

## WORKING PAPER 35 – **About India's Stand on the Israel-Palestine Conflict**

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**Abstract:** A tragic conflict erupted between Israel and Hamas on 7th October 2023. India, of course, was forced to take a political stance. This paper aims to understand both India's historical position regarding the Palestinian cause and currently growing ties with Israel. We further inquire on the sources of the dramatic changes witnessed in India's stands, as well as on the implications of such political decisions. India is a nation not known to take quick sides in any conflict. However, India's strong support for Israel and against Hamas's acts of terror has created massive public reactions both within and outside the country. We argue that India's support for Israel is a departure from its traditionally cautious diplomatic policy towards the Middle East. Several experts praised India's solidarity with Israel and its strong condemnation of acts of terror, while others experts criticised India for not taking the pro-Palestinian stand. The causes underlying India's dramatic shift in political leanings have become a matter of public discourse.

**Keywords:** India, Israel, Palestine, Jerusalem, Palestinian Authority, United States, Conflict, Hamas, Middle East, Gaza, Monstrosity, ISIS, Terrorism, Militant, Forces of Civilization, War, Solidarity, Israel Defense Forces (IDF), UNRWA, Global Jihad, Global Politics, Operation Ajay, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), NAAM

Summit, UN, UNGA Resolution, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, Benjamin Netanyahu, Self-Determination, UNESCO, Massacre, Oslo Accords, Abraham Accords, Hyphenation, De-hyphenation, Humanitarian, Obligation, Truce, Leadership, G20, I2U2, India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, Strategic Partnership, Cautious Diplomatic policy, European Union, Western nations, Arab States.

## **Introduction**

It is said that history repeats itself. This is certainly true of Israel's history. Exactly 50 years ago, Israel was caught napping on October 6, 1973, when Egypt and Syria both attacked it during Yom Kippur, one of the Jewish holiest days. Nevertheless, Israel countered the military offensive and recovered its territory. However, the then-Prime Minister Golda Meir paid the price for perceived intelligence failures. Her party lost the majority in the following parliamentary elections. Now, on October 7, 2023, Israel was again tragically surprised by a heinous terror attack from Hamas, an Islamist militant group that controls the Palestinian territory of Gaza. Many have termed the attack as the worst inside Israel's territory since it was founded in 1948. Moreover, it occurred just as Israel and Saudi Arabia were making efforts to soften their relations and perhaps even reshape the Middle East's age-old fault lines.

Hamas militants indiscriminately fired over 5,000 missiles and rockets from the Gaza Strip, thereby showering death and destruction into Israel. Hamas militants, whose offensive was unprecedented in scale, entered southern Israel by land, sea and air (using paragliders). Their offensives killed over 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians, injuring another 2,700 citizens. Josh Paul, a senior US State Department official, referred to Hamas's surprise attack on Israel as 'a monstrosity of monstrosities'. The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, stated that "the savage attacks that Hamas perpetrated against innocent Israelis are mindboggling". Netanyahu compared the activities of

Hamas with those by ISIS. He called for support from all allies and exhorted the 'forces of civilization' to support Israel. The pictures that emerged after Hamas's offensives were both shocking, outrageous and gruesome. Hamas was seen beheading children and butchering people, including many foreign nationals. Apart from the gruesome killings, scores of hostages were taken, including women and children, in an act of deliberate terror and brutality. The magnitude of Hamas's brutality can also be understood in its treatment of a German young woman, Shani Louk, whose naked and battered body was paraded around by Hamas terrorists in a truck. Shani Lauk's only fault was that she was attending the 'Festival for Peace' party near Kibbutz Re 'im when Hamas terrorists invaded and started attacking partygoers.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu declared war against Hamas. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched massive airstrikes against numerous Hamas targets. Over 500 residential buildings were razed, rendering over 250,000 people homeless. In the initial IDF counterstrikes, over 1,100 citizens were killed and over 5,000 were wounded, including many civilians. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) now shelters over 137,000 people in schools across the territory. The citizens of Israel will make Netanyahu accountable for this intelligence failure once the crisis comes to an end. The opposition parties have for the moment agreed to be part of a national unity government to wipe out Hamas completely. Palestinians, too, greatly suffer from Hamas' inhuman policy practices. Wolf (2023) has categorically stated that "terrorist organisations like Hamas do not represent the cause of the Palestinians. In the Gaza Strip, Hamas might be interested in their own partisan interests, such as achieving and maintaining power, as well as securing international funding through spreading Jihadism and creating instability within and

beyond the region". Wolf also believes that Hamas is part of a larger phenomenon pushing for a global jihad.

