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Israel's War in Gaza- An Update

Israel's expanded operations in the Gaza Strip have continued in September. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu continued his rejection of US Special Envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff's 60-day truce plan entailing the release of 10 living and 18 dead hostages, freeing Palestinian prisoners and expanded aid. Netanyahu's office on August 16 announced that Israel would only accept a comprehensive deal that ensures the release of all captives in one go and meets its terms, such as Hamas' disarmament, demilitarisation of the Gaza Strip, Israeli control of the Gaza perimeter and installation of non-Hamas and non-Palestinian Authority (PA) governance.

On August 20, Defence Minister Israel Katz approved the Israel Defence Forces' (IDF) takeover of Gaza City, named as Operation Gideon's Chariots II. IDF sent about 50,000 call-up orders to reservists. On September 3, Hamas' military wing, Al-Qassam Brigade, announced Operation Moses' Staff" in response to Operation Gideon's Chariots II. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) have reportedly transferred hostages to combat zones in Gaza City to deter the IDF's offensive. On August 30 2025, the IDF killed Al Qassam Brigades spokesperson Abu Obaida in an airstrike in Gaza City. Katz congratulated the IDF and Shin Bet for the "flawless execution" in a post on X.



On August 10, five Al Jazeera journalists were killed in Israeli strikes near Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City. The Committee to Protect Journalists called it "targeted assassination" and "yet another blatant and premeditated attack on press freedom". On August 25, five journalists affiliated with Reuters, Associated Press, Al-Jazeera, Independent Arabia and Quds Feed were killed along with 20 others in

two Israeli strikes on Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis. According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), around 220 journalists were killed during Israel's war in Gaza. On September 1 2024, more than 250 media outlets in over 70 states staged a front-page protest highlighting the killings of journalists. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis report released on August 22, more than half a million people in Gaza are trapped in famine, marked by widespread destitution and preventable deaths. The analysis projected that famine conditions would spread from the Gaza governorate to Deir Al Balah and Khan Younis Governorates by the end of September.

On September 8, six Israelis were killed and eight others wounded in a shooting attack at a bus stop in Jerusalem. Two Palestinian gunmen opened fire at the Ramot Junction before being killed by an off-duty soldier and a civilian. Hamas praised the attack as a "heroic and exceptional operation" and a "natural response" to what it called Israeli crimes. On September 9, Israel launched an airstrike targeting Hamas leaders in Doha during ceasefire negotiations and killing at least six people, including the son of Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayya, as well as a Qatari security officer. Hamas confirmed its leadership survived the assassination attempt. Israel

claimed responsibility, saying the leaders targeted were behind the October 7 2023, attacks, describing it as a response to the Jerusalem shooting. Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim condemned the strike as a "reckless criminal attack" and violation of sovereignty, while Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed called it "state terrorism" and vowed legal action. The Gulf and Arab states issued strong condemnations.

On September 14 2025, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio began an official visit to Israel by praying at the Western Wall in Jerusalem with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, amid tensions following Israel's strike on Hamas leaders in Doha and its planned offensive in Gaza City.. Netanyahu praised US-Israel ties as "strong and durable." On September 15, Rubio held talks with Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar and President Isaac Herzog. Rubio, signalling openness to potential West Bank annexation, warned countries against recognising Palestinian statehood at the upcoming UNGA.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared on September 11 2025, that "there will be no Palestinian state" as he signed an agreement to advance the E1 settlement expansion near Ma'ale Adumim. The plan, worth nearly \$1 billion, includes 3,412 housing units and major infrastructure, effectively bisecting the West Bank and cutting East Jerusalem off from Palestinian areas. Netanyahu framed it as securing Israel's "heritage and land," while Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich hailed it as a step toward annexation.

On September 12, the UN General Assembly voted a French-Saudi resolution backing a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine by 142 votes in favour, including India, 10 against, including Israel and key ally the United States, and 12 abstentions. The resolution agreed to back a Hamas-free Palestinian government.

