Cease the fire: Israel-Palestine Conflict

What is the issue?

The ongoing [stand-off between Israel and Palestine](#) and Israeli attacks is taking a huge toll on civilian lives, calling for immediate cease fire.

What is the current situation there?

- Israeli armed forces stormed Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque.
- Israel pounded Gaza with air strikes and artillery in response to the rocket firing by Hamas.
- The Israel-Palestine conflict has escalated dangerously within days.
- At least 119 Palestinians, including 31 children, have been killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza in a matter of 5-6 days since May 10, 2021.
- Nine people were killed in Israel in the rocket attacks, including an Indian national and a child.

What is the key conflict?

- There was already resentment and frustration among the Palestinians in the Israeli occupied territories.
- Israel has expanded Jewish settlements and deepened occupation.
- It recently made a move to evict Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah for Jewish settlers.
- This, and Israel's high-handedness in East Jerusalem, added to the anger of the Palestinians, leading to clashes.
- Hamas claims to be the main national resistance force against the Israeli occupation.
- It seized on the opportunity and escalated the crisis with rocket attacks.
- Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas's militant infrastructure.
- But Israel knows that it is hard.
- In 2014, Israel carried out a seven-week-long operation with the same objective.
- Seven years later, there is Hamas, firing over 1,800 rockets into Israel

within five days.

Why should the clash end immediately?

- Beyond the rhetoric by both sides, this is a loss-loss situation in which the civilians are taken hostages.
- Hamas's rockets do not distinguish between Israeli civilians and soldiers.
- Israel's [Iron Dome defence system](#) neutralised most of the rockets.
- But some actually hit Israel's population centres, killing civilians and raising concerns for the country's rulers.
- Israel is in fact witnessing a twin crisis.
- While the conflict with Hamas is escalating into a land attack, Israeli cities are gripped by riots between Jewish vigilantes and Arab mobs.
- The riots prompted President Reuven Rivlin to evoke fears of a civil war and the government to declare a state of emergency in some locations, including the central city of Lod.
- This is the most serious law and order crisis Israel is facing internally since the second intifada of 2000.
- In return, Israel has attacked Gaza, inflicting a heavy casualty on the impoverished region's population.
- The high casualty of children points to the collective punishment approach of the Israeli military.

What is the way forward?

- For now, both sides have refused to stand down from the fighting despite international appeal.
- Israel's right to defend itself, which the U.S. and Germany have endorsed, cannot be the right to launch an indiscriminate bombing on the civilians of Gaza.
- The international community, especially the U.S. which is a close ally of Israel, should put pressure on both sides to cease the fire.
- They should do it sooner as every day, dozens are being killed in the bombings.

Source: The Hindu