

**Palestine Issue in the Muslim World: Divided regional response and diplomacy**

The **Palestine issue** has long been a central and contentious matter in the Muslim world, with its roots in the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent displacement of Palestinians. While the cause of Palestine has historically unified Muslim-majority nations as a symbol of shared Islamic solidarity, the regional response has been far from cohesive due to political, ideological, and strategic divisions. These differences have significantly influenced the trajectory of Palestinian diplomacy and the broader conflict.

**1. Background of the Palestine Issue**

The conflict began with the Zionist movement's push for a Jewish homeland, culminating in the British Mandate's support through the Balfour Declaration (1917). The creation of Israel in 1948 led to the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians, known as the Nakba (catastrophe). Successive wars, particularly in 1967, expanded Israeli control, including the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza. This displacement and occupation have made Palestine a rallying cry for Muslims worldwide.

**2. Divided Regional Responses**

**A. Ideological Differences**

**1. Arab Nationalists vs. Islamists**

- During the 1950s and 1960s, Arab nationalist regimes, such as Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser, championed the Palestinian cause as part of their anti-colonial, Pan-Arab agenda.
- In contrast, Islamist groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, framed the issue as a religious struggle against Zionism and Western imperialism.

**2. Sectarian Divide**

- The Sunni-Shia divide has shaped responses, with Iran, a Shia-majority country, positioning itself as a staunch supporter of Palestinian resistance movements (e.g., Hamas and Islamic Jihad).
- Sunni-majority Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, have historically been less confrontational, emphasizing diplomatic solutions.

**B. Normalization and Realpolitik**

In recent years, a number of Muslim-majority countries have shifted towards normalization with Israel, reflecting broader geopolitical and economic interests:

**1. Abraham Accords (2020)**

- Brokered by the United States, these agreements saw countries like the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan recognize Israel. These nations prioritized economic benefits, security alliances, and countering Iran over Palestine.

**3. Turkey's Dual Role**

- Turkey, under Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has presented itself as a vocal defender of Palestine, criticizing Israel's actions in Gaza and advocating for Jerusalem.
- Simultaneously, Turkey maintains diplomatic and trade ties with Israel, reflecting its pragmatic foreign policy.

## CSS PLATFORM

Realizing The Dream! – Give us a student, we give back a Bureaucrat

### 4. Gulf States and Saudi Arabia

- While Saudi Arabia has not formally normalized relations with Israel, its strategic cooperation, particularly against Iran, suggests a gradual softening stance. Riyadh has pushed for a two-state solution but avoided direct confrontation with Israel.

## 2. Challenges to Unified Diplomacy

### A. Palestinian Internal Divisions

- The split between Fatah (dominant in the West Bank) and Hamas (controlling Gaza) undermines the Palestinian leadership's ability to present a unified front in negotiations and diplomacy.

### B. International Pressure

- Muslim countries face immense pressure from Western powers, especially the United States, to tone down their opposition to Israel.

### C. Prioritization of Other Conflicts

- Regional conflicts (e.g., the Syrian Civil War, the Yemen War) and economic challenges have diverted attention from Palestine.

### D. Lack of a Strong Global Muslim Bloc

- Despite organizations like the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Muslim world has struggled to mount coordinated political or economic actions against Israel.

## 3. Diplomatic Efforts in Support of Palestine:

Despite the divisions, several Muslim-majority nations continue to advocate for Palestine on global platforms:

### 1. UN and International Forums

- Countries like Malaysia, Pakistan, and Indonesia are vocal supporters of Palestinian statehood in international organizations, including the UN.

### 2. Economic and Humanitarian Aid

- Qatar provides significant financial aid to Gaza, while Turkey and Iran support both humanitarian and resistance activities.

### 3. Public Sentiment

- Grassroots movements in Muslim-majority countries keep the Palestinian cause alive, even when governments pursue normalization with Israel.

## 5. The Way Forward

A comprehensive solution requires:

- Reconciliation among Muslim countries to adopt a unified stance on the issue.
- Strengthening Palestinian unity between factions like Fatah and Hamas.
- Leveraging global partnerships to counteract Israeli policies, including sanctions or boycotts.

## Conclusion:



## **CSS PLATFORM**

**Realizing The Dream! – Give us a student, we give back a Bureaucrat**

The Palestine issue exposes deep divides within the Muslim world, where historical, political, and ideological differences hinder a unified approach. While public support for Palestine remains strong, the political and strategic realignments of many Muslim-majority nations, particularly in the context of normalization with Israel, complicate diplomatic efforts. For the Palestinian cause to regain momentum, it will require a recalibration of Muslim-world diplomacy, emphasizing unity and resilience against external pressures.

CSS PLATFORM