

# Structure and Escalation of the Israel-Palestine Conflict

**Indira Papunidze**

*Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia*

(Presented by Academy Member Liana Melikishvili)

**Abstract.** Conflicts are an integral part of our daily lives and are characterized by a dualistic nature, as they can be viewed both negatively and positively (e.g., as drivers of political progress). Since every conflict is unique, each requires an individual approach. Conflicts exist at various levels, including interstate, intergroup, and interpersonal relations. This paper examines the long-standing confrontation between Israel and Palestine, with a particular focus on Hamas. Utilizing the “Whirlpool” model of conflict escalation, the study explores the chronology, structure, and underlying dynamics of the confrontation, while analyzing the positions, interests, views, and attitudes of the parties involved. The issue remains highly relevant, as the confrontation continues to this day despite previous agreements, resulting in an ongoing conflict in the Middle East that directly impacts our region. The issue is examined through a historical lens using both primary and secondary sources, employing a qualitative case study methodology alongside methods of induction and deduction. © 2026 Bull. Natl. Acad. Sci. Georg.

**Keywords:** escalation, *casus belli*, dualism, Zionism, image of the enemy

## Introduction

Conflict is defined as a confrontation of interests or viewpoints between two or more parties, whether real or perceived (Asatiani et al., p. 4). Every conflict has its own unique “nature” and structure. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has a long history, dating back to the very foundation of the State of Israel. Historically, neighboring Arab states maintained the ideological position that a state with a fundamentally different mentality and religion should not have existed in the Arab sphere. To begin, it is necessary to define the structure of the aforementioned conflict and then follow the

“whirlpool” of escalation through a brief historical retrospection. Every conflict has structural elements such as participants (parties), the zone of disagreement, perceptions of the situation, underlying motives, and the actions of the actors involved.

**Participants (the Parties)** are Israel and Palestine (Hamas since 2006). In this case, it is important to consider the social characteristics (affiliation with a certain social stratum or group, nationality, religion, material status, etc.) and psychological characteristics (personal traits of the participants) of the parties. In the Israel-Palestine conflict, there

are radically different religious and ideological approaches between the parties. A significant economic imbalance is observable, which, from a psychological standpoint, creates a sense of superiority for one side (in this case, the Israelis).

**The zone of disagreement – the territory of Palestine (West Asia).** Jews believe that the territory of Palestine is their historical “Promised Land” and that the State of Israel must exist there. Meanwhile, at the time of the creation of the State of Israel, nearly 70% of the inhabitants of Palestine were Arabs (United Nations, “the Question of Palestine”, 1946). Notably, in 1947, Great Britain's mandate to govern Palestine expired. Due to the conflict between Jews and Arabs, the British were unable to extend the mandate. According to the 1947 UN Resolution, Palestine was divided into two parts. The Jewish state was to receive 56.47% of the land, and the Arab state 43.53%. Additionally, 498,000 Jews and 325,000 Arabs would live in the Jewish state, while 807,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews would live in the Arab state (BBC News, 2001). The city of Jerusalem was granted a special status and remained under international supervision. While this plan was acceptable to the Jews, the same cannot be said for the Arabs. Amidst heavy clashes, the Jews declared independence under the name of Israel. Later, five Arab states declared war on it in the name of liberating Palestine. Initially, Egypt occupied Gaza, while Jordan occupied the West Bank; Jerusalem was divided into two parts (the West remained with Israel, the East with Jordan). Later (after the 1967 Six-Day War), Israel occupied these territories more. It was after the “Six-Day War” that Israel became the strongest military power in the region. During this period, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed, which later in the 1990s recognized Israel's right to exist as a state. A temporary body – the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) – was created to control occupied Gaza and parts of the West Bank. Due to weak governance, the PNA caused dissatisfaction among

segments of Palestinians, which was reflected in the 2006 parliamentary elections when the Islamist movement “ Hamas ” took the reins of power. The confrontation deepened further on October 7, 2023, when Hamas fighters breached border barriers in southern Israel and attacked the civilian population, while simultaneously launching over 5,000 rockets toward Israel. This event was the starting point for the conflict entering a new phase.

