

A YEAR INTO GAZA CONFLICT

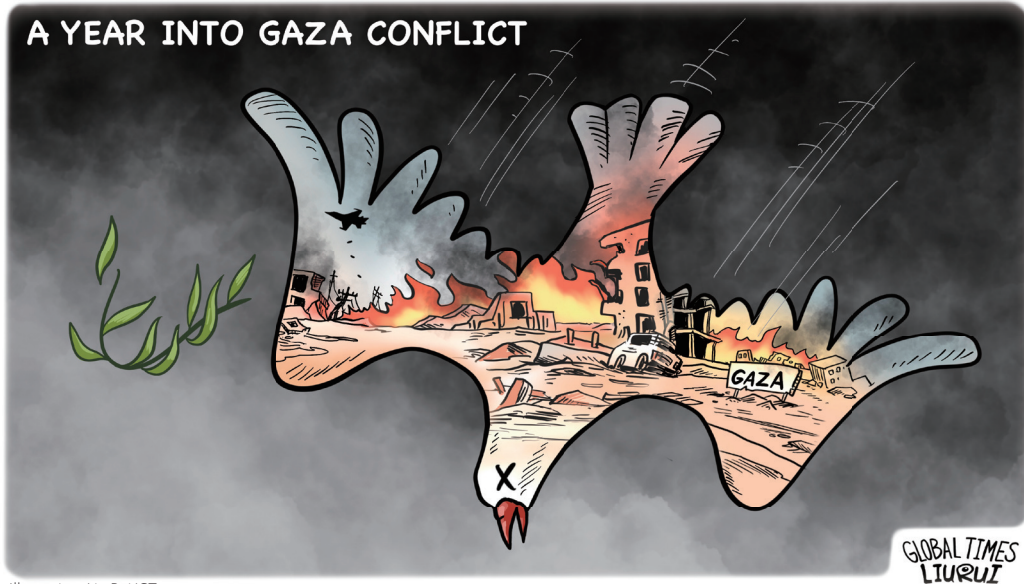


Illustration: Liu Rui/GT

One year on, where will the Palestine-Israel conflict head?

By Ding Long

This round of the Gaza conflict has lasted for a year and has become the longest, bloodiest, and most destructive conflict between Palestine and Israel to date. On the anniversary, the world is holding its breath, waiting for “the other shoe to drop” as Israel has vowed to retaliate against Iran. This conflict poses a severe threat to regional peace and international security, casting a shadow over the prospects for peace and stability in the Middle East.

The violence has awakened a sense of human conscience and underscored the importance of a two-state solution. Calls for peace are gaining momentum worldwide, with China and other Global South countries serving as key advocates for a ceasefire and for international fairness and justice.

On the anniversary of this round of the Palestine-Israel conflict, a reassessment offers insights into its roots, characteristics, impacts, and future outlook.

The current round of conflict between Palestine and Israel has gradually evolved into a direct confrontation between the Iran-led “axis of resistance” and Israel. This marks the first direct clash between Iran and Israel, two major military powers in the Middle East, plunging both countries into a cycle of strikes and retaliation. This escalation has increased risks in the region, heightening uncertainty for Middle Eastern security and pushing the area to the brink of all-out war.

Following the outbreak of the Palestine-Israel conflict, the Iran-backed “axis of resistance” coordinated efforts to support Hamas in its struggle against Israel. In response, Israel adopted a strategy of targeting members of the “axis of resistance,” resulting in multiple fronts emerging around the core issue of the Palestine-Israel conflict. This has rendered international mediation ineffective. Moreover, the US has taken an ambiguous stance on the conflicts in the Middle East, wavering in its position. While appearing to engage in mediation, it, in fact, unwaveringly supports Israel, undermining the efforts of international diplomacy.

The Palestine-Israel conflict has opened a “Pandora’s box,” and its detrimental consequences are now unfolding in every aspect. The latest round of the Palestine-Israel conflict has spilled over to regional and global levels, severely disrupting the security landscape of the Middle East.

This has resulted in a lose-lose situation for both Israel and Palestine, with heightened confrontation and deepened animosity on both sides.

The Palestinians have suffered heavy losses, while Israel has yet to achieve its military objectives and its national image has been shattered. The foundation of the two-state solution has been further undermined, making hopes for peace in the Middle East even more elusive. The ripple effects of the conflict have spread globally, exacerbating the divide between the Global South and the West, causing rifts within the Western bloc, and leading to social fragmentation in Western countries.

