




# Operation “Al-Aqsa Flood” and its Impact on the Abraham Accords

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Operation Al-Aqsa Flood conducted by the Hamas movement on October 7, 2023, posed challenges to the dynamics of developments in the West Asia region. This operation was carried out on a large scale, catching Israel off guard and plunging it into shock from the onset. In this context, this paper, compiled through an analytical-descriptive method, seeks to answer the following question: What impact does the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood have on the peace negotiations between Israel and Arab countries within the framework of the Abraham Accords? Thus, the aim of the article is to examine the effects and consequences of this operation on the peace process under the Abraham Accords, which was underway with a view to strengthening relations between Israel and Arab countries. In line with this, the hypothesis of the article is as follows: "The consequences of the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood have slowed the process of normalizing relations between Arab countries and Israel." The findings of the article indicate that the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood by Hamas has resulted in various military-security, intelligence, political, and economic consequences, including: dispelling the myth of Israel's invincibility, bolstering and empowering the Hamas movement, bringing the Palestinian issue back to the forefront of global discourse, highlighting internal Israeli divisions, a significant intelligence and security failure for Israel, a surge in international public outrage against Israel, the downturn of Israel's economy, catching Israeli military leaders and intelligence systems by surprise, fostering unity in the Islamic world, enhancing Iran's regional standing in West Asia, and most notably, halting or at least delaying the process of normalizing relations between Arab countries and Israel within the framework of the Abraham Accords.

**Keywords:** Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, Abraham Accords, Arab countries in the region, Israel, Islamic Republic of Iran

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## 1. Introduction

After the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood on October 7, 2023, doubts slowly emerged regarding its consequences. One of the biggest worries was how this operation would affect the process of normalizing relations between Arab countries and Israel as outlined in the Abraham Accords. This event occurred at a critical point in the negotiations for Saudi Arabia's involvement in the Abraham Accords, which is significant for the

Islamic world. This brought up a critical inquiry: what will happen to the Arab countries' involvement in the Abraham Accords following Operation Al-Aqsa Flood? Israel's exceptional actions in Gaza indicated that the progress of the Accords could be disrupted or sidelined. On the other hand, Hamas has become more popular with the general population, particularly with Arabs, because of its anti-Israel activities and successes like releasing Palestinian prisoners, making its potential exclusion from Palestine's political landscape appear



improbable at this time. Operation Al-Aqsa Flood was not the initial military operation directed at Israel, as there are historical instances of such actions. Nevertheless, this mission was unparalleled in terms of its power and unpredictability for Israeli intelligence organizations, such as Mossad, Aman, and Shabak. Israel had not encountered a ground invasion from its enemies for a long time; the majority of its clashes with Palestinian factions involved only rocket and missile strikes. However, everything changed with the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood; Israel experienced a real ground offensive from Palestinian forces, and, for a few days, some areas of the occupied Palestinian territories were controlled by Palestinian resistance fighters. The most recent instance of a country openly and thoroughly attacking Israel and maintaining a presence there, even if only briefly, was in 1973 during the "Yom Kippur War." Multiple Arab countries, with Egypt and Syria in the lead, invaded Israel, but were ultimately defeated. Still, the powers of a besieged military group after 17 years do not match those of multiple significant Arab countries. This is the exact reason why Operation Al-Aqsa Flood has become so important in regional and international discussions.

Despite claims from Israeli think tanks, research institutions, and intelligence leaders, the operation still took place as they had repeatedly stated in their intelligence assessments that Hamas did not desire war and did not intend to drag Gaza into a conflict. Israel had continuously asserted that it had successfully maintained control over Hamas and its military prowess. In 2023, remarks by top Israeli officials at the Herzliya Security Conference, such as speeches from Herzl Halevi, Aharon Haliva, Tzachi Hanegbi, Yoav Gallant, Eyal Zamir, and Benny Gantz, emphasized this view. Therefore, the key component of this mission was the element of surprise, as well as the coordination and planning by Hamas forces during the operation. Considering the factors provided, Operation Al-Aqsa Flood is deemed the biggest, most important, and most successful operation carried out by Palestinian factions against Israel since its formation on May 13, 1948, as recognized by many senior Israeli authorities. This procedure has resulted in various outcomes across different aspects, which require examination from various viewpoints. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to explore the outcomes of

Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and how it has affected the Abraham Accords.