The multipronged attack against Israel has drawn the attention of the global community. All major Western nations have backed Israel. The leaders of the US, Germany, Britain, France and Italy, in a joint statement, all condemned the attack by Hamas and expressed their 'steadfast and united support' for Israel. Responses from Arab and Islamic governments are more divergent. The UAE condemned the Hamas' attacks; however, it also extended \$20 million in aid to Palestinians. Saudi Arabia expressed solidarity with the Palestinian cause. It was reported that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman aimed 'to prevent the expansion of the conflict'. Countries like Iran, Iraq and Yemen were accused to side with Hamas. Pakistan, widely known for state-sponsorship of terrorism in both India and Afghanistan, can be said to have an affinity with Hamas. The President of Turkey, Tayyip Erdogan, went further. He stated that Hamas is not a terrorist organisation, but a liberation group fighting for the Palestinian cause (lands and people). Erdogan even asked Muslim countries to unite and secure peace in the region. Israel has completely rejected Erdogan's statement, noting that the horrors perpetrated by Hamas were those by an obviously terrorist organisation.

On his side, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi sharply castigated Hamas's horrific actions. He expressed India's unequivocal support to Israel. In his words: "We stand in solidarity with Israel in this difficult hour." Modi reiterated this commitment after speaking with Netanyahu. In his words again: "India strongly and unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations." India's strong support for Israel in this crisis has been greatly appreciated by Israel. Naor Gilon, Israel's ambassador to India, highlighted the significance of India's support for Israel at this difficult hour. He stated that India's

support for Israel is important for two reasons. Firstly, India holds a very important position in global politics. Secondly, India has a long experience of fighting against terrorism. India knows what terrorism is. In his words, India's position comes from 'a point of knowledge and not of ignorance'.

India is also very concerned about the safety of Indian citizens in Israel. There are about 18,000 Indians in Israel – of various professions or studying (mainly at the doctoral and post-doctoral levels). Israel also contains about 85,000 citizens of Indian origin, mostly from the states of Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Kerala and West Bengal. India has launched 'Operation Ajay' to ease the safe return of Indians from Israel. Four flights have so far been deployed under this operation. Israel has also reiterated its commitment to assist Indians in leaving the region safely. Kobbi Shoshani, Israel's Consulate General in Mumbai, has emphasised the importance of support from leaders like Prime Minister Modi. Shoshani also stated that India's support has given Israel a sense of strength.

Given all of the above, this article is an attempt to understand the historical position of India towards the Palestinian cause. The trajectories of India's growing ties with Israel have also been delineated. Moreover, an attempt has also been made to understand the factors that led to dramatic changes in India's stand towards the Israel-Palestine conflict. What could be the possible implications of India's changing stand in the ongoing conflict have also been looked into.

## **2. India's stand for the Palestinian cause**

Historically, India has been at the forefront of efforts to mobilise support for the Palestinian cause. India's support for the Palestinian cause is

an integral part of its foreign policy. Nehru's India voted against both the partition of Palestine and Israel's inclusion in the UN.

India held the privilege of being a major non-Arab, non-Muslim nation to back the Palestinian demand for an independent state. In 1974, India recognised the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as 'the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people'. The first PLO office was set up in New Delhi in 1975. It was upgraded to that of an embassy in 1980. The embassy enjoyed all diplomatic immunities and privileges. Indira Gandhi developed strong ties with the PLO leader Yasser Arafat; these continued to grow at the NAAM summit hosted by India in 1983. Indira Gandhi treated Yasser Arafat as her brother, and vice versa. In addition, India was one of the first countries to recognise the newly established state of Palestine in 1988. Also, India opened its Representative Office in Gaza in 1996, which was later moved to Ramallah in 2003.

