

# The Israeli conflict brings harmony with Arab countries



Agnes Zang — May 16, 2021 comments off



When the United Arab Emirates shocked the Arab world through the normalization of relations with Israel, it said it would help ease the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict. But nine months later, the wealthy Gulf country found itself in a difficult position because its newest ally bombed the poor Palestinian territories of Gaza.

Israeli warplanes and artillery slammed into Gaza, and Hamas, the organization that controls the territory, fired rockets at Israel. According to enclave health officials, about 174 Palestinians were killed, including 76 women and children. The local doctor said that ten people were killed in Israel, including two children.

Although nearly a third of Arab countries have established relations with Israel, the bloodshed this week shows that the diplomatic relations established by last year's so-called "Abraham Agreement" have hardly affected them and did not help them. Alleviate the root cause of the protracted crisis—the conflict between the Jewish state and the Palestinians.

“they [the UAE] Obviously in a very difficult position. On the one hand, the interests of the UAE and Israel are long-term and strategic. Therefore, ideally, the relationship between the UAE should be able to withstand shocks. “Cinzia Bianco, a guest researcher at the European Commission on External Relations, said. “At the same time, the UAE clearly declared that the Abraham Agreement will provide them with leverage to support the Palestinians and curb Israelis’ actions against them. aggression. “

So far, Israel has rejected all international efforts to achieve a ceasefire. But Bianco said that Abu Dhabi can still use diplomatic means to pressure the Jewish state to limit the scale of its retaliation. She added that, however, such intervention could damage the progress of joint projects of strategic value to the UAE.

Recent cooperation includes plans by UAE and Israeli defense manufacturers to develop systems to counter drones.

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After the normalization of relations between Israel and the UAE under the Abraham Agreement, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco also took similar actions, which marked a fundamental departure from the established Arab position to the Jewish state.

The Arab position before the agreement was that they would only recognize Israel if they reached a just settlement with the Palestinians, thereby establishing a viable Palestinian state. The Trump administration’s public support for the pro-Israel stance facilitated the transactions that made Palestinians feel isolated and betrayed. Critics say that Arab countries have given up bargaining tools, but have received very little return, and warned that this move will be used by more militant Palestinian factions.

Like other members of the Arab League, the UAE on Tuesday approved the appeal of the International Criminal Court to “investigate the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Israel against the Palestinians.”

Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to the President of the UAE, said this week: “The UAE defends the rights of the Palestinians to end the Israeli occupation and adopts two countries with an independent Palestinian state as its capital and East Jerusalem as its capital. solution.” . “This is a long-standing principled position and will not waver.”

The UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs quickly condemned Israel's plan to evict Palestinian houses from land requested by Israeli settlers last month. When clashes broke out between Israeli armed police and stone-throwing Palestinian youths, the UAE urged the Israeli authorities to reduce tensions.

The UAE's clear public position concealed the condemnation of Israel's actions by Emirati and the residents of authoritarian countries and their support for the Palestinians. Any local anger over the decision to normalize relations at an early date was suppressed. With the exception of the fringe of UAE online activists supporting Israel, most social media reactions-even those of some ministers-were pro-Palestinian.

"standardization [of relations] It is irreversible, but in this case it is even difficult to defend or even talk about." Said Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, a professor of political science based in Dubai.

After the UAE signed the agreement, there was speculation that Israel's main award, Saudi Arabia, would follow suit. Like Abu Dhabi, Riyadh secretly cooperates with Israel on intelligence and security matters because they have a common goal to counter Iran.

## Respected

However, this week's Israeli attack on Gaza has made things more and more distant. The Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Faisal bin Fahhan, said on Sunday that Saudi Arabia "resolutely rejects Israel's violation of the Palestinians" and called for an immediate ceasefire.

The Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that Morocco had established relations with the Jewish state in October in exchange for the U.S. recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over the disputed territory of Western Sahara. The country said it was "deeply concerned" about the incident.

In 2014, in the last major war between Israel and Hamas, thousands of protesters including government ministers took to the streets of the capital Rabat. This time, the Moroccan police spread a pro-Palestinian small-scale protest in the city this week. According to reports, the newly established Moroccan-Israel Business Council has postponed a virtual meeting to encourage Morocco's investment in Israel.

HA Hellyer, senior associate researcher at the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace, said that the public sentiment in the Arab world still strongly supports Palestine. "No protest is not because there is no desire to protest, but because there is no permission to protest."

Hellyer said that restrictions on freedom of speech throughout the region have made it more difficult to measure the level of public anger, but widespread reports on social media and mainstream TV show that the "Palestinian issue" is still very close to the hearts of Arabs.

He added: "Almost half of the messages I received on Thursday to mark the religious holiday that commemorates the end of Ramadan were photos of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem," he added.