

## After October 7... When the War Expanded to Encompass the Entire Ummah



The reality of states in the world of politics lies not in what they see of themselves but in what their enemy sees of them and this perception may lead states either to triumph or to fall.

The events following October 7, 2023, with their military escalations and the crises endured by Gaza's residents, were a true test for the Arab and Islamic nations, whose children are being killed by a common enemy that openly declares its ambitions against them. The Israeli viewpoint in this war revealed that the enemy considers the Arab and Islamic world as a single bloc. It deems weakening any part of it as weakening the whole.

While the Arab states act as independent territories with their own sovereignties, the enemy knows that these lands may, at some moment, connect and form a mighty torrent against it, nullifying its very project of existence. Thus, Israel's scope of military targeting in the region expanded after October 7, in an attempt to fight all those who reject its existence in order to preempt coordinated resistance elements scattered across Arab and Islamic lands that might rise with a unified national project threatening its survival.

This article studies the signs and statements in which Israel, through its offensive operations across multiple areas and through statements by its leaders, made clear that it draws no distinction among Arab countries: Saudi, Jordanian, or

Iraqi. In its eyes, they are all Arabs; the lands of the Arabs form one entity, and Israel does not acknowledge Sykes-Picot boundaries.

### The Spread of Targeting: From Gaza to Qatar

The war that Israel has waged on Gaza over the past two years has shown that Gaza is not the only target. The Israeli targeting expanded from Palestine to cities across the Arab and Islamic world striking Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, Iran, and ultimately Qatar.

Beyond that, Israeli media campaigns promote the expansionist Zionist project threatening even those states not on the front lines, and others on the borders of the Palestinian conflict primarily Jordan, which hosts the Gal'ed Brigade along its border under the pretext of protecting Israel. But reality indicates that Israel poses a tangible threat to Jordan.

What is happening can be easily read through the Israeli lens, which treats Arab states as a single entity posing an existential threat. Over decades, Israel has intervened in Arab conflicts and launched military operations to scatter Islamic alliance attempts.

It bombed Iraq's Tammuz reactor in 1981, sought to undermine Pakistan's nuclear projects, and fomented divisions among Arabs especially after the Arab Spring. Now, after October 7, its military movements across capitals and international organizations aim to ease its perception of threat from any pan-Arab cohesion.

After October 7, Israel launched dozens of airstrikes on Lebanon to target Hezbollah and its leadership, leading to hundreds of martyrs and widespread displacement, as well as closure of many border roads.

It exploited Syria's transitional turbulence after the fall of Assad's regime to expand in Daraa and strike various sites across Syria, shaping a security landscape to deter resistance and block weapons routes via Syria.

Also, there is a deeper motive in Israel's expansionist ambitions: it exploits the weakness of each Arab state to place a foothold within it.

Yemen, too, did not escape: Israel struck ports like Hodeidah and Ras Issa to degrade infrastructure allegedly used by the Houthis for military supply, and hit electricity and fuel installations in Sana'a besides destroying civilian homes.

In Iraq, the prime minister of Sudan attempted, following escalation, to reach agreement with some Shiite figures to prevent them from joining the war on Hezbollah's side. Israel had declared that dozens of potential targets in Iraq could be struck anytime for Israel considers Iraq a strategic component in the battle, owing to its relations with Iran, presence of resistance groups and militias,

and its place on the map Israel envisions.

We may view Israel's bombardment of Iran itself as a message: it is fighting anyone who supports Islamic and Palestinian resistance movements. Through powerful media amplification, Israel has portrayed the Iranian project as a dangerous axis to attract global support against Iran, in order to hinder its ambitions and weaken facilities all under the banner of safeguarding Israel.

Finally, Israel struck Qatar in a treacherous move, responding to Doha's mediation role in the Palestine-Israel conflict. Israel threatened Qatar to expel Hamas leaders residing there.

This pattern of targeting reflects multiple insights into how Israel views Arab-Islamic unity: above all, it sees us all as a single enemy. It does not regard the conflicts in Gaza, Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria as separate but as a network of threats. Weakening any one link strengthens Israel; cutting any part alleviates its security and political burden.

The resistance axis, primarily backed by Iran in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen, reinforces the Israeli perception of multiple Arab fronts forming a unified bloc against Israel. To prevent this bloc, Israel legitimizes crossing sovereignty or borders of any Arab country under labels such as "containing a terrorist organization" or "housing military arsenals."

Whether these claims are real or pretexts, Israel clearly does not believe in Sykes-Picot divisions. It leaps over all borders under any justification reinforcing our belief that the enemy views us as one.