India's tendencies have always leaned to support the fights of the oppressed. This commitment is often cited as the reason for India's solidarity with the Palestinian national cause. India actively supported the Palestinian cause across various multilateral platforms. During the 53rd session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), India co-sponsored a draft resolution on 'the right of Palestinians to self-determination'. At the United Nations in 2003, India again stood firmly against the issue of the construction by Israel of a separation wall. In 2011, India voted for Palestine to become a full member of the UNESCO. On November 29, 2012, India co-sponsored and voted in favour of the UNGA Resolution enabling Palestine to become a 'non-member Observer state' at the UN without voting rights. In September 2015, India also batted for the installation of the Palestinian flag at the UN.

In December 2017, US President Donald Trump formally recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and planned to move the US embassy there from Tel Aviv. In this context, India voted in favour of the UNGA Resolution (introduced by Turkey and Yemen) aimed at opposing the decision by the United States to (i) recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and (ii) shift the USA's Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. India clearly stated that New Delhi's position on Palestine was independent and consistent. In 2018, India backed the UNGA resolution introduced by Ireland calling for a 'comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East'. India also again condemned Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories. In June 2018, India voted in favour of the UNGA resolution about the 'Protection of the Palestinian Civilian Population'. Former Indian President Pranab Mukherjee was the first Indian President to visit Palestine in October 2015. Prime Minister Narendra Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Palestine in February 2018. Prime Minister Modi was also conferred with the 'Grand Collar of the State of Palestine', the highest Palestinian award, in recognition of India's continued support for the Palestinian national cause.

In addition to the strong political support both at bilateral and multilateral fora, India has provided various forms of economic assistance to Palestine – especially in education, healthcare, technology, etc. During Prime Minister Modi's visit to Palestine in February 2018, six Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were signed regarding infrastructure in different fields including the construction of a super-speciality Hospital at Beit Sahour, Bethlehem Governorate; a School in Muthalath al Shuhada village, Jenin Governorate; a School in Tamoon Village in Tubas Governorate; construction of an additional floor at Jawaharlal Nehru Secondary School for Boys in Abu Dees; the India Palestine Centre for Empowering Women; and the procurement of Equipment and Accessories for New National Printing Press in Ramallah. India also extended support for the

construction of both the Jawaharlal Nehru Library at the Al Azhar University and the Mahatma Gandhi Library-cum-student Activity Centre at the Palestine Technical College. Both institutions are located in Gaza. India financed the setting up of the Palestine India Technopark in Ramallah and the Institute of Diplomacy in Ramallah. India provided US \$ 30 million in budgetary support to Palestine over the years. Prime Minister Modi also increased India's annual contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East from US \$ 1.25 million to US \$ 5 million from 2018-2019 (MEA, 2019).

India has always stood for the Palestinian national cause and extended all possible support to Palestine's nation-building process. After the massacre of Israeli citizens by Hamas militants on October 7, 2023, it is arguably reported that over 400 people have lost their lives and scores wounded in Israel's retaliatory counter-measure strikes on the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza. Israel has denied its involvement in bombing the hospital. It stated that the explosion at Al-Ahli was the outcome of a rocket misfired by Palestinians. Prime Minister Modi spoke to the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and extended its support for the Authority. Modi expressed India's condolences and outrage at the loss of civilian lives at the Al Ahli Hospital.

India sidelined Hamas by only talking to the Palestinian Authority, which it regards as the only legitimate representative of Palestinians. There is no reason to doubt India's support for the Palestinian cause itself. Arindam Bagchi, spokesperson at the Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India, also clarified India's stand towards Palestine. He said that India's policy on the Israel-Palestine issue has been 'longstanding and consistent'. India has reiterated this policy time and again. After Modi condemned Hamas's deadliest attack on Israel, Bagchi said, "India always advocated the resumption of direct negotiations towards establishing a sovereign, independent, and

viable state of Palestine, living within secure and recognised borders, side by side at peace with Israel. I think that position remains the same."

