ones to fight against arrogant powers. It is a resistance day for those nations who have suffered oppression at the hands of the United States and other powers. However, they have now understood to stand against the superpowers. This is the day when oppressed ones should be equipped against the arrogant powers and knock them to the ground. This day will differentiate between the hypocrites and committed faithful people. The committed ones acknowledge this as the day of Palestine's cause and will perform whatever is needed. However, hypocrites, who have maintained a secret friendship with arrogant powers, will remain impartial or will not allow the public to hold demonstrations. This day is decisive as the fate of the oppressed nations is determined on this day because they declare their existence against exploiters. The others nations should rise as Iran stood and knocked them to the ground and continues to do so. All nations should undertake uprising in a bid to throw these tumors and germs into the Garbage cane."

On the night of Qadr, when the destinies and fates are determined, the Muslims make themselves relieved from Satan's traps by reciting supplications and staying awake throughout the

night and finally become obedient servants of God. In addition, it is expected that on this day the world Muslims free themselves from the chains of slavery of Satan and superpowers. They must join the everlasting love of God, the Almighty, and cut off the hands of historical criminals from reaching to the oppressed nations and slash their greed.

Impact of 'Quds Day' on Palestine Issue

1 -Displaying massive opposition of the Muslim World to Israel's existence

This everlasting initiative not only shows the widespread opposition of the Muslim nations to the existence of the Zionist regime but also makes the Muslims' hearts yield the integration process among the Muslim World. In this fashion, the first step toward Muslim unity has been taken that will make it possible to achieve a united Ummah beyond racial and sectarian differences.

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ferences.

2 - The means of pressure against the Zionist regime

Among those pressure tools that can be used against this regime is to undermine its legitimacy. The echo of this issue will automatically attract the attention of the Muslims to thoughts of Imam and will get this cause to be deeply rooted in the hearts of faithful people.

3 - Keeping out the national or Arab aspects of Palestine and converting it into an Islamic and global Issue

Zionist regime has gone a long way to convert this issue into a racial and national conflict between Arabs and Israel. However, by declaring its stance as a great religious authority, Imam Khomeini breathed a new spirit into an almost forgotten issue. This led the Palestinian movement to think only about the option of the sole Islamic resistance instead of nationalism and communalism.

4 - Spiritual influence on Muslims and their massive participation in the issue

In fact, the massive influence of Imam's thoughts can be seen among the Muslim world. In addition to accessible piousness in the month of Ramadan, the Quds cause has also created a spirit of collective determination and coordination among the Muslims. This day provides a role model for the Muslims and gives them self-confidence that Quds can be retaken back with a combination of courage and unity.



Quds Day and the Awakening of the Islamic World

Introduction

Christian Zionists believe that Jesus Christ (as) has made a covenant to return to Jerusalem (Al-Quds) and sit on the throne of David and rule the world with justice and peace. They believe that for the fulfillment of their belief about the return of Jesus Christ (as) and his sovereignty over the future the two Muslim mosques of Al-Aqsa and Rock in Jerusalem should be destroyed by the followers of the Bible and replaced by Solomon's Temple.

Based on these beliefs, the Zionists have been committing the worst crimes in Palestine for

more than seventy years. It was by keeping in mind the need to save Quds and Palestine that the late Imam Khomeini (ra) named the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan as the "Quds Day". He described this day as the Day of Islam Day, the day of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), the day of the revival of Islam and Islamic laws, the day of Islamic mobilization, an opportunity for the united uprising of nations against the corrupt people, and the day of the confrontation of the oppressed against the arrogant powers. Imam Khomeini's foresight has awakened the Mus-

lims and freedom-seekers of the world about the nature of the global arrogant powers and international Zionism, and a huge wave of Islamic awakening has begun in the Islamic world too, God willing, eradicate arrogance and Zionism.

Brief Introduction to Awakening in the Muslim World

Following the downfall of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (the former Tunisian president) in January 2011, which was apparently ignited by the death of Mohamed Bouazizi - a vegetable vendor in Sidi Bouzid whose cart of veg-



establishments had been confiscated - after he set himself on fire. The incident gave rise to demonstrations against Ben Ali's despotic rule that was considered to be responsible for the existing unemployment, inflation, poverty, and corruption. The demonstrations started in the hometown of the vendor and rapidly spread to other cities and the capital city of Tunis. Bin Ali fled to Saudi Arabia, his rule collapsed and a series of protests and demonstrations began in countries like Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Libya, and Bahrain, which faced similar situations under tyrannical rulers.

The government of Hosni Mubarak was the second to fall after the government of Tunisia. Following widespread protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square and other Egyptian cities and despite initial resistance, Hosni Mubarak was forced to step down and the central council of Mubarak's ruling party resigned en masse.

Widespread popular protests and mass demonstrations tar-

geted the dictatorial government of Abdullah Saleh in Yemen, where Yemenis called for the removal of the regime by chanting the slogan "the people want to overthrow the regime". Eventually, following widespread popular demonstrations in various Yemeni cities including Sanaa, Taiz, and other cities, Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime, which was strongly supported by Al-Saud

and had killed many people during their protest, collapsed and he, too, fled to Saudi Arabia.

Libya, too, soon experienced popular protests - along with some other Arab countries - against Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. The opposition formed an interim government in eastern Libya and in the city of Benghazi and called for Gaddafi to step down. Gaddafi, however, refused to step down, and as the conflict escalated, the situation escalated into a civil war. Meanwhile, the entry of NATO and the Western world into the developments in Libya and their help to Gaddafi's opponents, made the situation worse for Gaddafi. NATO planes repeatedly attacked Libyan cities and bombed cities and positions of Gaddafi supporters, killing many innocent people. The Libyan revolutionaries finally defeated Gaddafi with the help of the Western world (US and European warships and aerial bombardment) and killed Gaddafi after crushing the last

► Some of the most popular slogans in these movements reflecting upon their objectives include: "People demand the removal of the regime, people demand social justice, neither east nor west but Islam, peaceful movement until final victory, Allah-o Akbar, Dictator leave, neither Sunni nor Shi'a, only Islamic unity"; all of which are indicative of their Islamic awakening



remnants of the pro-government remnants.

In Bahrain, too, the Al-Khalifa government faced massive popular demonstrations in different cities. With the escalation of demonstrations, the Al-Khalifa government destroyed Lulu Square, which had become a gathering place for the protesters and a symbol of opposition to the regime. Following Al-Khalifa's plea to Saudi Arabia for help, Saudi military forces entered Bahrain and began to crush the demonstrations and the opposition. Nevertheless, demonstrations, protests and clashes still continue in Bahrain. In addition to the above-mentioned countries, we have witnessed popular demonstrations in other Arab countries, including Jordan, Algeria, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia.

A Glance at the Nature of the Awakening in the Islamic World

Keeping in view the main pillars of revolutions such as leadership, ideology, revolutionary forces, slogans, objectives, and strategies adopted for the struggle, the following issues need to be taken into consideration.

