

FROM THE EDITOR

The most important agenda item on a global scale recently is the possibility of a third world war. So much so that nearly 10 million women and children from Ukraine, which resisted Russia to take back Crimea and other sensitive regions with the support of the USA and Europe, migrated to almost every part of Europe and even to Turkey. Because of Ukrainians' characteristics such as being white and educated, they are accepted into European countries without much reaction compared to other African or Middle Eastern immigrants. This causes migration to be perceived as voluntary population mobility rather than being compulsory. While this is the case, while the Russia-Ukraine war continues in our immediate vicinity and all balances are shaken, Azerbaijan-Armenia relations escalate, tensions have risen again with the bombing of Israel by the Palestinian terrorist organization Hamas, known for its closeness to Iran and the Hezbollah terrorist organization, on October 7, 2023. Moreover, while international relations have become extremely sensitive under the influence of the attitudes taken by the superpowers, the position of Turkey, which is trying to maintain a balance between Russia and the USA, has become even more difficult.

HAMAS, the Sunni Islamic political-military resistance organization (actually terror based) that replaced the Palestine Liberation Organization and was founded in 1987, is bombing Israel with the support of Iran and Hezbollah, while the main reason is that the Arab states in the region are getting closer to Israel in the name of normalization and forgetting about Palestine. They, along with Western Europe, turn a blind eye to the ethnic genocide, violence and poverty openly practiced by Israel. While Hamas was officially terrorizing, it was trying to gain its legitimacy from the fact that this last opportunity was too important to miss. Since all Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia and Qatar, have intense relations of interest with Israel and therefore with the USA, someone had to warn them. On the other hand, the fact that the Israeli Intelligence Organization could not prevent the October 7 attack, which had been prepared for more than two years, also increased question marks. Comments were also frequently observed that US President Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of the far-right Likud Party, benefited from this bombing, two important figures who were going through their politically weakest periods.

When we look at the historical background of today's events, we see that there are occasional Jewish migrations to the lands considered sacred by both Israel and Palestine. As a matter of fact, the state of Israel, which is seen as the illegitimate child of the Middle East, was not established in a short time. In the early 1900s, the previously peaceful life in Palestine, where there were only 25,000 Jewish immigrants compared to half a million resident Arabs, was affected by the accelerated Jewish immigration. With the change in population composition, both sides inevitably enter into a land sharing struggle. The

separation of the Arabs in Palestine, one of the six provinces of the Ottoman Empire, with British support, and thus the colonization of the Middle East by England and France played an important role in the emergence of this situation.

It is historically recorded that the idea of establishing the state of Israel was first put forward by the French general Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799. The issue became even more serious at the First Zionist Congress held in 1896. However, these ideas did not come to life immediately, and the Jews established a state in Palestine, which was also home to the Israelite tribes in ancient times, with the decision of the United Nations in 1948. After England withdrew, Jews quickly settled in the entire region. When we look at this population mobility, we see that Jews immigrated to the State of Israel in large groups from Europe, the USA and Russia.

Initially, Jews constituted less than 10 percent of the Arab population in the region. However, Jews suffered great losses in the Nazi genocide in Germany and the establishment of the State of Israel became more urgent. According to the decision taken in the United Nations, more than half of the Palestinian lands were given to the Jews (56%), even though they came later. While Palestinians define May 15, 1948 as a Great Disaster, they never recognize the decisions taken. Although the Palestine Liberation Organization, led by Yasser Arafat, achieved some results with its more moderate approach, conflicts always continue. Arab states in the region and their own conflicts of interest are partly responsible for this situation. As a matter of fact, HAMAS, a much more radical terrorist organization, came to power in Palestine in 1987.

On the other hand, the real big US and Israeli plan may be to disarm and exile the Palestinians from Gaza to the Sinai region of Egypt. In fact, it should not be forgotten that this issue has been on the agenda for 20 years. This could also benefit Arab states in the region, who would be happy to see Hamas destroyed. None of them want to spoil their relations with Israel and the USA for the sake of the Palestinian people. Egypt, which is most disturbed by the situation, perceives the settlement of nearly six million Palestinians in Egypt according to the latest census as a threat, and has to fight against both Israel and the USA, the architects of this plan. Because Egyptian leaders, first Morsi and then Sisi, are constantly worried that Palestinians will act together with Islamic Jihadists and pose a threat to their country.