India's explicit and strongest condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations in the wake of Islamist group Hamas's horrific attack on Israel is a matter of public debate and discussion. Many believe that India's stand towards the Palestinian cause evaporated. Again: India did not support Israel in the Arab-Israel war of 1948, the Suez Crisis in 1956, the Six-Day War with Palestine in 1967, the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and the Lebanon War in 2006. India's support for Israel in the ongoing war does deviate from its decades-long cautious diplomatic policy on the Middle East. We'll now look into India's relationship with Israel so as to better understand what's happening.

### **3. India's Growing ties with Israel**

The civilizational relationships between Indians and Jews date back over two millennia. India has welcomed Jews for several centuries. India's culture has been immensely enriched by Jewish contributions. India is widely known as an ancient nation with strong cultural traditions and practices in Israel. India has also long been an attractive tourist destination for Israelis.

The relationship between India and Israel flourished as a strong strategic partnership. Israel is one of India's most reliable defence and security partners in the world. On September 17, 1950, India extended recognition to the state of Israel. In 1953, India allowed Israel to open a Consulate in Mumbai. Throughout the Cold War period, India-Israel relationships were limited. Formal diplomatic relations were not established till the early 1990s. When full diplomatic relations were established in 1992, both countries opened regular Embassies. It was

opined that the changing geopolitical scenario towards the end of the Cold War, the increasing conundrums of terrorism at home, and its volition to access Israeli defence technology were among the reasons that moved India to set up formal diplomatic relations with Israel. It was also argued that the end of the Cold War and the impending 'Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements'-also commonly known as the Oslo Accords-prompted India 'to end its policy of keeping Israel at a safe distance.' The Oslo Accords were signed between then Prime Minister of Israel Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Negotiator Mahmoud Abbas, on September 13, 1993, at the White House, to ensure rapprochement between Israel and Palestine. Under the Accords, Israel agreed to accept the PLO as the representative of Palestinians. On the other, the PLO repudiated terrorism and recognised Israel's right to exist in peace.

India-Israel relations have grown significantly since 1992. India's cooperation with Israel has been fruitful and constructive. The areas involved include water, agriculture, robust counter-terrorism, and defence and intelligence sharing. India procures over \$1 billion worth of Israel's military hardware annually. Israel became India's second-largest supplier of sophisticated arms after Russia. India also benefits from Israel's surveillance technology, which plays a significant role in monitoring its borders, mainly in Kashmir. India is Israel's third-largest trade partner in Asia and seventh-largest globally. Moreover, India and Israel signed an MoU in May 2023 for joint research in hi-tech fields such as AI, quantum technology and semiconductors. India's bilateral trade with Israel has surpassed \$ 10 billion.

Chengappa (2023) summed up India's relations with Israel in three distinct phases. The first phase began when India recognised Israel in 1950, but without further formal diplomatic relations. During this period, India completely stood for the Palestinian cause, possibly

thinking of Muslim appeasement at home. The second phase started when India, under the leadership of P V Narasimha Rao, established full diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992 and engaged in economic and security cooperation. The third phase ensued when Narendra Modi came to power in 2014. Under Modi's leadership relations with Israel have reached new heights. In addition, India abstained from a vote against Israel at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva in 2015 regarding a report with evidence of 'alleged war crimes' committed by both Israel and Hamas during the Gaza conflict in 2014 (particularly calling for Israeli officials' accountability). For the first time, India did not vote against Israel.

India and Israel celebrated 30 years of diplomatic relations in 2022. Prime Minister Modi was the first Indian Prime Minister to undertake a historic first-ever visit to Israel on July 4-6, 2017. During this visit, the relationship between the two countries was elevated to the strategic partnership level. Before this period, India maintained a policy of hyphenation in its ties with Israel and Palestine. For instance, when any head of the state visited Israel, he or she then visited the Palestinian Authority as well. When Prime Minister Modi came to power in 2014, he instituted a policy towards Israel called de-hyphenation, meaning that "India's relationship with Israel would stand on its own merits, independent and separate from India's relationship with the Palestinians. It would no longer be India's relationship with Israel-Palestine, but India's relationship with Israel, and India's relationship with the Palestinians."