## 2. Literature Review

Given the relatively short time since the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, which occurred less than a year ago, while numerous meetings and discussions have been held by experts and scholars, and several reports have been written on this topic, there is still limited academic research or published scientific literature on the matter. However, due to the importance of this topic, the few available studies are reviewed as follows:

- Moghavemi, Amir Reza (2024), in his study titled "Analyzing the Consequences of the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood on Israel's National Security," states that the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood is the most extensive, significant, and impactful operation by Palestinian groups against Israel in the past 75 years. According to Moghavemi, this operation not only altered the security equations in the Levant but also reshaped the security and political architecture of the West Asia region. Using a descriptive-analytical method and library and documentary sources, he investigates the question: What effects did the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood have on Israel's national security? His findings indicate that the October 7, 2023 operation posed not only domestic and regional challenges for Israel but also threatened its national security on an international scale. Factors such as the ineffectiveness of Israel's intelligence apparatus, the failure of its military doctrine, internal issues, economic challenges, and damage to its foreign policy after the operation have impacted various pillars of Israel's national security. This instability is expected to present Israel with fundamental and long-term challenges in the future. (Moghavemi, 2024)

Pourhasan, Nasser (2023), in an article titled "The Impact of the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood on the Abraham Accords," argues that the operation has transformed the nature and trajectory of many developments in the West Asia region. Pourhasan's goal in his article is to analyze the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and its impact on the peace process between Israel and Arab countries. His main question is: What impact does the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood have on the process of peace negotiations between Israel and Arab countries? The article's findings suggest that, with the operation revealing more of Israel's aims and actions and intensifying regional resentment

towards the regime, a “cold peace” may halt in the near to mid-term future, while a “warm peace,” particularly in light of Palestine’s importance to public opinion in countries pushing for the Abraham Accords, is unlikely to materialize (Pourhassan, 2023).

Vazirian, Amirhossein (2023), in his research titled “The Operation Al-Aqsa Flood Surprises Israel and Disrupts New Security Arrangements,” contends that the prospects for normalizing relations between Israel and Arab countries, as well as with Palestine, have been weakened, at least in the near future. The author believes that regardless of the outcome of the war, Israel has shown military and security vulnerability to the Arab countries that have normalized or are inclined to normalize relations with it. Furthermore, one of the consequences of the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood has been the failure of the U.S. strategy in the region, which was based on containing or sidelining Iran (Vazirian, 2023).

- Sari Asl, Rasoul (2023), in a study titled “Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and the Initiative in the Hands of the Resistance Front,” notes that most evaluations prior to the start of the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood indicated that Netanyahu intended to instigate war against the resistance to quell internal crises by weakening Islamic resistance groups in Gaza and restoring unity at home. However, since the start of the Al-Aqsa Flood, Israel has faced an intensifying economic crisis. Key indicators include the local currency, the shekel, falling to its lowest level in 14 years, a 10% drop in the Israeli stock index this year, and a \$30 billion loss on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange within three weeks of the conflict (Sari Asl, 2023).

### 3. Theoretical Framework

Sustainability security has always been a crucial requirement for human societies in all periods of history. The feeling of danger and the desire for safety compel human societies to implement different actions, such as launching military offensives or campaigns against their adversaries, to guarantee their existence. The emphasis on security and the difficulties it poses has resulted in the creation of numerous security theories. Each of these theories, which have various foundations and approaches, have conceptualized and examined different security aspects, leading to a collection of ideas, techniques, and case studies referred to as “security studies.” The Copenhagen School, a leading institution in

security studies, has established itself in the field by offering a comprehensive definition of security. This institution, recognized for its pioneering efforts in security studies, was one of the first to create a separate field dedicated to security studies. Barry Buzan, in his book “People, States, and Fear”, presented the theory of Regional Security Complexes, which is a key framework for analyzing security studies at the regional level, as introduced by the Copenhagen School (Taheri & Seifi, 2015).

Following the 1980s, the Copenhagen School, named by scholars Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, introduced a new concept of security after the shortcomings of realism and idealism in predicting the Cold War (Hasani Chenar & Ajili, 2021). Buzan gives a general definition of security as “lack of threat” and, in terms of the global system, defines it as “the capacity of states and societies to uphold their separate identity and operational integrity” (Buzan, 2018).

The Regional Security Complex theory is a theory that uses a regional level of analysis to study international security issues. Because of its focus on analyzing at the regional level, it is alternatively referred to as the theory of environmental security. By partitioning the globe into interconnected regional security complexes, this theory can connect four distinct levels of regional examination, pointing out the foundation for analysis at each level. The primary focus is on weaknesses in the states of the region. The following stage focuses on relationships between states in the area. The third stage examines how a regional security network interacts with nearby networks. In conclusion, it assesses the participation of world powers in the security dynamics of the region (Abdullah Khani, 2010).

Basically, the central concept of this theory is that security interdependence leads to the formation of regional security complexes as threats spread more quickly over short distances than long distances. This theory focuses on exploring potential alignment between nations in response to shared risks. The Copenhagen School argues that regional convergence is crucial for states in volatile areas because of its flexibility and strong influence. West Asia is perhaps one of the areas that Buzan and Waever’s work is most pertinent to, with the common enemy of Israel to the “Axis of Resistance” resulting in a coming together, both in the past and more recently, as seen in Operation Al-Aqsa Flood. These two

components—shared dangers and local alignment—correspond with the framework of the Copenhagen School. Therefore, this article aims to examine and assess the consequences of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and its influence on the Abraham Accords according to this hypothesis.