In this round of conflicts, the forms of warfare are constantly evolving. Merchant ships in the Red Sea became targets of attacks, threatening the security of international transportation. Civilian communication tools have been weaponized, and warfare has infiltrated the international supply chain, raising concerns about the security of global supply chain and posing a real threat to economic globalization. Assassinations, “targeted killings,” and attacks on diplomatic institutions occur frequently, with national sovereignty and international law being disregarded. The ethical boundaries of war are continually being breached, sowing the seeds of hatred and making the situation in the Middle East even more perilous.

However, there is still hope for peace amid the flames of war. After the outbreak of this round of the conflict, the Palestinian issue has returned to the international spotlight, and calls for resolving the Palestine-Israel conflict based on a two-state solution and achieving peace in the Middle East are growing stronger. The dawn of peace should not be overshadowed by the flames of war, as positive shifts in international public opinion will have a profound impact on resolving the Palestinian issue.

China’s efforts to facilitate historic reconciliation among various Palestinian factions, the increasing recognition of the State of Palestine by more Western countries, and the rising status of Palestine in the UN are all positive signs that strengthen the foundation for resolving the Palestinian issue through a two-state solution.

The Palestine-Israel conflict remains the root cause of the current turmoil in the Middle East, and achieving a ceasefire is the priority. Resolving this longstanding conflict in the Middle East will not happen overnight, but peace in the region should remain a goal that, however distant, must be pursued.

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My journey through Xizang: a contrast to Western narratives

Earlier this year, I was pleased to visit Xizang and witness China’s efforts in promoting unity among different ethnic groups with my own eyes. During my time there, I observed certain realities of Xizang that contrast sharply with the narratives often presented in the West. Xizang is not the marginalized and backward region I initially thought; instead, it boasts impressive infrastructure and reflects the Chinese government’s respect for the religious and cultural life of the Tibetan people.

Several aspects impressed me during my recent visit. The first was education. I was surprised to find that Xizang has a publicly funded education system that covers school meals, lodging, and tuition from kindergarten to senior high school, ensuring equal educational opportunities for all children. I visited a public boarding school where many students were doing homework in the classroom, learning in both Tibetan and Putonghua. In certain countries, minority languages are not respected, but in the schools that we visited, minority languages are valued. I also had discussions with students in vocational training. By providing practical skills, students can become productive members of society, even if they do not pursue academic courses in university.

I was also impressed by the level of development in Xizang, particularly the infrastructure, which astonished me since I had never been to such a mountainous region before. The breathtaking high altitude was notable, yet the overall infrastructure, including the roads, was well-maintained. We also visited a village whose residents had relocated from arid areas. China has helped millions escape poverty, and this village exemplifies those efforts. The local government established a modern community there, providing factory jobs that enable residents to access employment and services. When people read some of the international human rights instruments, they should notice that development rights are now recognized as human rights.

At the same time, I was curious about the relocation of the villagers and whether it was voluntary. We interviewed one family who confirmed that their relocation was indeed voluntary; those who chose not to move were allowed to stay. Regarding allegations of forced

labor in China, the information I gathered from several brewery and milk production facilities indicated that they prioritize high wages and respect for labor rights.

We also visited a family-run brewery that collaborates with countries like Sweden and Germany to purchase equipment. Despite differences between the West and China, partnerships are being forged at the economic level. Collaborating with countries that provide the necessary expertise is valuable, as long as it respects local culture, environment, and people. China’s economic development cooperates with Western countries in this manner.

In Xizang, I also witnessed the Chinese government’s respect for the environment and the culture of the Tibetan people. The famous Potala Palace attracts many tourists, with a steady stream of Tibetans coming to pay their respects, indicating a vibrant cultural life. Visiting religious sites was another important aspect of this trip. We are very interested in religious freedom, and saw people openly practicing their faith there. I did not find any restrictions on their cultural and religious beliefs; instead, I observed that they freely engaged in their practices. The integration of modern life with respect for cultural and religious beliefs is truly encouraging.

As a researcher and human rights lawyer, I believe in the importance of evidence when making allegations. Before my visit to Xizang, I had noticed Western media reports regarding human rights issues, but at that time, I could not guarantee their accuracy since I had not been to those areas myself. During my visit, I observed the real situations in Xizang. I think it is essential for scholars and civil society members who claim that there are human rights issues in Xizang to come and see for themselves, collect evidence, and engage with the local people to verify their claims. They need objective analysis rather than relying solely on Western media reports.

The article was compiled based on an interview with Lloyd Kuvuya, assistant director of the Center for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. opinion@globaltimes.com.cn

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