The de-hyphenation policy became apparent for the first time when Prime Minister Modi met with Prime Minister Netanyahu at the UN in 2014. When it was observed that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas would not be in New York at the same time, a concern arose in Israel that India would call off its meeting with Netanyahu and preserve a balance in its relationship with both Israel and the

Palestinian Authority. In 2017, when Modi undertook the historic first-ever visit to Tel Aviv, he skipped a customary stoppage in Ramallah, thereby affirming the de-hyphenation policy.

On October 27, 2023, India also abstained from voting on a UNGA Resolution entitled 'Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations', submitted by Jordan and calling for an immediate humanitarian truce in the Israel-Hamas conflict. India abstained from voting on this draft resolution as it lacked any mention of Hamas as perpetrators of violence. Indian Ambassador Yojna Patel, Deputy Permanent Representative at the UN, opined that the terror attacks on Israel on 7th October 2023 were shocking and deserve condemnation. She called for an immediate and unconditional release of hostages taken by Hamas. She further added, "Terrorism is a malignancy and knows no borders, nationality, or race. The world should not buy into any justification of terror acts. Let us keep aside differences, unite and adopt a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism." It is argued that "The days of India decrying terrorism while still championing the Palestinian cause seem to have passed." The concept of 'ruthless pragmatism' seems to be India's new guiding principle. In the next section, we discuss the issues and factors leading to a shift in India's stand.

#### **4. Factors leading to a shift in India's stand towards the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict**

As already stated in the previous section, India's relationship with Israel took a friendly turn after 2014. Some political experts hold that the similarities in political ideologies of the ruling BJP in India and Netanyahu's right-wing Likud have been a connecting factor. Some experts believe that an affinity between Modi and Netanyahu lies at the source of these stronger ties. Bhargava (2022) stated that India's longstanding pro-Palestine position has shifted to a 'careful

balancing act' after India established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992. India's enhanced proximity to the US is also perceived as a part of the shift in India's policy towards Israel. Mishra (2023) opined that India did the right thing by changing its stand on Hamas-Israel relations. Almost two decades ago, Israel under Prime Minister Ariel Sharon facilitated the (excruciating) withdrawal of all soldiers and Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip as a gesture meant foster peace and let Palestinians decide the fate of Gaza. Mishra (2023) further argued that despite this amicable gesture by Israel, Hamas kept attacking and obtained the de facto takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007. It was only after this takeover by Hamas that Israel was compelled to impose a blockade that caused suffering to Palestinians due to intermittent border closures.

Instead of creating an atmosphere of peace and commerce, Hamas built miles of underground tunnels to protect its fighters and hide weapons and rockets. Ordinary Palestinians' living standards have not improved. Whatever resources and aid sent to Gaza was appropriated by Hamas and redirected towards war with Israel. This situation has created a dilemma for both the European Union and several Western nations. In the last 20 years, Hamas has continually provoked gruesome conflicts with Israel in 2008, 2009, 2012, 2014, and 2021 – and again with a large-scale attack on 7th October 2023. It is also argued that India remembers its grappling to purge the Lashkar-e-Taiba and other Pakistan-based Islamist terror outfits – with help from Israel. Now it is the time for India to stand in solidarity with Israel in their hour of need under Hamas brutality.

Ganguly and Blarel (2023) enumerated some factors indicating India's policy shifts. Firstly, India will face a national election in 2024. A bold and unequivocal support to Israel will increase political mileage to the ruling party in the next election as it does not address the concerns of the Muslim population. The ruling party has shrugged off the Muslim vote for all practical purposes. Despite extending sympathy to the Palestinian cause, some Indian Muslims lack any

particular fondness for Hamas. Secondly, India has been defending itself from terrorist attacks by Islamist militants sponsored by Pakistan. India's adoption of an unyielding posture on Hamas's attack will not only please the Indians; it will also convey an implicit message to Pakistan that India will no longer relent on terrorism. Prime Minister Modi had also compared India's surgical strike to Israel's covert operations against militants abroad, substantiating Israel's military prowess, which is something worth emulating.