#### 4. Research Findings

The multifaceted consequences of the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood have considerably weakened Israel, impacting the Abraham Accords as a result. The main outcomes of this operation are as follows:

##### 4.1. *Disproving the Myth of Israel's Invincibility*

The significant strategic importance of the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood lies in its impact on Israel's attempts to dominate the Gaza Strip. This action resulted in the collapse of Israel's Gaza plan and caused significant damages to its military and intelligence systems. In this confrontation, Israel experienced double the number of casualties as seen in the 1967 war. Moreover, the security and military lapses on October 7<sup>th</sup> were greater than the ones seen in the October 1973 Yom Kippur War, possibly because of oversights in intelligence. Both the Aman and Shin Bet were unable to predict or collect information about this mission. This happened even though Israel is highly respected worldwide for its security and espionage technology and skills, and despite Gaza being constantly monitored physically and digitally, which only increased Israel's embarrassment (Center for Islamic World Future Studies, 2023).

Therefore, the main result of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood was the breakdown of the belief in Israel's unbeatability. Israel has presented itself as having the most dominant military in West Asia and one of the top intelligence agencies globally for more than 70 years. This procedure rendered that picture null and void (Emadi, 2024).

During the October 7<sup>th</sup> operation, over 5,000 rockets were launched into Israel within just 20 minutes. The Iron Dome air defense system was overwhelmed by these attacks in a manner previously unseen, demonstrating that even the most advanced technology has its limitations, particularly against adversaries who are far less affluent. Expensive hardware, no matter how effective, possesses weak points that can be exploited with less sophisticated technology. Once adversaries

identify these vulnerabilities, they can exploit them at a fraction of the cost. Therefore, Hamas' attack highlighted a major intelligence failure on Israel's part (Niruthan, 2023)

Detailed analysis of the October 7<sup>th</sup> operation reveals that this time, Hamas took a preemptive approach, targeting Israeli military sites, and thoroughly bypassed Israel's early warning systems and intelligence services. Furthermore, Israel's inability to protect citizens in the north and south—evidenced by tens of thousands of displaced individuals unable to return to their homes—marked a significant security gap. Even after months of engagement, Israel was unable to achieve its declared objectives, making it clear that Israel had suffered a strategic military defeat despite inflicting devastating destruction upon Gaza. This defeat has not only shaken the Israeli government domestically but also impacted its image throughout the region, effectively diminishing Israel's strategic value in the area. The notion that Israel could maintain regional order and serve as a security shield for the United States' Arab allies has proven illusory (Al Arian, 2024).

The unsuccessful Israeli operation has shown Arab nations that they should not depend on Israel's military strength for stability. As a result, other Arab nations are now more cautious and hesitant when considering the idea of normalizing relations with Israel.

##### 4.2. *Strengthening and Victory of the Hamas Movement*

One of the main challenges faced by the Axis of Resistance in the last ten years has been Hamas' slow separation from the coalition. In the midst of the Syrian crisis, Hamas criticized the Resistance's overall strategies, pushing for a change in regime and the removal of Bashar al-Assad. Nevertheless, following the establishment of diplomatic ties among the UAE, Bahrain, and Israel, and the apparent abandonment of the Palestinian struggle by leaders from both Arab and non-Arab nations, Palestinian resistance organizations acknowledged the significant support provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran for Palestine. This understanding has brought Palestinian factions closer to the Axis of Resistance led by Iran. The improvement of ties between Arab nations and Israel without solving the Palestinian problem has made Iran the primary advocate for the Palestinian cause, despite objections from the Resistance. This inspires other countries and groups

backing Palestinian goals to reduce their dependence on countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. In the future, this could create the basis for bringing together groups opposed to Israel in the area and increasing the power of the Resistance Axis in the Middle East (Moghavemi & Hatami Nejad, 2022).

One of the Resistance Axis's goals has been to halt the domino effect of Arab countries joining the Abraham Accords, which the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood has partially achieved. Saudi Arabia, which had been on the verge of signing the accords, has currently retreated, influenced by public opinion. Additionally, since the start of the recent conflict in the occupied Palestinian territories, the explicit support for Gaza from the Resistance has improved its image in Arab communities, partly undoing the damage caused by anti-Resistance media. The Operation Al-Aqsa Flood demonstrated that one branch of the Resistance, Hamas, independently designed and executed an unexpected operation, signaling the strengthening of the Resistance. Consequently, the normalization of relations between Gulf Arab countries and Israel now appears to be progressing at a slower pace. The Al-Aqsa Flood, which delivered Israel's most significant military and intelligence defeat, has also underscored the self-confidence and self-reliance of Palestinian groups (Shah Rezai, 2024).