Generation Z: A Catalyst for Change in Nepal's Political Landscape

On September 8, 2025, over 12,000 Generation Z students organised peaceful protests against the government's ban on 26 social media platforms and rampant corruption. The demonstrations escalated into violence when the government deployed security forces. In two days of clashes, 72 people, including police, died, and over 1,700 were injured. The uprising severely damaged public infrastructure and hundreds of private residences, with preliminary estimates indicating \$1.5 billion in public infrastructure and \$188 million in hotel damages.



In the past three years, three elected governments in South Asia have been overthrown due to youth-led protests against corruption and public disillusionment with governance. This pattern highlights corruption as a key catalyst for unrest, notably in Nepal, following the upheaval in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Since its formation in 1769, Nepal has witnessed street protests and political violence led by various parties and ethnic groups, including the anti-monarchy and

pro-democracy movements. However, the September 8, 2025, uprising by Gen Z was distinct from previous events.

The movement was leaderless, party-less, and self-motivated, utilising decentralised digital coordination and swarm tactics. Though some leaders remained unseen, their generational solidarity led to an intensity that toppled the government within 48 hours, a stark contrast to previous protests that took months to achieve similar results.

Gen Z activists predominantly represent Nepal's marginalised and disadvantaged communities. Frustration peaked as corrupt political leaders, notably Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, attempted to suppress dissent by imposing censorship on social media. These platforms were pivotal for exposing the extravagant lifestyles of the elite via hashtags like #Nepokids, #Nepobaies, and #YouthAgainstCorruption, amidst widespread struggles for employment, education, and healthcare.

Due to limited domestic opportunities, many undergraduate students have migrated for work, while elites send their children abroad for education. Marginalised students in Nepal have used social media for livelihood and expression. The ban on these platforms, particularly impacting anti-corruption efforts, prompted Gen Z coordinators Miraj Dhunagana and Purusottam Yadav to protest on September 8.

The September 8 peaceful street protest in front of Parliament turned violent beyond expectations. The Gen Z believed that infiltrators had hijacked the protest. The pictures and videos of the horrific killings started circulating on the internet, which led to widespread anger against the police and the government. On that evening, Gen Z called for revenge on the internet on September 9.

As Gen Z, supported by locals, targeted the ruling party and the Prime Minister's house, the protests turned violent, fuelled by suspected infiltrators from the Royalist factions, the Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP), and the CPN-Maoist. The RSP exploited the chaos, launching specific attacks, including an assault on Nakkhu jail to free Rabi Lamichhane. Pro-Royalist elements targeted democratic institutions, while Maoists targeted public infrastructures. Over 90 per cent of police stations and booths were burned or damaged.

The damage to public and private property during the attack indicates it was planned with specific targets by the opposition parties, unlike the peaceful demonstrations promised by the students.

The Gen Z protests resulted in the Prime Minister's resignation. The Army intervened 24 hours later, facilitating negotiations with protesters, but faced criticism for its tepid response during the peak of the conflict. The international community, including the UN and several countries, urged restraint and the protection of civil liberties. Notably, the Dalai Lama congratulated the newly appointed interim government led by Sushila Karki, marking a surprise moment in Nepal's political landscape.

In response to Gen Z's demands, the President dissolved Parliament, with elections set for March 5, 2026. While major political parties welcomed this progress, they criticised the interim government's decision to dissolve Parliament. The Supreme

Court Bar Association echoed these concerns. On September 13, eight political parties issued a joint statement arguing for the immediate reinstatement of Parliament and asserting that the interim Prime Minister should be a current member of Parliament.

The fall government, motivated by protests from Gen Z, has reshaped Nepal's political landscape. After forming a new interim government, peace has returned to the streets, and the government has agreed to address Gen Z's demands. However, tensions continue to persist between older political parties and Gen Z. The new government faces significant challenges, including balancing the needs of Gen Z with those of established parties, funding public infrastructure rebuilding, holding timely elections, and restoring confidence among the police and businesses amid ongoing uncertainty and lawlessness. Ongoing dialogue is crucial for achieving lasting peace and realising the inclusive vision of a New Nepal.