From the viewpoint of leadership, none of these movements was led by a single effective leader such as Imam Khomeini or the leaders of the revolutions in France, Russia, China, and Cuba. Undoubtedly, it cannot be said that these movements lack leaders. However, the absence of a prominent leader is quite evident in them. It seems that a pattern of the second or third-degree revolutionary movement such

as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Rashid al-Ghannouchi in Tunisia has come to be adopted instinctively and spontaneously.

In terms of ideology, it is clear that owing to the Muslim population of these countries, Islam is their main ideology and chanting of the slogan like "Allah-o Akbar, Neither East nor West only Islam indicate that the people of these countries have chosen Islam as their school of revolution; although there are secular intellectuals and people with Arab socialist and nationalist leanings among them.

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Since there are usually three different strategies (Parliamentary struggle, Armed and guerilla struggle, and mass protests) for ousting a regime, understanding the strategy of the people of Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Libya and other countries where movements have taken place would also reveal the nature of these movements.

For example, when we see people in the Arab countries choose Fridays as the day of protests and demonstrations, or march after their Friday prayers, the origins of these revolutions become

clear. They usually name Fridays with different names such as: "Day of Wrath", "Day of Martyrs", "Day of Resistance" and the like. At the same time, they emphasize unity in the Islamic world. In addition to what has been said so far, the following reasons indicate the trend of Islamic awakening in North Africa and the Arab Middle East.

The Fear of the Zionist Regime

Had the above-mentioned movements were of secular and pro-west essence, the Zionist regime should not have been apprehensive of them. However, the anti-Zionist slogans of the people during the demonstrations, the capture of the Israeli embassy in Cairo, and the flight of the Israeli ambassador show the anti-Zionist orientation of these movements. Undoubtedly, one of the important factors influencing this orientation is Quds Day and its anti-Zionist slogans. Currently, the Zionist regime is deeply concerned about its security and integrity. While in the recent past the Zionists were able to besiege the Gaza Strip and impose tough sanctions and Hosni Mubarak had blocked the only way to help the people of Gaza and did not even allow any aid to the Palestinians through the underground routes by creating a concrete wall deprived the starving men, women, and children in Gaza, following the victory of the Egyptian revolution, the people of Egypt opened the way to help Gaza and blew up the gas pipeline that supplied the Zionist regime.

America's Fear of Popular Revolutions in the Region:

What is being referred to as the Arab Spring poses many challenges to US foreign policy. This Islamic awakening has indeed threatened or destroyed two of America's strategic goals in the region; First, maintaining the security of the Zionist regime, which is at the forefront of US foreign policy, and second, protecting the pro-US regimes of the region, such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Saudi Arabia. If, as claimed by pro-West individuals, these uprisings were oriented towards secularism and liberal democracy, the United States should not be afraid of their success. The very fact that the US government and the West are trying to help control these uprisings is indicative of its concern about the anti-arrogance orientation of these movements. Many people in the region are aware that the United States does not want real democracy for the countries of the region because if it did, it would not support the existing dictatorial rulers. As a matter of fact, the Americans seek to maintain their information bases and illegitimate economic interests in the region by confiscating these revolutions in their favor in different ways.

Conclusion

Today, Palestine, Holy Quds, the first qibla of Muslims, and the Gaza Strip are immersed in fire and blood at the hands of the Zionists, and free and zealous people are filled with great sorrow. They are waiting for a major

action on the part of the Muslims to get rid of the Zionists. The global network of Zionism, both Jewish and Christian, led by the United States and Britain, has left the criminal Israeli government free to kill the innocent Palestinian people in order to consolidate its dominance over the Islamic world. The issue of Jerusalem and Palestine is the most bitter chapter in the book of contemporary world history. Today, helping the Palestinian people is a human and Islamic duty. This is because if the aggression of the Zionist network, led by the United States, Britain and Israel, is not prevented neocolonialism is bound to take over many other Islamic territories. From the Islamic point of view, extending help to the Palestinians cannot be subjected to any doubts.

It was this necessity that prompted Imam Khomeini to name the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan as the "International Quds Day" to be a symbol for the Islamic awakening and the salvation of Quds and Palestine. Fortunately, today, in the light of Imam Khomeini's divine providence, all Muslims and freedom-seekers of the world have risen up against global arrogance and international Zionism, and the Islamic Revolution of Iran and Quds Day has awakened dormant and oppressed consciences in the Islamic and Arab world. Thanks to the lettering of Al-Quds Day and the resulting awakening, today the Zionist regime has suffered a great internal crisis and anonymity among the nations of the world.



**An Analytical
Glance at the
Conspiracy of Normalization
of Relations **between Islamic
Countries and Israel****

On August 13, 2020, the former US president, Donald Trump, tweeted that the United Arab Emirates and Israel had agreed to normalize relations. Under the agreement, the UAE, which has made a niche for itself in regional politics in recent years and is trying to make up for the lack of elements of power such as population, geographical location, history, and military capacity with its financial power, will expect to enter the scene of power as an effective actor. Israel, in turn, will suspend the annexation of parts of the West Bank, and the two countries will expand cooperation in various fields.

Israel and the United Arab Emirates were two pioneers in suppressing the wave of democratization in the region. Opposition groups were verbally and financially supported, and all pro-freedom groups were targeted under the guise of being "Pro Political Islam." Articles have also been published claiming that Turkey and Iran support these groups, claiming that the two countries have interfered in the internal affairs of Arab countries and are supporting "Islamist" groups. However, opposition to the rise of any nationalist or leftist organization in the authoritarian and monarchical regimes such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE proves that accusing these movements of being Islamist is only a cover for gaining international support.

Following the peace agreements between the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain with the Zionist regime, the process of nor-

malization of relations between some Arab countries and this regime - after years of groundwork - finally reached the final stage and other countries are expected to follow the policy adopted by the UAE and Bahrain soon. The Arab aspect of the Israeli-Arab conflict, which had been a geopolitical fault in West Asia for decades, has now become very faint, and it seems to these countries the issue of Al-Quds is merely an Israeli-Palestinian issue.

The normalization of relations between some Arab countries and the Zionist regime, in terms of its effect on the patterns of friendship and enmity, can change the order of the region. This change can have important effects and consequences on the political and security issues of the region and lead to new alliances and coalitions in general and on some issues in particular in the region. The issue of Palestine, political Islam, regional power struggles, especially in Iraq, Syria,

and Lebanon, and the rivalry of the UAE and Egypt and Turkey in Libya, the security of the Persian Gulf, the Yemeni war, and so on, are issues that can be strongly affected by normalization of relations.

The Reasons for the Inclination of Arab Countries towards Normalization of Relations with Israel

1 - One of the predominant reasons for this move on the part of these countries towards the normalization of relations with Israel should be sought at the individual level of their rulers. Given the political systems of these countries, their rulers see themselves in need of external support in order to strengthen their domestic position. As a matter of fact, they see the relationship with the Zionist regime as a way to gain this kind of support.