To sum up, a key result of the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood is a major success for Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement. Israel has not been able to free its hostages from Hamas or dismantle the organization, leading to the conclusion that Hamas has triumphed in this conflict. Furthermore, despite widespread propaganda against Hamas, studies show that more than 70% of Gaza's inhabitants back the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and Hamas. A recent survey by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, a somewhat secular institution aligned with the Palestinian Authority, revealed that 70% of Palestinians approve of Hamas' actions, with their support increasing in Gaza post-war. Additionally, 71% of individuals surveyed believed that the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood carried out against Israel was warranted and supported it (Emadi, 2024).

#### 4.3. *The Return of the Palestinian Issue as the World's Foremost Concern*

The dismantling of the belief that the Palestinian issue had concluded was a major result of Operation "Al-Aqsa Flood". The Al-Aqsa Flood operation once again highlighted the Palestinian issue as the most pressing global concern. Recent efforts to improve relations between Arab nations and Israel have aimed to downplay the importance of the Palestinian issue within the Islamic world. Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and around 10 months of Israeli genocide in Gaza shifted the Palestinian problem to the main issue in the Islamic world and the top concern in global public opinion and the global order. The change is illustrated by the large-scale protests in the U.S., the U.K., France, and Germany in solidarity with Palestine (Emadi, 2024).

Therefore, the event on October 7th has once again brought the Palestinian matter to the forefront as a major global concern, not only for the Arab and Islamic regions but as an important worldwide issue. Since October 7th, the media and politicians have brought up topics like the creation of a separate Palestinian nation and the importance of dealing with Israeli control, which could lead to new ways to prevent these occupations. As a result, Operation Al-Aqsa Flood highlighted the revival of the Palestinian cause globally, emphasizing that no other issue in West Asia can be resolved without addressing the Palestinian issue (Moghadam, 2023).

The renewed focus on the Palestinian issue, especially in Islamic nations, has significantly impacted the process of normalizing relations between Gulf Arab countries and Israel, prompting a more careful approach and consideration of public and international reactions.

#### 4.4. *Highlighting Internal Divisions within Israel*

Over the past three years, especially after the signing of the Abraham Accords, Israeli society has seen significant deterioration due to internal conflicts, including disputes stemming from judicial reforms, economic issues, and the government's military policies. In 2022, Israel began the year in crisis, with the dissolution of the Knesset and the cabinet, finding itself in a severe political and social rupture and international isolation. The intense divisions and conflicts between the Israeli public and its leaders, particularly over the "judicial reforms" proposed by the ruling far-right cabinet, have escalated.

Additionally, Israel's military structure is facing challenges as reservists refuse to participate in army programs in protest of the judicial reforms. In this regard, the head of Israel's internal security service (Shabak) recently stated that the security threats and divisions within Israeli society are pushing Israel toward dangerous territory. On the economic front, the Netanyahu government has also failed to demonstrate positive performance. Furthermore, after Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, families of prisoners and their supporters held demonstrations in West Jerusalem, calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and a prisoner exchange with the Palestinian resistance movement, Hamas. Demonstrators criticized the government's military policies and demanded a new agreement for prisoner exchanges. Additionally, Netanyahu's opponents held protests in Tel Aviv, Israel's capital, where they gathered in front of the Ministry of Defense, calling for Netanyahu's resignation and early elections (Shah Rezaei, 2024).

As a result, Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and more than eight months of warfare against Gaza have highlighted the internal divisions within the occupied territories. These divisions had existed for years, with five parliamentary elections held over four years from 2019 to 2023, eventually resulting in a Netanyahu-led cabinet with extremist partners. The Gaza war has intensified and publicized the extremist nature of Netanyahu's cabinet, as well as the internal divisions within the cabinet, the war cabinet, and across the political landscape in the occupied territories. The recent trips of Benny Gantz, a member of Israel's war cabinet, to the U.S. and the U.K. reflect these internal divisions; Gantz has emerged as a primary contender for the prime minister's role after Netanyahu, with strong support from the Biden administration and European allies. In response to Gantz's uncoordinated trip, Netanyahu attempted to prevent state resources from being allocated to Gantz and hinder cooperation between Israeli embassies in the U.S. and the U.K. with him, signaling that Israel has only one prime minister. In the latest instance of internal division, Gideon Sa'ar, a member of the Israeli cabinet, announced his resignation (Emadi, 2024).

The preoccupation of Israeli officials with internal divisions has limited their capacity and focus on international relations, particularly regarding the

Abraham Accords and the continuation of normalization with neighboring countries, especially Arab nations.