Beijing's Show of Force: Decoding China's Largest Military Parade

On September 3, 2025, Beijing's Chang'an Avenue witnessed China's largest-ever military parade to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Second World War. This spectacular display of military might, attended by world leaders including Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un, represents far more than a historical commemoration—it serves as a powerful projection of China's military capabilities and evolving geopolitical alliances.

The parade showcased China's remarkable military transformation through a choreographed presentation of 45 troop contingents lasting about 70 minutes. Hundreds of People's Liberation Army aircraft demonstrated Beijing's technological advancement, while symbolic elements reinforced historical messaging: 80 buglers marked the anniversary years, and spectator seating in green, red, and gold symbolised fertile land, sacrifice, and peace.



The parade was attended by 26 foreign leaders, revealing China's evolving alliance structure. Kim Jong Un's attendance marked the first time a North Korean leader participated in a Chinese military parade in 66 years. Putin's presence alongside other authoritarian leaders, including Myanmar's Min Aung Hlaing and Iran's Ebrahim Raisi, demonstrated emerging power alignments.

Western participation was notably limited to two European leaders: Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, both critics of sanctions against Russia who have maintained controversial positions on Ukraine.

The parade reinforces the Chinese Communist Party's version of history while serving broader political purposes. During World War II, both the CCP and Kuomintang (KMT) fought Japanese forces, often while engaged in their own civil war. This parade emphasised the CCP's role in defeating Japan while marginalising other wartime contributions. This selective historical narrative lends support to the party's legitimacy.

Xi Jinping's address during the parade delivered carefully crafted messaging that balanced historical commemoration with contemporary geopolitical positioning. "Today, humanity again has to choose between peace and war, dialogue and confrontation, win-win cooperation and zero-sum game," Xi declared, positioning China as a defender of global peace while subtly criticising Western approaches.

The Chinese leader emphasised that "the Chinese people firmly stand on the right side of history and the progress of human civilisation," reinforcing Beijing's narrative that its rise represents moral progress rather than a threat. Xi's promise that China would "remain committed to the path of peaceful development" while building "a community with a shared future for humanity" served as both reassurance and challenge to the existing international order.

Perhaps most significantly, Xi declared that "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is irresistible," signalling unwavering confidence in China's trajectory toward global leadership and implicitly challenging any attempts to contain its rise.

The participation of Putin and Kim Jong Un underscores the formation of what analysts view as an authoritarian axis challenging the Western-led international order. Their presence alongside China's military showcase demonstrates shifting global alignments and emerging alternative power centres that directly challenge US hegemony.

The parade served as a showcase for China's most advanced military technology, featuring weapons systems that underscore the PLA's modernisation efforts. A new version of China's Dongfeng-5 nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile, the DF-5C, was unveiled for the parade with an estimated range of about 12,400 miles, making it capable of reaching any part of the United States from mainland China. The missile can carry up to 12 warheads on a single mission.

China's LY-1 laser weapon was displayed for the first time, mounted on armoured trucks, with the powerful device believed to have the ability to disable electronics or blind pilots. The parade also featured the AJX002 giant submarine drone, measuring approximately 65 feet long, capable of carrying out reconnaissance or surveillance missions.

Other significant weapons included the DF-61 intercontinental ballistic missile fired from mobile launchers, and the JL-1 and JL-3 nuclear-capable long-range missiles, launched from aircraft and vessels at sea, respectively. The new YJ-15 hypersonic missile was showcased for the first time, designed to be launched from ships or aircraft and pierce through large vessels.

China's Victory Day Parade represents more than historical commemoration—it embodies Beijing's vision for reshaping global order. By combining military modernisation with a selective historical narrative and strategic alliance-building, China positions itself as both a defender against historical aggression and a challenger to contemporary Western hegemony. The parade's success in projecting strength must be weighed against its potential to accelerate regional arms races and deepen international divisions. As China continues to assert its growing power, such displays will likely become increasingly important tools of statecraft, serving both domestic legitimacy and international deterrence purposes.