2 - Normalization is, in fact, a kind of coalition to ensure a balance of power at the regional level. The United Arab Emirates, for example, which has pursued ambitious goals in Yemen, Libya, and to a lesser extent Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq in recent years, now finds itself in a position in which it has no chance of success on these fronts and vis-à-vis Iran and Turkey in the absence of strong support from the Zionist regime and the United States.

3 - These countries consider the Zionist regime as a station for receiving the economic and political support of the United States and to be a part of the front of dominant power in the world arena; such that the United

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States, for example, would turn a blind eye to widespread human rights abuses and political repression exerted by these regimes.

The Impact of the Process of Normalization on the Social Structure of the Region, including Patterns of Friendship and Hostility

In the incoherent and permeable set of West Asian countries, the influence of and support provided by foreign powers is very effective. Friendship and enmity, which is one of the constituent variables of security complexes along with power relations, is very important in shaping the pattern of relations within a complex, which includes a range of true friends, expecting support and/or protection, indifference or neutrality, suspicion and fear. The social structure of the West Asian region has special features due to the ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious diversity, the effects

of the presence of colonialists, including the way the borderlines have been drawn, its geopolitical and geo-economic importance, and thus becoming an arena of competition for great powers. The Persian / Arab, Turkish / Arab, Persian / Turkish, Muslim / non-Muslim, and Shiite / Sunni divisions have been among the most important historical divisions in the region.

Therefore, following the normalization of relations with Israel, the cooperation of the Arab countries with the Zionist regime will increase significantly, particularly in potential areas, such that the Arab countries will expect support from the Zionist regime in many areas and for a number of issues.

Following their defeat in the two wars of 1967 and 1973, the Arab countries gradually came to the conclusion that they were not in a position to destroy the Zionist regime and, therefore, had to

accept it as a fact. Palestinian leftist and nationalist movements, too, moved in the same direction, which eventually led to the Oslo Accords. But at the same time, in the late 1980s, for the first time within the occupied territories, a struggle called the “Intifada” took shape. In these struggles, the Islamist groups of Hamas and Jihad have played a special role and Islamic ideology has prevailed over nationalist and leftist ideologies.

This, in addition to the fundamental changes of recent years, ruined the hopes that Arab countries had of a speedy resolution of the Palestinian conflict in 2002. Regional challenges, including the so-called Arab Spring, confrontation with Iran, and the influence of the Islamist government of Turkey, have made the Palestinian issue to be one of the lower priorities of these countries. With the normalization of relations with the Zionist regime by the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain and the procedure adopted by some other Arab countries in this regard, this move (normalization of relations with Israel) has come to be recognized as essential by them and the potential areas of cooperation between the Arab countries and the Zionist regime have increased significantly. This will, in turn, greatly diminish the importance and impact of the Jewish / Muslim or Jewish / Arab divide as well as the Palestinian cause.

Influence on Regional Power Balance and Political Arrangements about Regional Issues

The normalization of relations

with Israel on the part of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain makes the political arrangements about regional issues clearer. At the present time, the elements that make up the regional power balance can be considered to include four blocs. These four blocs are 1- Conservative and anti-Brotherhood bloc, 2- The axis of resistance led by Iran, 3- Supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood (Turkey and Qatar), and 4- the Zionist regime. Since the second and third blocs are supporters of political Islam; although they have conflicting interests in some areas such as Syria, they also have many common interests, and in general, relations between them have become closer in recent years.

It seems that the first and fourth blocks are trying to balance power vis-a-vis the second and third blocks, by advancing the process of normalization of relations. The first bloc, consisting of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Jordan, finds itself in a defensive position in the region against the two other blocs that oppose the status quo and support Islamist groups. The security and military cooperation of this bloc with the Zionist regime, which was in secret, is gradually becoming apparent. The UAE, which has played a more active role in regional conflicts than other Persian Gulf states, now expects more support from the United States and the Zionist regime, and this will be a factor adding to the existing tension.

According to the regional security complex theory, in addition to the four variables of boundaries,

anarchic structure, polarization, and patterns of friendship and enmity, there is another variable called penetration that can affect the internal campaigns of a security complex and make a change in it.

Owing to its geopolitical, geo-economic, and geo-cultural position, the West Asian security complex, has always been subject to change or, in other words, the intervention of foreign powers prompted by global competition. If we consider the four actors of the United States, the European Union, Russia, and China as the determinants of the pattern of global power distribution, China has never interfered in the affairs of the West Asian region or its role has been very limited and the Russian-American rivalry is of more importance and the interests and goals of the European Union are in alignment with those of the United States.

Concluding Remarks

The reasons for the normalization of relations with the Zionist regime by the Arab countries can be examined at three domestic, regional, and international levels. At the domestic level, the rulers of these countries seek to strengthen their position by gaining foreign support. At the regional level, their intention is to be at par with Iran and Turkey, and at the international level, the aim is to be in alignment with the forefront of the superior power, i.e., the United States. For the United States, too, normalization of relations between the Arab countries and Israel is the formation of a

coalition of allies that could pave the path for the continuation and strengthening of the regional role of this country and reduces the role of its rivals.

With the normalization of relations with the Zionist regime by the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain and the trend that is being followed by some other Arab countries in this regard, the potential areas of cooperation between the Arab countries and the Zionist regime have increased significantly. This trend will, on the one hand, greatly diminish the importance and impact of the Jewish / Muslim or Jewish / Arab divide and, on the other hand, increase the Arab / Persian or Arab / Turkish divide in the region.

Moreover, this trend of normalization will also give a clearer shape to the political arrangements about regional issues. The security and military cooperation of the conservative countries of the region with the Zionist regime, which was kept secret in the past, will now begin to gradually be done openly and is expected to escalate tensions in the region, including in Syria, Yemen, and Libya.

How far will the recent event be regarded as a victory or a political show-off for bin Salman, bin Zayed and Netanyahu is a matter of debate. However, what is clear is that Israel's so-called victory in the so-called Deal of the Century, which was hailed by Trump, has receded to the recognition of the Zionist regime by a few regional governments and suspension of Israel's plan with regard to annexing the West Bank.

Jerusalem the Capital of Palestine

Bobana M. Andjelkovic, Research Associate of University of Belgrade, Belgrade

After the assassination of Haaj Qasem Soleimani by low-life criminals and cowards, who were unable to confront him in any way, but remotely by drones, the Spokesperson for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Brigadier General Ramadan Sharif, said that "Qasem Soleimani's death may lead to the Jerusalem's liberation."

The So-called "Deal of the Century" is rather a deal to mark a century of English wrongdoings in occupied Palestine, which are continued by its colony the USA, and its present officials. This false "deal" is made by Zionist terrorists in the UK and USA upon request from Zionists who illegally settled in Palestine. The sectarians from Chabad and CUFI have delusional minds and are covered with darkness and evil which lead them. Further occupation of Palestine is their family business. The officials from the sectarian Vatican also deceive peoples of the world about their attitude toward the Zionist entity and occupation of Palestine. Western European countries and their monster entity, the EU, introduce laws to prosecute everyone and anyone who even says something about the Zionist entity. Trump introduced executive order to proclaim as anti-Semitic any talk against the Zionist entity. The legal systems in the Western world became a tool for protecting Zionist terrorists and assassins – legality as a phenomenon following justice and rightfulness is abandoned there. Both US President

Trump and Zionist Entity's Prime Minister Netanyahu are proclaimed criminals even by the legal systems within entities they represent as officials, but both continued to run for a new term in their offices.