#### 4.5. *Israel's Major Intelligence and Security Failure*

For years, Israelis have boasted about their intelligence and security agencies, displaying them to the global community, including Western nations. Their intelligence and espionage agencies, like Mossad, are romanticized for their skill and expertise, while agencies like Shin Bet and Shabak are also promoted as modern, sophisticated entities that pride themselves on their reputation for infallibility. Nonetheless, the effective implementation of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood dealt a major blow to their perceived intelligence and security capabilities, destroying the invincible image Israel had cultivated for so long. It is important to mention that in Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, Palestinian fighters managed to seize more than 20 Israeli settlements and push further into the occupied territories for the first time. This exposed Israel's exaggerated boasts about their intelligence and security supremacy, demonstrating their vulnerability in practice to the world. This will definitely have a negative impact on the global allies' international cooperation with Israel (Jahan News, 2023).

Hence, Israel suffered a significant setback in military and intelligence capabilities when Palestinian resistance prevailed in Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, shattering its reputation of being unbeatable. This has resulted in significant implications for Israel and the U.S., leading to their attacks on women and children in Gaza. Highlighting Israel's military and intelligence strength was a major factor in Arab countries' justification for normalizing relations. The Operation Al-Aqsa Flood exposed Israel's intelligence failure, causing this tool to become ineffective (Shah Rezaei, 2024). Therefore, the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood military operation carried out by Palestinian resistance factions highlighted ongoing intelligence shortcomings in Israel's security system. Israeli agencies could not grasp the objectives of Palestinian resistance groups, predict future events, or anticipate the timing of the operation. These deficiencies were apparent in Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, when top Israeli military officials had informed the government before the operation that Hamas had withdrawn and was not interested in escalating tensions. Hamas's period of relative tranquility prior to the operation was a

deliberate part of its operational planning strategy (Abdel Razek, 2023).

#### 4.6. Escalation of Global Public Outrage Against Israel

The widespread protests around the world were sparked by Operation Al-Aqsa Flood's successful implementation followed by Israel's brutal military actions in Gaza, leading to the deaths of hundreds of Palestinians in air and artillery attacks. One instance is the assembly of more than 100,000 British citizens demonstrating against Israel's actions - its attacks on Gaza and the deaths of innocent people - an unheard-of occurrence in the U.K.'s history, as it is one of Israel's strongest supporters. Likewise, American cities like Chicago, Washington D.C., and New York have seen historic protests denouncing Israeli aggression and genocide towards Gaza's population. Other countries in Europe such as France and Germany, along with Australia, have also witnessed extensive demonstrations against Israel. Apart from the widespread protests in Arab and Islamic countries supporting the Palestinian people, these demonstrations showcase the level of public resistance to Israel's racist and apartheid policies in Western countries, highlighting a discrepancy between public opinion and the position of Western governments towards Israel. During its harsh military campaign against Gaza after Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, Israel experienced a major setback in terms of global public perception. Additionally, Israel acknowledges the danger of losing control of media influence to the growing support for the Palestinian cause. It has been recognized that losing control of the media could harm its global reputation, as acknowledged by numerous Israeli officials and writers. Israel's increasing worry is clear in the following signs of shifting worldwide opinions:

- Former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett noted that pro-Palestinian content on the Chinese social media platform TikTok outnumbers pro-Israeli content by 15 times.

- A shift in public opinion in the U.S. over nearly a month following Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, as seen in the following indicators between October 13, 2023, and November 14, 2023:

1. The percentage of those advocating support for Israel dropped from 41% (at the beginning of the operation) to 32% (after 41 days of conflict).

2. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of Americans, opposing official U.S. and Israeli positions, support a ceasefire. Those advocating for the U.S. to remain a neutral mediator increased from 27% the previous month to 39%.

- A survey conducted on October 23, 2023, among British adults indicated that operation Al-Aqsa Flood has returned the Palestinian issue to the forefront of international concerns (Abd al-Hay, 2024)

#### 4.7. Economic Collapse in Israel

One of the major outcomes of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood is the challenge to the Arab-Med Corridor.