**Perceptions of the situation.** This is a state where the interpretation of the same situation by different actors often does not coincide; what is deemed acceptable and just by one side is viewed as unacceptable/wrong by the other (Nizharadze et al., 2010, p. 7). Both sides believe that the territory of Palestine is their historical land. Zionism (the Jewish national movement) was based on the settlement of Jews scattered across many countries back into Palestine and the creation of a sovereign Jewish state. Palestinian Arabs still believe that the UN, with its 1947 resolution, violated their rights to live peacefully within their own state.

**Motives and goals of the parties.** Israel's goal is to destroy Hamas (declared as a terrorist organization) and ensure peace in the region. Conversely, Hamas's doctrine aims to unify Palestine under an Islamic state and expel Jews from the region.

**Actions of participants.** Since the 1950s, both parties involved in the conflict have attempted to achieve their goals through violent methods.

**The “Whirlpool” of escalation.** “Escalation” comes from the Latin word for ladder. It can be continuous – with a constant increase in tension and mutual strikes – or wave-like, where tension periodically rises and falls. Furthermore, one can distinguish between steep and sluggish escalation. In the former, the conflict moves very quickly toward extreme expressions of hostility; in the latter, the severity of the conflict increases slowly or remains at one level for a long time. The latter case represents a chronic conflict that can last for years or even centuries (Kropadze, 2023, p. 33). The

conflict under discussion belongs to this latter type, as it has continued for years, periodically intensifying and then slowing down, with no end in sight despite the October 2025 agreement (the implementation of which requires time). Furthermore, there is a low level of trust between the parties regarding the fulfillment of treaty points (e.g., Hamas refuses to disarm).

We consider the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a long-term conflict that possesses the following stages characteristic of the “whirlpool” model (in the context of sluggish escalation): 1. Initial action; Multiplication of problems; 3. Creation of alliances; 4. Distortion of communication; 5. Extreme positions; 6. Orientation toward inflicting damage.

*Initial Action* – The creation of the State of Israel can be considered the starting point. During this period (1947-1949), the confrontation known as the “Nakba” (meaning “catastrophe” in Arabic) took place.

*Multiplication of Problems* – This refers to a situation where the parties go “outside” the initial problem, expanding the zone of disagreement and accusing the opponent of things not directly related to the original issue. Following the first confrontation, numerous clashes occurred: the 1967 Six-Day War, the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the “Intifada” starting in the 1980s, the 2021 special operation at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, etc. Moreover, the parties blame each other for all their misfortunes.

*Creation of Alliances* – This began as soon as the State of Israel was founded. Arab countries joined the Palestinian “alliance,” while most Western countries joined the Jewish “alliance.” Since Israel's founding, Arab League countries (Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Trans-Jordan) declared war on the new state. Israel was (and is) supported by the world's most powerful state – the USA. After the events of 2023, many Western states expressed solidarity with Palestine, which caused irritation in Israel.

*Distortion (or termination) of communication* occurs when information originating from one

party is filtered and interpreted according to their position. That which does not align with the held position is ignored or distorted, or its significance is diminished/disregarded.

*Extreme Positions* – The parties to the conflict hold extremely divergent positions and visions regarding the resolution of the conflict, which, in turn, determines their actions directed against one another. In the 90s of the 20th century, an agreement was reached (known as the “Oslo Accords”), according to which the “Palestine Liberation Organization” recognized Israel's right to exist as a state, on the condition that the Israeli side recognized it as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians. As a result, the Palestinian National Authority was established as a provisional government with limited administrative powers.

Both sides, as of today, have developed extreme positions. Their goal is the mutual destruction of one another.

Specifically, the events that unfolded on October 7, 2023, and the response to them, were a manifestation of the parties' attempts to inflict maximum damage.