So-called "Deal of the Century" implies disarming Palestinians, dissolving Palestinian Authority, demanding that Palestinians recognize the Zionist entity as a "Jewish state", ending Palestinian cultural and education programs based on Palestinian history, demanding from Palestinians media to stop any campaign against the Zionist entity and to be in line with Western mainstream media matrix; no Palestinian refugees from 1948 until now would be allowed to return, Palestine would not have any right to develop diplomatic relations and those made by now should end (the fact is that Palestine established diplomatic relations with more countries than the

Zionist entity). US' Special Envoy for The Middle East, Jason Greenblatt, stated in February 2018, before the announcement of the so-called "deal" that Palestinians are not even required to agree with it. The spokesperson of the State Department said at the beginning of May this year that the annexation of Palestine is "on Israel to decide".

Several days ago, Mike Pompeo visited the occupied land of Palestine, on which Zionists have been raging for decades. US officials showed once more that they act on the basis of lawlessness. Amidst imposed restrictions due to questionable 'pandemic', while borders of most countries are closed, Pompeo travels across half of the world to visit his fellow savages and terrorists in the Zionist entity to develop plans for future terrorism and crimes.

US Secretary of State visited the false officials of false Zionist state on the territory of occupied Palestinian land on May 13th to mark two years of Trump's administration decision to proclaim occupied Jerusalem a Zionist entity's capital and to support further forceful annexation of the rest of Palestinian land. The other reason for his visit was coordination with Zionist terrorists to work together against China.

While the world is still in a 'lock-down' due to imposed coronavirus pandemic, organized by Anglo-American terrorist states and their minions in various organizations, Pompeo travels across half of the

► **The So-called "Deal of the Century" is rather a deal to mark a century of English wrongdoings in occupied Palestine, which are continued by its colony the USA, and its present officials. This false "deal" is made by Zionist terrorists in the UK and USA upon request from Zionists who illegally settled in Palestine**

world without any problem, without being tested or quarantined. Does he hold the Zionist entity passport, if he is moving freely? Why the measurements of pandemics do not apply to the US delegation? Do they all hold Zionist entity passports? Are they US or Zionist officials, or it is all the same now? Not so long ago, after becoming US Secretary of State, charlatan Pompeo commented on the state of affairs in his previous job (at the CIA): “We lied, we cheated, we stole.” He changed the job, but nothing else changed in his attitude or activity – it is in line with Zionist’s manners, as well.

“Trump’s rhetoric is that of a casino”, Haaj Qasem said last year. And his behavior is that of a silly and mindless person from a Wild West. Nothing has changed in the USA, since its foundation – it is still governed by mindless cowboys, now joined by mindless Zionists.

What is the “Vision for Peace” for the arrogant Western world and their Zionist friends, it is state terrorism and crime for most of the world. A small portion of humanity is brainwashed and supports the inhuman occupation of Palestine and the genocide of Palestinians. That is even more visible as pressure around the world continues by the arrogant West to support the terrorist Zionist entity. As the Western world became an advocate for Zionists’ lies, deception, and genocide, it has been falling apart more and more, ever since.

Apart from lies, cheating, and stealing, murders can be added to the USA’s manner in state affairs. Only a few days after Pompeo left occupied Palestine, the Chinese Ambassador to the Zionist entity,



Du Wei, was found dead in Tel Aviv – that is in connection with the other reason for Pompeo’s travel to occupied Palestine – to stop any Chinese activity in Western Asia. Du Wei’s death came only two days after he publicly criticized the US’ hysterical propaganda against China. Not only the West and Zionists are against Palestine, but they are trying to plot against the biggest world power today, China – that acting also reveals their absence of reason and support for the law of the jungle. But, even in the jungle, there is some natural law that makes harmony among animals.

The law of the jungle pursued by the Axes of Evil (West and their Zionist friends) does not contain any natural order from the jungle – it only contains support for terrorism and crimes.

Although there will be more and more irrational and sabotage plans by the Axes of Evil to stop any process which is not under their control, especially connected to the occupation of Palestine, what is in-

evitable will happen. No occupation lasts forever. No falsehood lasts forever – they are all exposed sooner or later. Even the twisted machinery of the Axes of Evil cannot help what will happen in the future. Even if West and Zionist together continue to plot against The Resistance; even if the Vatican continues to covertly support the Zionist entity; even if Western Europe still sits humiliated and hypnotized by disgraceful Zionists; even if Arab League still sleeps with no signs of awakening; even if all forces of evil unite in their hike against humanity and human compassion all around the world, their distorted and inhuman games will fail.

As Iranian Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei said: “In any case, Palestine will conquer its enemies by Allah’s favor and grace. Baytul-Moqaddas [Al-Quds] is the capital of Palestine; the US, or powers greater or smaller than the US and its cohorts, cannot do a single thing against the divine truth and revelations about Palestine.”



ISRAEL AND UNITED STATES' CLAIM ON AL-QUDS!!!

The name Al-Quds meaning "The Holy One" is another name for the city of Jerusalem, a city in the Middle East and one of the oldest cities in the world and is considered holy to the three major Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Israelis and Palestinians are the two disputing sides over this city, where Israel maintains its primary governmental institutions and Palestine ultimately foresees it as its seat of power. Due to the weak political and military position of the Palestinians, Israel and its allies (particularly the United States of America) are attempting through various means to claim Al-Quds to belong to the Zionists.

The former U.S. President, Donald Trump, declared Jerusalem (Al-Quds) to be the capital of Israel

on December 6, 2017. The OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) strongly responded to Trump's statement and scheduled an emergency meeting in Turkey in which a recommendation was made to take the United States claim against Jerusalem (Al-Quds) to the United Nations. This has tamed the United States and Israel efforts against Al-Quds, the majority of United Nations member states in the General Assembly have objected to the claim and recommended efforts to ease the tensions caused by such unilateral claims.

History of Al-Quds from Judaism, Christianity and Islam Perspective

The history of Al-Quds requires a comprehensive discussion, mainly

from the perspective of Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). The scriptures of the three religions have recorded their respective stories, including the story of Al-Quds in which there are three holy sites of the three religions. The city has a number of places of religious significance including the Temple Mount and its Western Wall for Jews, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher for Christians, and the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock for Muslims. Currently, there are 204 synagogues, 158 churches, and 73 mosques in Jerusalem. This confirms that a glance at the perspective of all three religions is necessary for a comprehensive discussion.