Thirdly, India might have taken note of key Arab states, from Egypt to Saudi Arabia, which neither offered full-fledged support to Hamas nor issued serious denunciations of Israel's actions. They called for the de-escalation of hostilities and extended humanitarian aid to Palestinians. Unlike in the earlier crises, many Arab states had normalised their ties with Israel and some were in the process of normalising ties at the time Hamas launched the attack. The careful reactions by some Arab states provided India with some diplomatic leeway, mainly against the backdrop of growing Indian trade and strategic relationship with the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Fourthly, India's firm condemnation of Hamas could be seen as a signal to the United States regarding its readiness to stand by a major US ally. India's public posture against Hamas may also lessen apprehensions by the Biden administration about India's arguably shaky position on the Russia-Ukraine war.

## **5. Implications of India's changing stand**

Nevertheless, India's robust support to Israel is likely to create some concerns. India has developed good relationships with many countries in West Asia - Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel and the UAE, all prominent powers in the region. If the ongoing conflict spills over to other parts of the region, then the Abraham Accords - mediated by the US- signed on September 15, 2020, between Israel, the UAE and Bahrain for maintaining and strengthening peace in the Middle East will face a setback. Moreover, a new bloc or grouping formed by the

foreign ministers of Israel, India, the UAE, and the United States in 2021, called the 'I2U2' (also known as a new 'Quad') to enhance collaboration and tackle challenges in six key areas - water, energy, transportation, space, health and food security -may suffer headwinds. Furthermore, if the escalation between Israel and Palestine furthers, this will hurt the local, 90 lakh-strong Indian community, all breadwinners for their families in India.

During the G20 Summit held in September 2023 in New Delhi, the new economic corridor, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, was announced by the leaders of India, the USA, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, Italy and the European Union. It is meant to encourage and promote economic development by enhancing connectivity and economic integration in the entire region with a network of railroads, motorways and ports. This development is seen as an alternative to the 'Chinese Belt and Road Initiative'. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor includes two separate corridors. The East Corridor connects India to West Asia/the Middle East. The Northern Corridor is to connect West Asia/the Middle East to Europe. It has been assessed that the spread of the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict can affect the progress of this vital project. US President Joe Biden believes that this economic corridor might even be the possible reason behind Hamas's attack on Israel.

## 5. Conclusion

On October 7th, 2023, Israel was attacked by Hamas militants on an unprecedented scale. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi sharply castigated Hamas's horrific actions. He expressed India's unequivocal support to Israel. In his words, "We stand in solidarity with Israel in this difficult hour." Modi's expression of support for Israel has generated widespread debate about India's changing stand towards Palestine. Many critics in India argue that it has deviated sharply from its cherished foreign policy concerning the Palestinian cause. However,

the fact is that India has not negated its cherished foreign policy. It has adopted a more pragmatic, realistic, assertive and independent approach in its foreign policy.

India's relationship with Israel is completely based on its own merit, independent and separate from India's relationship with Palestine. India understands that Israel has witnessed huge casualties caused by unprecedented surprise attacks by the terrorist organisation Hamas. India has been the victim of terrorist acts emanating from Pakistani soil and understands what it means to be the victim of terrorism. India condemns terrorism in all forms and manifestations. Indian Ambassador Yojna Patel, Deputy Permanent Representative at the UN, opined that the terror attacks on Israel on 7th October 2023 were shocking and deserve condemnation.

However, India is equally concerned with the loss of civilian lives on the other side of the border. Prime Minister Modi has also talked with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and expressed India's condolences and outrage at the loss of civilian lives in Gaza. India reminded both the parties about "universal obligations to observe international humanitarian law." India still stands for the sovereign, independent and viable state of Palestine and for the Palestinian cause. In any part of the world, wherever peace is threatened, India has appealed for peace to be restored. India has appealed to both Israel and Palestine to repudiate violence. India stated that "We urge the parties to de-escalate, eschew violence and work towards creating conditions for an early resumption of direct peace negotiations."

However, on October 27, 2023, India abstained from voting on the UNGA Resolution calling for a humanitarian truce in the Israel-Palestine conflict as the resolution failed to mention the terrorist group Hamas as the perpetrators. When talking to the Palestinian Authority, which it regards as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians,

India has sidelined Hamas. India believes that fighting terrorism is a global responsibility. By siding with Israel, India sends a strong message that it will no longer relent on issues of terrorism.

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