What is important but unacceptable is that people who suffered genocide, which resulted in the death of six million Jews in Germany, especially during the Nazi period, killed Palestinian children and women as if in retaliation, and bombed the Gaza and West Bank regions where they lived, making them uninhabitable. According to the latest figures, the number of Palestinian casualties exceeds 9000.

It is recorded that 3500 of these are children. Finally, Likud member parliamentarians Tally Gotliv and Galit Distel Atbaryan went further and said that the Gaza strip should be destroyed for ethnic cleansing purposes, and even nuclear weapons should be used for this purpose if necessary.

There are many people who see the exile of Palestinians to Egypt as a window of opportunity. Israel has already imprisoned the Palestinians behind high walls in the West Bank. Unfortunately, the expulsion of Palestinians from north to south towards the Egyptian and Sinai Deserts is also part of a brutal plan. Only humanitarian aid material from the south, that is, Egypt, is allowed to pass through underground tunnels. All this means that it is clear that the disproportionate violence implemented by Israel, especially the land operation, that is, heavy bombing threats from the air, will do nothing but further radicalize the Palestinians. In fact, this is why US President Biden changed policy to prevent Israel from killing more civilians, or in current discourse, requested a break, as in sports competitions.

In this context, as well as the attitudes of international powers in the region, it is appropriate for Turkey, as a regional power that has experienced all kinds of terrorism and violence, to condemn and try to prevent Israeli state terrorism on the side of the oppressed Palestinian people, rather than the Hamas organization, which is in close contact with Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah and Iran. Turkey, which is already trying to live with more than 10 million immigrants due to the civil war in Syria, has no room for any immigrants it will import for the Palestinian cause, nor for organizations that feed on violence.

In particular, it is inevitable that violence creates counter-violence and radicalization. With every bomb it drops in Gaza and every baby, child and woman it kills, Israel destroys the image it has tried to create in the 75 years since its founding. We learn that the rulers of Arab countries that cooperated with Israel for normalization also made some new political decisions under pressure from their people, for example, Bahrain closed its newly opened Embassy and Jordan withdrew its representation. Even all of this provides us with a kind of broad interpretation of the question of why Hamas attacked Israel out of the blue. In fact, while 5% of those who died in the Russia-Ukraine war were children, nearly half, or 40 percent, of those who lost their lives in Israeli attacks in Palestine were children. In addition, the people who have been living in camps in Palestine for three generations are economically very poor. Children cannot grow because they cannot eat healthy, and physical and mental problems increase. Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip are at the bottom of the global scale in human development indexes.

For now, Hamas administrators seem to be on the winning side of the game they set up by taking a great risk, despite the large number of civilian casualties. Thus, even though they interrupted the USA and Israel's Grand Plan to drive the Palestinians to Sinai, it should not be forgotten that humanity has never gotten anywhere with violence and terror. Because even though they look like playmakers today,

what happens to innocent lives while they are acting as freely as the other radical forces behind them, especially Iran, allow. Again, it will be necessary to establish two states in the region proposed by Turkey and to prepare in principle for a peaceful, just and humane life under the assurance of guarantor countries - although it is not easy.

In future issues of our journal, research revealing the historical background of population movements in the Middle East before and after the Ottoman Empire will gain priority. Undoubtedly, it is possible to include opinions and evaluations about current problems in the tunnels or camps in the Gaza Strip and possible migrations in the future. The interdisciplinary identity of our journal, which is always open to articles on current and important topics, is the most important indicator of this.

Founder of Bařkent University and Chairman of the Supreme Board, Prof.Dr. Mehmet Haberal undoubtedly deserves to be thanked first and foremost for being our guiding example in the publication of this international journal and in all our other activities.

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