History of Al-Quds from Judaism

Perspective

The Jews believe that the migration to their so-called holy land began when Prophet Abraham came out of Babylon with his followers in 1900 BC to avoid undesirable things from King Nimrud. The Jews believe that when Abraham returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and his allied kings, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh, which is the Valley of the King. And King Melchizedek of Salem (Jerusalem) brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of God, the Most High. He blessed him by saying, "Blessed be Abraham of God, the Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God, the Most High, who has delivered your foes into your hand".

According to biblical history, Zion was said to be impregnable and David captured it and renamed the place as 'The city of David'. It was a small place of some 15 acres but significant in terms of its location. The appearance of the word 'Zion' was first in the Old Testament when King David established his kingdom in 1000-969 BC. The word 'Zion' is mentioned 152 times in the Old Testament, all pointing to the city of Jerusalem.

Jews first entered the Jerusalem area in the time of David. Earlier the initiation of the state of Israel was started by Saul (Talut) in 1025 BC. He gathered the tribes of all the Jews to fight against the king of Jalut (Goliath). One of Saul's troops was a young man named David who would lead the people of Israel after the Talut. He is also regarded as the founder of the realm of the Israelites in Palestine territory. David and his successors enhanced

Jerusalem's credentials even further by transforming the city into the most important national and religious site for Jews.

After the leadership of David and Solomon who ruled the Palestinian territories for about 80 years, Solomon's kingdom was split into two states in 923 BC. The Kingdom of Jehuza (Judah) in the South with its capital Jerusalem (Al-Quds) was ruled by Solomon's son, Rehoboam. He was supported by two tribes of the Israelites; Jehuza and Benjamin, who lived in the South and around Jerusalem. But ten other tribes refused to pledge to him and instead chose to be ruled by Jeroboam from the tribe of Ephraim (one of the tribes of Israel) forming the second kingdom of Israel in the north.

The books of Kings and Samuel (and Deuteronomy, which is closely related to their outlook) place enormous significance on the establishment of Jerusalem as the Jewish ritual center. According to the views promoted by these books, sacrifice is not legitimate in any other location, even if intended for the God of Israel. A prayer is quoted at the dedication of the Temple, which cites the words of God: "Since the day that I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city in any tribe of Israel to have a temple built that my Name might be therein; but I have chosen David to rule my people Israel" (Kings, 8:16).

History of Al-Quds from Christianity Perspective

Al-Quds (Jerusalem) in Christianity's doctrine is quite famous. As in the Old Testament and the New Tes-

tament, there are many prophetic stories that are not very different from those believed by the Jews. It is narrated that Jesus, the son of Mary, was a Jew and the founder of the Messianic movement in Judaism and proclaimed the kingdom of God that would mark the beginning of his missionary activities. His journey to Jerusalem for Easter was probably because he expected the kingdom to begin in Jerusalem. But once in Jerusalem, he was later crucified by the Roman. The followers of Jesus consider this city (Jerusalem) to be the site of the marvelous miracle of his resurrection, and as the place of his promised return in the gospel. It was also in that the first apostles proclaimed in their Gospels the good news of the coming kingdom of the son of God who was crucified and resurrected as the Messiah. When the Roman Emperor Constantine embraced Christianity in 325 AD he built the church of the Holy Sepulcher in Al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Based on the above explanation it can be understood Al-Quds (Jerusalem) is a holy place to the Christians, who believe it was where Jesus, the redeemer of the sins, was crucified and resurrected. However, the conflict between Judaism and Christianity occurred during the rule of the Roman empire, when a Roman Emperor embraced Christianity and established churches to mark Jerusalem as his territory.

History of Al-Quds from Islam Perspective

Al-Quds is believed to be the place from where Prophet Muhammad's Mi'raj began; the second

part of a night trip from the Mecca to the Aqsa Mosque and Mi'raj (ascent to the heavens). The story of Isra' and Mi'raj and the message from Allah to perform prayers there made the Aqsa Mosque located in Al-Quds became the first qiblah for Muslims.

Interestingly, as the last of Abrahamic religions Islam recognizes the existence and story of previous Prophets many of whom were sent to the Israelites. Thus, Muslims do believe in the sites of historical heritage located in the area of Jerusalem; one example of which is the tomb of Prophet David in an ancient cemetery on Mount Zion.

According to historical records, Umar bin Khattab, the second caliph after the Prophet (pbuh) signed an agreement with Christian Patriarch Monophysite Sophronius to convince him that the holy sites and Christians of Jerusalem will be protected under Muslim rule. The city was, thus, peacefully surrendered to Muslims while Christians continued to follow their own rules and regulations, although under the rule of the Muslim governor for the city. After being under the rule of Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, it came to the target of the crusaders, until it finally came to be ruled by the Ottoman Turks.

The controversy surrounding the status of Jerusalem as a capital city for Muslims or Jews has been the subject of a number of United Nations resolutions.

The seriousness of the issue of Al-Quds reached its peak when Donald Trump declared Al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the capital city of Israel on December 6, 2017. Israel, as expected, welcomed the

US decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Meanwhile, the member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) strongly responds to and condemned the statement made by Trump. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called an extraordinary summit of the OIC on December 13, 2017, to review the situation. During the meeting in Istanbul, the 57-member group denounced Trump's move as "null and void" and called on the United Nations to "end the Israeli occupation" of Palestine. Muslim leaders warned that Trump's administration will be liable for "all the consequences of not retracting from this illegal decision".

Turkey's Hurriyet newspaper reported that Erdogan launch initiatives at the United Nations to have Washington's "disgraceful" decision annulled. He stated: "As a country, we are determined to do our bit on this issue. We will wash the dirty laundry of those who breach international law". He

also stated, "We will work to annul this unlawful decision, first in the Security Council and then in the UN General Assembly". He further added that Ankara will encourage other countries to recognize the Palestinian state. Presently, 137 countries in the world recognize the Palestinian state. God willing, this number will further increase with our efforts".

Pressure from OIC member states succeeded in bringing the issue of U.S. claim to the United Nations meeting so that an emergency session was held. The UN General Assembly has decisively backed a resolution effectively calling on the US to withdraw its recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The text says that any decisions regarding the status of the city are "null and void" and must be canceled. The non-binding resolution was approved by 128 states, with 35 abstaining and nine others voting against on 21 December 2017. The nine who voted against the resolution were the U.S., Israel, Guatemala, Honduras, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, and Togo. Among the 35 abstaining were Canada and Mexico. Those voting in favor included the other four permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, and the UK) as well as key US allies in the Muslim world. There were 21 countries that did not turn up for the vote.