From the beginning of 2025, active negotiations began regarding a ceasefire, the release of hostages, and the resolution of humanitarian issues, while military positions and civilian objects were periodically bombed. In October of the same year, a peace agreement was signed between Hamas and Israel, based on a 20-point plan developed by the President of the United States, Donald Trump. This plan concerns the ceasefire, the exchange of prisoners, the governance of Gaza, humanitarian issues, etc. However, the situation remains tense.

## Conclusion

It is difficult to discuss a decades-long confrontation in detail within a single paper; however, the main points have been conveyed. Examining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and subsequently Israel-Hamas confrontation, through the application of the “Whirlpool” model offers an

original perspective on the dynamics and escalation of the conflict

A retrospective examination of the chronology and nature of the ongoing hostilities raises a question: Did Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, provide a *casus belli* for Israel to attempt to eliminate terrorist organizations in the region, establish full control over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, resolve the dispute over Jerusalem, and

bring an end to this seemingly endless conflict? Furthermore, the high-level functioning of Israel's *Mossad*, Shin Bet (Shabak), IDF (*Tsahal*), and Aman are widely recognized. Given all this, how was it possible to “allow” the events of October 7 to occur without being prevented? Questions surrounding these events remain, and they continue to generate legitimate debate and discussion.

### პოლიტიკის მეცნიერება

## ისრაელ-პალესტინის კონფლიქტის სტრუქტურა და ესკალაცია

### ი. პაპუნძე

ბათუმის შოთა რუსთაველის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, საქართველო

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის ლ. მელიქიშვილი მიერ)

კონფლიქტები ჩვენი ყოველდღიური ცხოვრების განუყოფელი ნაწილია. იგი საინტერესოა თავისი დუალისტური ბუნებით, ვინაიდან მას განიხილავენ როგორც ნეგატიურ, ისე დადებით კონტექსტში (როგორც პროგრესის გამომწვევი ფაქტორი). უნდა აღინიშნოს, რომ ყველა კონფლიქტი არის უნიკალური და, შესაბამისად, მათდამი მიდგომაც ინდივიდუალური უნდა იყოს. იგი სხვადასხვა დონეზე არსებობს (სახელმწიფოთა, ჯგუფთა, ინდივიდთა შორის და ა.შ.), თუმცა აღნიშნულ ნაშრომში საუბარია ორ სახელმწიფოს, კერძოდ, ისრაელსა და პალესტინას შორის არსებულ კონფლიქტზე (პალესტინა კი თანამედროვე პერიოდში უნდა ჩავანაცვლოთ „ჰამასით“ (ისლამური წინააღმდეგობის მოძრაობა)), რომელიც მრავალი წლის განმავლობაში გრძელდება. ნაშრომში ისრაელ-პალესტინის კონფლიქტი წარმოდგენილია განსხვავებული რაკურსით, კერძოდ, იგი განხილულია კონფლიქტის ესკალაციის „ქარბორბალას“ მოდელით, ოღონდ, მისი არატრადიციული გაგებით. კვლევაში გადმოცემულია ისრაელ-პალესტინის კონფლიქტის ქრონოლოგია, განხილულია მასზე მოქმედი ფაქტორები, სტრუქტურა, ბუნება, გაანალიზებულია მხარეთა პოზიციები, ინტერესები, შეხედულებები და დამოკიდებულებები. საკითხი აქტუალურია, რადგან დაპირისპირება დღემდე გრძელდება (მიუხედავად შეთანხმებისა) და ჩვენ თვალს ვადევნებთ ახლო აღმოსავლეთში მიმდინარე

კონფლიქტს, რომელსაც გავლენა აქვს ჩვენს რეგიონზე. გამოყენებულია პირველადი და მეორადი წყაროები, ინტერვიუს და დედუქციის მეთოდები, საკითხი გაანალიზებულია ისტორიულ ჭრილში. გამოყენებულია თვისებრივი კვლევის მეთოდი, კერძოდ, შემთხვევის შესწავლა (case study), რაც გულისხმობს რეალური ფაქტების ანალიზს.

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