Operation Al-Aqsa Flood has brought intense attention to the Arab-Med Corridor. This passage describes a corridor that seeks to promote integrated growth within the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel, potentially creating a new geo-economic structure to rival China's corridor and the North-South route. The importance of this passageway is in Israel's ability to achieve complete integration and stability in the surrounding area with the help of it. Israel would obtain a strategic advantage over Palestine by connecting to the NEOM project in Saudi Arabia and being close to the Tiran Strait, which would give it access to the Persian Gulf. Three foundational pillars of Israel's economy have been in place since the mid-1990s: a knowledge-based sector, an export-oriented economy, and foreign investment. The knowledge-based sector alone accounts for roughly 50% of service exports and 35% of government tax revenues, with goods and services exports reaching approximately \$166 billion in 2022. This unique economic structure has made Israel a key piece in the Arab-Med Corridor and a common reason for regional countries to normalize relations with it. However, Operation Al-Aqsa Flood has accelerated capital flight and the departure of skilled labor from Israel—trends already in motion due to judicial reforms. Prior to the operation, foreign investment had decreased by 90%, and 68% of tech companies intended to either leave or move funds outside of Israel (ISNA, 2023). Thus, it can be said that Operation Al-Aqsa Flood has inflicted a major setback on Israel's economy. According to official Israeli statistics, the country has incurred approximately \$2 billion in damages since the beginning of the operation. Added to this are increased uncertainties in economic dynamics, widespread disruptions to supply

chains, and the outflow of both domestic and foreign capital, all contributing to daily losses in the millions. For this reason, many strategic analysts believe that Israel's ongoing military campaign against Palestinian resistance in Gaza will cost Israel and its citizens millions each day, potentially leading to even larger challenges and setbacks.

#### 4.7.1. *Economic Repercussions of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood*

Ever since the beginning of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, the value of Israel's currency has significantly dropped, now being at a rate of one dollar to four shekels. Israeli stocks have faced significant decreases, making them the poorest performers on a global scale. The Tel Aviv Stock Exchange experienced a 16% decrease, resulting in a \$25 billion decline. J.P. Morgan estimates that Israel's economy could face an 11% recession in the last quarter of 2023. In addition, Israeli economists predict the national budget deficit might reach 1.5% of GDP in 2024, totaling at least 27 billion shekels, marking the biggest financial shortfall since the Yom Kippur War in 1973. The significant drop in foreign investments, particularly in the high-tech industry, a key aspect of Israel's economic strategy, along with the declining stock prices of major companies such as Intel, are additional outcomes of the operation. In June 2023, Benjamin Netanyahu announced that Intel planned to invest \$25 billion in building a new factory in the southern city of Kiryat Gat, 42 kilometers from Gaza. However, the continuation and escalation of the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood have cast doubt on the viability of such projects. Additionally, the prolonged conflict, which has led to the deployment of over 360,000 reservists and extensive closures, particularly in northern and southern Israel, alongside potential increases in defense budgets post-war, present further economic challenges (Moghavemi, 2024). Giorgio Cafiero, CEO and analyst specializing in the Gulf countries, notes that Israel's war against Gaza, now in its fourth month, has severely impacted the economy, with many industries halting operations despite a few continuing new investments. Since October, Israel's government has been providing subsidies to the 360,000 reservists deployed to Gaza—many of whom work in high-tech sectors such as finance, AI, pharmaceuticals, and agriculture. In November 2023, the Bank of Israel reported the “gross impact” of the war at 198 billion

shekels (\$53 billion) and lowered its growth forecasts for 2023 and 2024 to 2% from the previous estimates of 2.3% and 2.8%, respectively. In December, Israel's Finance Ministry estimated that if the intense phase of the war concludes in Q1 of 2024, the conflict could cost Israel approximately \$13.8 billion this year (Cafiero, 2024).

Therefore, it appears that the escalating conflict in Gaza has further deteriorated Israel's economic condition, possibly impeding its progress in building relationships with Arab countries. One of the key goals of the Abraham Accords was to promote economic prosperity within countries that were normalizing relations. Considering Israel's ongoing economic challenges, what methods can it employ to support the economic growth of these countries?

#### 4.8. *Surprise of Israeli Leaders and Intelligence Systems*

One significant aspect of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood is the Israeli leadership and intelligence systems' unexpected oversight regarding the southern front and their mistaken perception of Gaza as a non-threatening entity. Reports, analyses, and even official Israeli documents suggest that Israel viewed Hamas differently and practically removed Gaza from high-intensity war scenarios. Hezbollah's deceptive actions also played a role here; by setting up two tents along the Lebanon-Israel border in the months leading up to the operation, Hezbollah directed Israel's attention to the northern front, leaving the southern front with less focus. This lack of attention was likely a key factor in the Israeli leadership's surprise (Moghavemi, 2024).

Israel's intelligence agencies have consistently aimed to avoid unexpected events, a goal they were unable to achieve during Operation Al-Aqsa Flood. During past wars like the Yom Kippur War in 1973, Israeli intelligence agencies warned political leaders of possible attacks. Yet, during the Al-Aqsa Flood, Israeli intelligence and security agencies were surprised in a manner that was both tactical and strategic. Ronen Bar, who leads Israel's internal intelligence agency (Aman), openly acknowledged this mistake and accepted accountability (Reuters, 2023). Hamas challenged a fundamental belief in Israel's counter-terrorism strategy by sending armed individuals into Israel via air, land, and sea, it is not an exaggeration to say. Had Israeli defense planners actually thought about the chance of armed militants



coming in through paragliders or boats, Israeli intelligence would not have been surprised by this attack. Only with the element of surprise can low-tech attacks be successful (Niruthan, 2023).