The above explanation shows that the U.S. and Israeli claim over Jerusalem is a matter of great concern to the international community. This shows Israel's efforts and crimes against the Palestinians to seize control of the Palestinian

► **The controversy surrounding the status of Jerusalem as a capital city for Muslims or Jews has been the subject of a number of United Nations resolutions.**

territories, including Al-Quds, over the past 70 years have always been and will always be opposed by the international community and have implications.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above exposure the concluding remarks would focus on several things. First, the history of Al-Quds viewed from the perspective of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam shows the link between the theological studies of each doctrine with a visible historical journey. In addition, the history of Al-Quds is also filled with the dynamics of the struggle for power from the time of the kingdoms to today's era of nation-states. Second, from the historical point of view the fate of Al-Quds (Jerusalem) has undergone many phases right from the Proto Kana'an period around 4500-3500 BC, followed by the Neo-Babylonian period, the Roman period, the Byzantine period, the Rashidun period, the Umayyad period, the Abbasid periods, and the Fatimid period until the decline of the Ottoman period and the transfer of the city into the British mandate in 1917. The city was destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times, and contested 44 times. Third, the international law indicates that the countries in the world are not indifferent towards the fate of Al-Quds, which was clearly displayed in the condemnation of the U.S. claiming Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel in 2017. The above sequence of events shows that from the perspective of international law Israel the United States cannot make unilateral claims against Al-Quds (Jerusalem).

The Importance of Islamic Unity in the Liberation of Al-Quds

According to scholars of Islam, unity in Islam is an obligation upon all Muslims. To be part of one body, worshiping one God, and following one book is an inseparable part of our Islam and has been engraved into Islamic teachings by the Holy Prophet of Allah (pbuh).

Muslims from around the world have been asked by the Great Leader of the Islamic Revolution and scholar, Ayatollah Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini (ra), to unite in order to be able to free the Palestinians from the demonic state of Israel in the occupied territories of Palestine. However, the absence of unity amongst the Muslim Ummah has resulted in the continued hegemony of Israel over Palestine.

The last Friday of the month of Ramadan, the most sacred month of the Islamic calendar, is commemorated by millions around the world as the International "Quds Day". The month of Ramadan especially empowers believers with God's mercy, as the starting point of awakening and awareness in all aspects of life. The Quds Day was initiated in 1979 by the late Imam Khomeini to promote unity in the Muslim Ummah and to express solidarity with the Palestinian people and oppose Zionism and the illegitimate Israeli occupation of Palestine, especially Jerusalem and the use of force and violence by the Zionists against the defenseless people of the occupied lands.

Imam Khomeini understood the importance of Islamic unity and the connection between the struggle to liberate Palestine and the struggle for social justice around the world. In his words, "All must know that the aim of superpowers in creating Israel does not end in the occupation of Palestine. They plan, God forbid, to extend the fate of Palestine to all Islamic countries."

The issue of "unity of the Islamic world" has always been one of the intellectual and long-standing concerns of religious leaders and reformers, especially Imam Khomeini. This issue was emphasized by the Imam during the period of social and political activity, both before and after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, and he did not neglect it for a moment. Imam's sincere commitment to "unity" not only made him the most prominent revolutionary figure in the Islamic world but also made him gain a high position

among the various Islamic sects and schools of thought.

The history of the last seven decades is witness to the undeniable fact that the occupying forces have all through these years intentionally targeted Palestinians including students, educational and academic institutions, made illegal arrests, and harassed and detained university students, and subjected them to mental stress and torture as contrary to the UN Convention Against Torture. The suppression of academic life in the occupied Palestinian territories is part of concentrated and systematic political and military efforts of the Israeli government to attack the means of development of the Palestinian society.

Scholars, journalists, and observers familiar with the Israeli occupation of Palestine are very well aware of the violations of the rights of Palestinians in whatever

way possible.

Following the announcement of the last Friday of the month of Ramadan as the International Quds Day people all over the world, irrespective of their color, ethnicity and language welcomed the stance and came out of their houses and mosques after Friday prayer and gathered in the streets to show their solidarity with oppressed people of Palestine and also showed their will to defend the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third most sacred place after Mecca

and Medina.

The World Quds Day is not only a message to Zionism and imperialism that Palestinians are not alone and their rights would not be deprived anymore but this occasion is also a unique show of Muslim unity and the concept of Ummah. When Shia and Sunni both chant slogans against the illegal occupation of Muslim land it shows that the plot of division among the Ummah has been



failed and the conspiracy against the unity of Muslims by internal and external forces foiled. No leader of the Muslim world before Imam Khomeini talked so bluntly about the Palestinian cause. Hazrat Imam talked about the Palestinian cause before Islamic Revolution and his vision was very clear about this issue. That is why just after the success of the Islamic Revolution he announced World Quds Day as if it was his utmost priority. Today when we see that World Quds Day is being observed around the world even in the western country, this is, in fact, the success of the vision of Imam Khomeini. When we see that some of the Muslim rulers and their beloveds create hurdles or try to malign the gatherings of

oppressed people we can easily understand that this is according to the agenda of Zionism. Sometimes marchers of Quds Day pay a heavy price of supporting Palestinian cause like one of the incident took place at Quetta, the capital of Balochistan Province of Pakistan in 2010 where 56 people died and more than a hundred injured but in the very next year the same occasion was celebrated with the same zeal and fervor. A bus carrying students and teachers of Karachi University was attacked by a planted bomb on the University Road in 2012 in which two students were martyred but the participants did not stop and went to the rally. This is the impact of the vision of Imam Khomeini who motivated the entire Mus-

lim world with his wisdom. The current political situation of the Middle East shows that Israel is the weakest country in the region despite the heavy cache of arms and continuous support of the United States. Imam Khomeini once mentioned that: "The issue of Quds is not a private or personal issue. It is neither the exclusive problem of one country nor a present-day problem of all Muslims. Rather, it is a phenomenon concerning the monotheists and faithful people of all ages past, present, and future.

By standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people, a nation facing one of the world's longest military occupations the believers can ensure that history will look kindly upon our community of scholars.



International Quds Day: An African Perspective

Sheikh Abdullah Makwinja, President Ahl-ul Bayt Islamic Guidance Council, Zimbabwe



"We are on the side of the oppressed whichever pole they may be in. Palestinians are oppressed by the Israelites, therefore, we side with them". Imam Khomeini

"But we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians" Nelson Mandela

International Quds day is an annual event held on the last Friday of Ramadan to express support for Palestine and oppose its occupation by Zionist Israel. It is a unique form of a wide-aware campaign against the Israeli occupation of Palestine which started in 1979 on the call of Imam Khomeini after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The Palestinian people's struggle is not directed against Judaism as a religion, but against the colonial occupation of their land

and atrocities committed by the Zionist regime.

For a large number of Africans, the term occupation, which is synonymous with colonialism invokes images and memories of racism, discrimination, oppression, brutality, indulgence, undue privilege (for some), pretension, resistance, and ultimately emancipation; all of which come to us through the history of segregation, racism or most appropriately apartheid.

Apartheid is the Afrikaans word for 'apartness', originally used to describe the system of racial discrimination that existed in South Africa until 1994. The term apartheid is not only a reference to South Africa's former regime but it is also used in international law to describe a category of regimes, defined in the United Nations (UN) International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973), to which more than 100 states are signatories. The definition was refined in Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2002) The Rome Statute defines the Crime of apartheid as: "inhumane acts... committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of sys-

tematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime."