This expansion is not a dead ideology but a vivid reality expressed by these scattered targets, revealing that the targeted countries are interconnected in security, military, strategic fronts even if their official political discourse is fragmented. Regrettably, this unity is not our reality, but it is the enemy's view of us.

### Displacement and "Arab Alternatives"

When Israel and the United States proposed relocating Palestinians especially Gazans to Jordan and Egypt, they were not offering a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli existential issue; they were offering Palestinians the notion that they are Arabs who came from the Arabian Peninsula and must return to their original countries.

Israeli historian Zvi Meshi-nei presents a vision to resolve the regional existential conflict by rooting Palestine in Judaism: he claims that Palestine "was Israel" in essence, and its population became Muslim by force, while most Muslim Arabs in Palestine arrived from across the Arab world to work for Jews.

This narrative, which portrays Palestinians as migrants rather than indigenous citizens, has been expressed multiple times by Netanyahu regarding the displacement of Palestinians in February 2025, he proposed Saudi Arabia as an alternative homeland on the grounds that it is an Arab country with vast lands.

But if we scrutinize the idea, Netanyahu regards all Arab countries as alternative homes for Palestinians, since they are also Arabs. He views the Hijaz region as the cradle of Islam, thus making it a plausible homeland for Muslims in his narrative.

The term “displacement” has echoed strongly since October 7, frequently used by extreme right-wing and decision makers in Israel to the point it became central to U.S. and Arab diplomatic proposals.

This was met with Arab rejection as displacement is seen as an erasure of the Palestinian cause, a clear assault on the right of Palestinians to exist on their land. Yet Israel opened a door to achieve its aims by framing migration as voluntary.

As the brutal assault on Gaza and the West Bank continues, this proposal embeds itself psychologically in a Palestinian whose rights are stripped — making migration appear as a possible choice when alternatives vanish.

This idea is not limited to recent years. Zionist policy toward the Palestinian Arab presence has long operated on displacement and isolation. In 1948, operations like Plan Dalet showed that evacuation and forced transfer were part of Israel’s establishment path even if not openly stated, they were pushed through massacres and intimidation. In that sense, the displacement discourse in 2024–2025 is an extension of an old political Zionist vision.

Between the denial of the Palestinian people as a political entity and historical presence, and proposals for land-swaps and demographic restructuring in favor of a Jewish majority, lies the strategic diplomatic narrative that frames displacement and relocation as solutions.

The U.S. welcomed this through proposals for Gaza’s reconstruction, hinting at mass relocation and resettlement by neighboring states under a new urban framework.

Arab publics and governments rejected it, viewing it as a violation of international law prohibiting forced displacement. However, Israel’s cunning becomes evident as it attempts to package displacement under terms like “reconstruction” and “economic alternatives,” making the proposal appear developmental and palatable to the international community.

This Israeli stance on displacing Palestinians reveals that it does not see Arab

boundaries as barriers for Palestinians for in its view they form a unified identity.

### “Caliphate” in the Israeli Narrative

After the war on Gaza erupted, Netanyahu revived the term “Islamic caliphate” to reject the return of a caliphate on the “Palestinian” borders of Israel portraying Hamas and the resistance as such a threat. Though Hamas has not adopted the slogan of caliphate, Israeli anxiety lies in the possibility that resistance may become a unified Arab-Islamic project against Israel.

While Arabs consider that the era of caliphate and unity has ended, Arab-Islamic unity still lives in the Israeli consciousness as a potential danger: if this Ummah reunites politically, it threatens the very idea of the Jewish state. In their view, we are a single entity, and they must keep us weak and divided.

Although Hamas does not adopt caliphal rhetoric instead portraying itself as a national liberation movement Netanyahu’s use of “caliphate” aims to link Hamas to ISIS, reframing the Palestinian struggle as a religious extremism war.

This narrative intensifies Western hostility toward Hamas, given the post-September 11 climate, enabling him to legitimize Israel’s brutality in Gaza as part of a civilization confrontation against Islamic extremism.

This reveals a Zionist imagination that sees the abolition of the caliphate as a precondition for Israel’s establishment, but fears its return as a threat. The reemergence of an Arab political project contradicts Israel’s *raison d’être* and opens the door to a relentless resistance that could erase Israel from the region.

In the end, the events after October 7 revealed the symbolic idea of Arab-Islamic unity in the Israeli mindset: through broad targeting across Arab and Islamic lands, attempted displacement of Palestinians, and invoking the caliphate narrative in resistance.

This shows that our independent states are felt more strongly by our enemy than by ourselves. The potential for a united political-national project is real in the enemy’s view and this very fear may drive us, unwittingly, toward that unity.