#### 4.8.1. *Can Countries Normalizing Relations Rely on Israel's Intelligence?*

One objective of the Abraham Accords member countries was to utilize Israel's advanced intelligence and espionage technology. However, can the normalization of relations be justified if Israel's intelligence systems, despite claims of expertise in human resources and technological capabilities, are vulnerable to such strategic surprises?

#### 4.9. *Unity of the Islamic World*

During a conference in Riyadh on November 10, 2023, several delegates from the Islamic world, including some with notable disagreements, assembled in an unprecedented fashion. The condition in Gaza and Operation Al-Aqsa Flood united them (Lasjerdi, 2023).

This meeting indicates that the Muslim world is experiencing positive changes. Countries in the Arab region such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar have shown firm positions on this matter. Islamic countries are getting ready for action, and the public is putting more pressure on their governments. These governments are unable to overlook this pressure. If the ongoing momentum in the area results in unity and collaboration among Islamic nations, it could result in substantial transformation. Israel is a small island surrounded by a vast ocean of Islamic countries, which have more potential resources than Israel. Israel, covering just 27,000 square kilometers, is situated among Arab and Islamic countries that occupy millions of square kilometers, with a population of seven million Jewish Israelis surrounded by hundreds of millions of Muslims.

The primary challenge facing the Islamic world is disunity and internal conflict. Recognizing and respecting each other's differing positions and working toward shared goals would generate a power greater than Israel could counter. A quick glance at a Middle Eastern map reveals Israel's isolated position among Muslim-majority countries. If Islamic countries collaborate and synergize for common interests, a

formidable force could emerge, beyond Israel's capacity to hinder (Barahani, 2023).

#### 4.9.1. *Impact of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood on Regional Unity*

Operation Al-Aqsa Flood has caused a response in the region, leading to mobilization and unification of the Islamic world to a certain degree. If this newfound cohesion continues, it may prevent Israel and its allies from progressing with their plans in the region, such as normalizing relations with Arab nations. This cohesion is another result of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood.

#### 4.10. *Strengthening Iran's Regional Position in West Asia*

The Islamic Revolution introduced significant challenges to the interests of Gulf Arab states and Israel. The dominant Western perception labels Iran's strategies as opportunistic, aggressive, and occasionally ideological. Although Iran, like any other nation, seizes new opportunities, Western analyses tend to amplify its motives. Rooted in the Islamic Revolution, Iran has reinforced revolutionary sentiment and extended moral and political support to Shia movements, aiming to expand its regional influence through allies and Shia-led governments in countries like Bahrain, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen (Arghavani Pirsalami & Arayesh, 2022: 14-15). These efforts have enhanced Iran's regional status within the geopolitics of West Asia.

The "geopolitical funnel" in West Asia refers to Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, which geographically connect Iran to the Mediterranean Sea, with a funnel-like shape extending from Iran westward. This region holds substantial geopolitical and geo-economic potential due to its political, economic, and security capacities, supported by its vast area, population, and ideological underpinnings. Security needs, alongside concerns about anarchy and chaos theories, create conditions for cooperation among these nations against Wahhabi and Salafi influences. Iran distinguishes itself within West Asia due to its historical, civilizational, geopolitical, geostrategic, and political-security capacities, which afford it a unique and influential regional position (Aghajani Mangari et al., 2022).

In this context, Iran's regional initiatives—such as coalition-building through a "Shia geopolitical axis" involving Shia populations in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon; a

defensive shift in military doctrine through missile programs; political influence by deploying Quds Force advisors to Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon; and strategic alignment with Russia under its “look to the East” policy—were critical factors prompting the Abraham Accords. These Iranian strategies represented a substantial security challenge to the Israeli-Arab coalition formed under the Abraham Accords.

Iran, as an independent and strategically positioned nation, has consistently influenced regional and global developments. Its promotion of resistance against colonialism, imperialism, and tyranny; scientific and technological advancements; the Constitutional Revolution, nationalization of the oil industry, and the Islamic Revolution internally; and the eight-year Iran-Iraq War and nuclear crisis management internationally all underscore Iran’s role. Iran’s strategic location, human resources, substantial oil and gas reserves, role within the Islamic world, geographic and political advantages, control over the Hormuz Strait, and missile, nuclear, and satellite capabilities have bolstered its deterrent power and strategic weight (Shah Rezai, 2024).