Why do we refer to Israel as an apartheid state? There is overwhelming evidence that the system instituted by the Israeli government against the Palestinian people meets the UN definition of apartheid. Segregation is carried out by implementing separate legal regimes for Jewish Israelis and Palestinians living in the same area. In the occupied West Bank, Jewish Israeli settlers living in illegal settlements are governed by Israeli civil law, while Palestinians also living in the West Bank are governed by Israeli military law.

Based on the systemic and institutionalized nature of the racial domination that exists, there are indeed strong grounds to conclude that a system of apartheid has developed in the occupied Palestinian territory. Israeli practices in the occupied territory are not only reminiscent of – and, in some cases, worse than – apartheid as it existed in South Africa and breach the legal prohibition of apartheid are as follows:

Forcible transfer of Palestin-

ians to make way for illegal Israeli settlements.

Preventing Palestinians from returning to their homes and lands (including millions of refugees living in exile).

Systematic and severe deprivation of fundamental human rights of Palestinians based on their identity.

Denying Palestinians their right to freedom of movement and residence (especially, but not limited to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip).

Murder, torture, unlawful imprisonment, and other severe deprivation of physical liberty.

Persecution of Palestinians because of their opposition to apartheid.

The 1967 occupied Palestinian territories have undergone several major types of development since the Oslo agreement between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israel was signed in 1993 and the Palestinian Authority was established in 1994. These developments have brought far-reaching structural changes in Palestinian politics and society. They have rendered the Palestinian community - both inside historic Palestine and outside - very vulnerable, and, as a result, have made collective action (including a third intifada) against collective colonial repression more difficult.

Some of the major developments are identified as: the emergence of a political discourse that evicts Palestinians from history and geography and denies them a national identity; the escalation of collective repression, and

settler-colonization; and atomization of Palestinian society (in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and probably elsewhere) under the impact of settler-colonialism and the move to isolate the Palestinian from the rest of the Arab nations and Muslim nations.

The latest among these developments was the wave of agreements, brokered primarily by the Trump administration before disgracefully departing the White House. They were dubbed as the Abraham Accords, making reference to Prophet Abraham whom both the Arabs and the Israelis consider as the father of the ancient

secret.

Abraham Accords are not about peace because none of the countries involved are fighting Israel. The fight is between Palestinians - who are struggling for their rights over their homeland - and the

Arab and Hebrew tribes.

Furthermore, one of the principal motivations for the Accords was the mutual distrust of Iran, felt by all countries involved, not the least of which was the U.S and Israel. Some political analysts believe that the real target of these accords was not Palestine, but rather Iran because of its staunch support for the liberation of Palestine. And to fulfill their dream of weakening Iran they (Israel and the US) carried out assassinations of Iran's general Qasem Soleimani and also a top Iranian scientist. Nevertheless, the accords are much more than a publicizing of what already existed in

occupying Israeli regime. In response to this development the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said



"Reducing the Palestinian issue to a purely Palestinian and at most Arab issue is a grave mistake, the Palestinian issue is a human one".

The Zionist plots may deceive some simple-minded people but cannot derail the world's general policy, which is defending the Palestinian cause. As stated by late Nelson Mandela: "But we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians". He added: "The temptation in our situation is to speak in muffled tones about an issue such as the right of the people of Palestine to a state of their own. We can easily be enticed to read reconciliation and fairness as meaning parity between justice and injustice. Having achieved our own freedom, we can fall into the trap of washing our hands of difficulties that others face. Yet we would be less than human if we did so".

On this day of solidarity with oppressed Palestine, I must recall, with deep sorrow, the heinous crime perpetrated a year ago against a Palestinian child, Mohammed Abu Khdeir, which shocked our consciences and broke our hearts. Mohammed, age 16, was abducted from the street outside his home in Occupied East Jerusalem, beaten and driven to a forest, where he was burned alive by a gang of terrorist Israeli settlers. In memory of his son, Hussein Abu Khdeir has said, "We don't forget him. We burn on the inside every time we remember the way he was murdered."

As reported by Human Rights Watch; "For 13 consecutive

years, the (Israeli) government has enforced a generalized travel ban on Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip and sharply restricted the entry and exit of goods. These restrictions, not based on an individualized assessment of security risk, have robbed the 2 million Palestinians living there of their right to freedom of movement, limited their access to electricity and water, and devastated their economy. Eighty percent of Gaza's residents depend on humanitarian aid."

With the dual system of law that currently prevails in the occupied Palestinian territory, best understood as the derivative of an ongoing settler-colonial process, logic dictates that Israel will inevitably reach the tipping point at which it is forced to confront its own racial realities vis-à-vis the Palestinians. While the shape that such a transformation ultimately takes will depend, primarily, on social attitudes and political craft, international law may retain a role through the light that it shines on the normative issues to be resolved in this context.

"According to the UN Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as of October 19, 2020, Israeli authorities demolished 568 Palestinian homes and other structures in the West Bank this year, including in East Jerusalem, displacing 759 people. Most buildings were demolished for lacking Israeli building permits, which are virtually impossible to obtain. As the Covid-19 pandemic spread between March and August, Israel averaged its high-