#### 4.10.1. *Reducing Perceptions of Iran as an Enemy in the Islamic World*

The detachment and discord between countries within a geographic region are detrimental to all and can invite exploitation by external powers. Israel has long sought to portray Iran as a mutual threat to itself and Arab states to facilitate normalization with these countries. However, recent de-escalation between Iran and Saudi Arabia undermines this strategy. Strengthening ties with Gulf Arab nations, particularly Saudi Arabia, is likely to shift Iran’s image away from being perceived as an enemy by the Islamic world. Given the historical influence of both Iran and Saudi Arabia in the region, resuming and deepening diplomatic ties and reopening embassies signal a move toward regional peace and stability, fostering cooperation between neighboring states and Iran (Sadr Al-Hosseini, 2023). Much of this shift has emerged following Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, which exposed Israel’s true nature to the public and regional governments, significantly influencing perceptions and strategic calculations.

#### 4.11. *Halt or Delay in the Normalization of Relations with Arab Countries*

A significant and crucial consequence of the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood was the suspension of the normalization process of relations between Israel and Arab countries. Before October 7, relations between Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia, were on an upward trajectory. Reports even suggested the possibility of Saudi normalization with Israel by Spring 2024. The entry of Saudi Arabia into the Abraham Accords, with the potential for other Arab and Islamic countries to join, would have transformed the regional order in favor of Israel and the United States. However, the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and the outcry from people across the Islamic world not only halted the normalization process but also created significant obstacles for future potential normalization between Arab states and Israel. Israel’s brutal policies against the people of Gaza and all Palestinians, coupled with the resurgence of Palestine as the central issue of the Islamic world, have raised the costs of normalization for Arab countries—especially for Saudi Arabia, which claims leadership of the Islamic world—thereby suspending the normalization of relations at least in the short term (Moghavemi, 2024).

One of the attractions for regional and extra-regional countries to normalize relations and enhance cooperation with Israel was its military and intelligence capabilities, derived from its technological strength. Throughout history, countries in the region (from Iran under the Pahlavi dynasty to the United Arab Emirates) and extra-regional states (India, China, and European nations) have viewed Israel’s capabilities as a basis for strengthening ties with Tel Aviv. Israel’s technological and intelligence diplomacy provided a platform for its broader engagement in the world. In other words, the perceived invincibility of the Israeli military in the eyes of Arab countries was deemed necessary for normalization projects, especially with Saudi Arabia, as well as for integrating Israel into the regional security and economic order and shaping a new Middle Eastern order centered around the United States. The irreparable blow that the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood dealt to this aspect of Israel’s power could lead to a reassessment of how leaders of other countries view Israel. As David Rosenberg, a columnist for Haaretz, noted, “Israel’s capabilities and capacity for innovation will remain unchanged; however, its reputation as the so-called

startup nation will almost certainly diminish and face more critical scrutiny" (Rosenberg, 2023).

Hamas's operation will also obstruct Israel's attempts to normalize relations with other Middle Eastern countries. According to Hezbollah, this operation sends a message not only to Arab states but also to the international community seeking to normalize relations with Israel. One of the normalization processes affected by recent events is the normalization of relations with Saudi Arabia. As stated by Fred Kamb, the normalization process between Israel and Saudi Arabia has been severely impacted by this operation. Prior to the operation, normalization had a 50/50 chance of success, but now this chance has dropped to zero. This is because part of the deal requires Israel to reach an agreement with the Palestinians, which does not seem likely to happen soon; therefore, the normalization process with Saudi Arabia will remain stalled (Komahi Ugm, 2023).

## 5. Conclusion

The impact of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood on Israel's political, military, security, informational, and economic aspects has dealt a significant blow that will have long-lasting effects on its infrastructure, requiring a considerable amount of time to recuperate from. This dispute will not just impact Israel's foreign policy and internal security, but it will also change current regional patterns, notably the normalization efforts with Arab nations. In simpler terms, regional alliances will change to support the resistance axis. The Al-Aqsa Flood operation was a major loss for Israel. In terms of military power, it somewhat weakened the perception of Israel's strength and reduced its ability to deter threats. From a political standpoint, Israel's progress in gaining acceptance in the region and moving away from isolation was stopped, dealing a severe setback to its goals of slowly incorporating large areas of the West Bank. The operation revealed Israel's economic weaknesses in maintaining long-term security, ultimately impacting its economy and raising concerns about the "Arab-Med" project. To sum up, the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood had various consequences: debunking the belief in Israeli invulnerability, empowering Hamas, refocusing global attention on the Palestinian issue, revealing Israeli internal rifts, a major intelligence blunder, increased global resentment towards Israel, economic strain, catching Israeli leaders off guard, uniting the Islamic

world, boosting Iran's influence in the region, and disrupting the Arab-Israeli normalization process. The Abraham Accords have various implications in military, political, informational, security, and economic aspects due to these developments.

## Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

## Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

## Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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The authors report no conflict of interest.

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## Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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