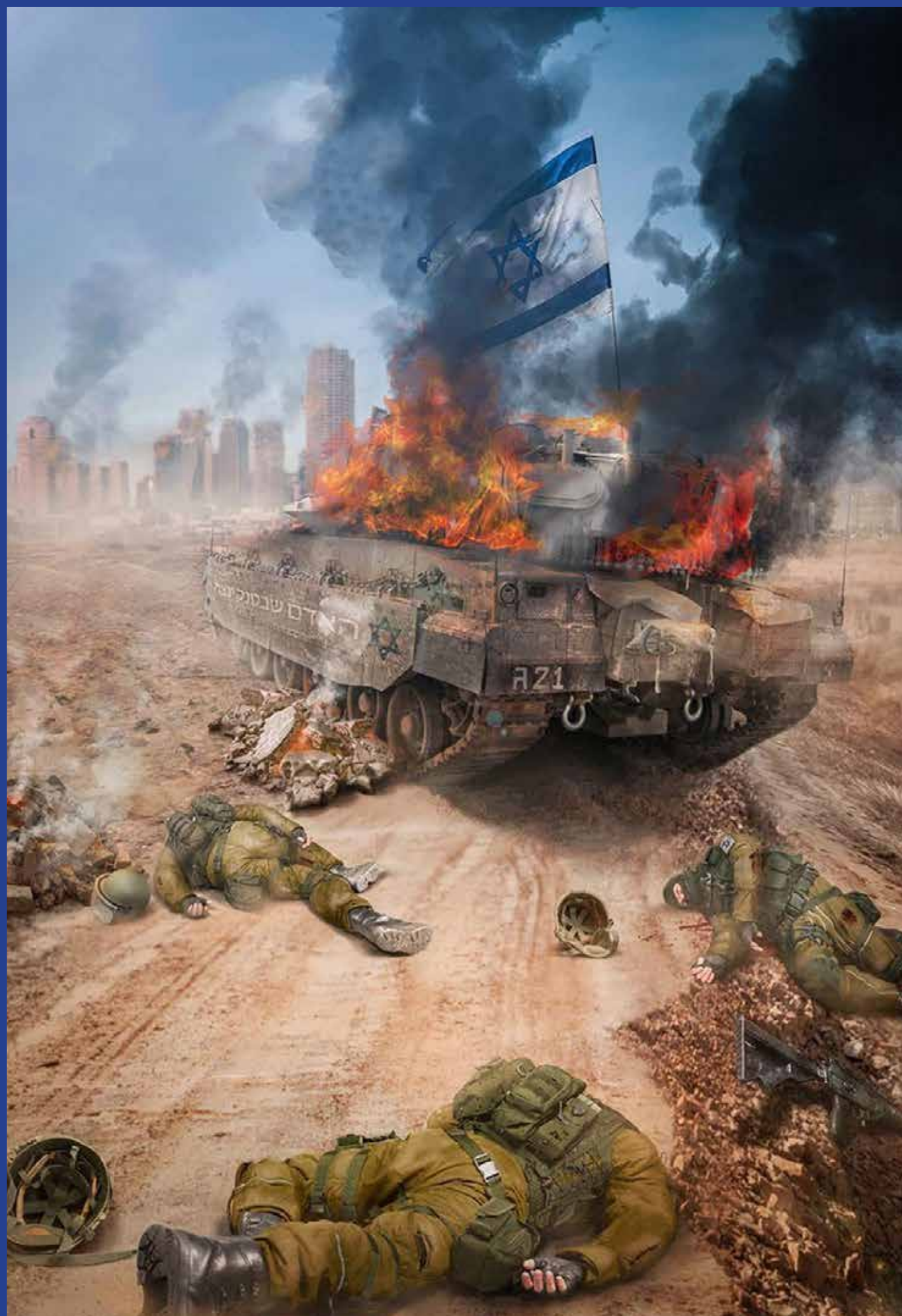
est home demolition rate in four years, OCHA found. On November 3, Israeli authorities razed the homes of most residents of the Palestinian community of Khirbet Humsah in the Jordan Valley for being in an area it designated as a "firing zone," displacing 73 people, 41 of them children."

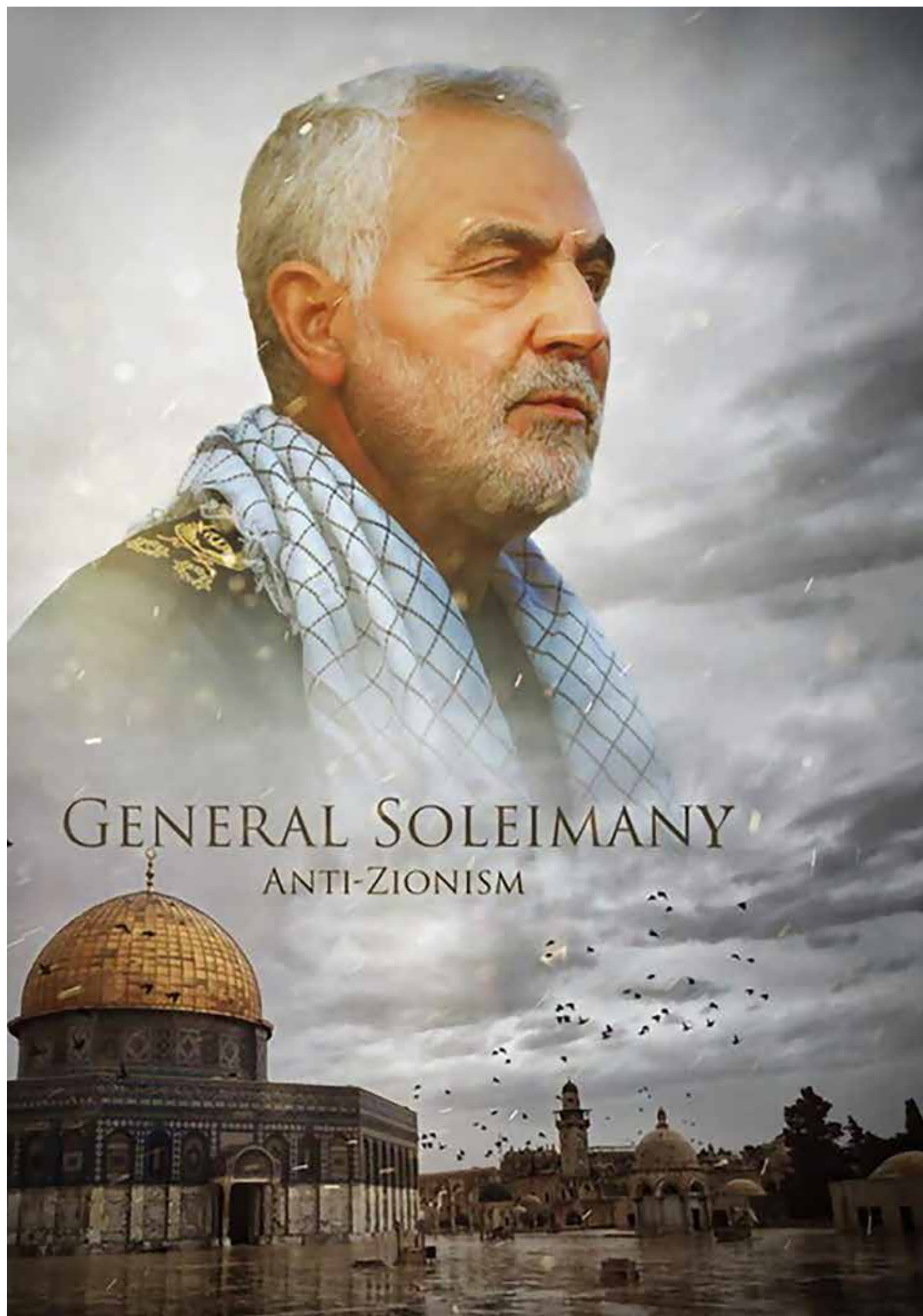
"During January and February, an average of 778 Palestinians in Gaza exited via Erez each day, a fraction of the daily average of more than 24,000 before the beginning of the second Intifada in September 2000, according to the Israeli rights group, Gisha. After Israel tightened the closure amid the pandemic, that figure plummeted between April and September to about nine people per day.

Again, according to OCHA "Families in Gaza, on average, received slightly more than 12 hours of electricity a day during the first nine months of 2020." According to the WHO, 47 percent of what it deems to be "essential" medicines were at zero stock level (with less than one month's supply) at Gaza's Central Drug Store at the end of September" last year.

Despite consistent Palestinian efforts to engage with the mechanisms of international law, the Palestinians have largely been excluded from international legal protection. On this international Quds day lets us continue to call for the establishment of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian State, living side by side and in peace with all its neighbors consistent with all UN resolutions.

Viva Palestine.





GENERAL SOLEIMANY

ANTI-ZIONISM