

Analysis & Commentary

The 'Divided World' also revealed in the Israel– Hamas conflict

—What is required of Japan in this Divided World—

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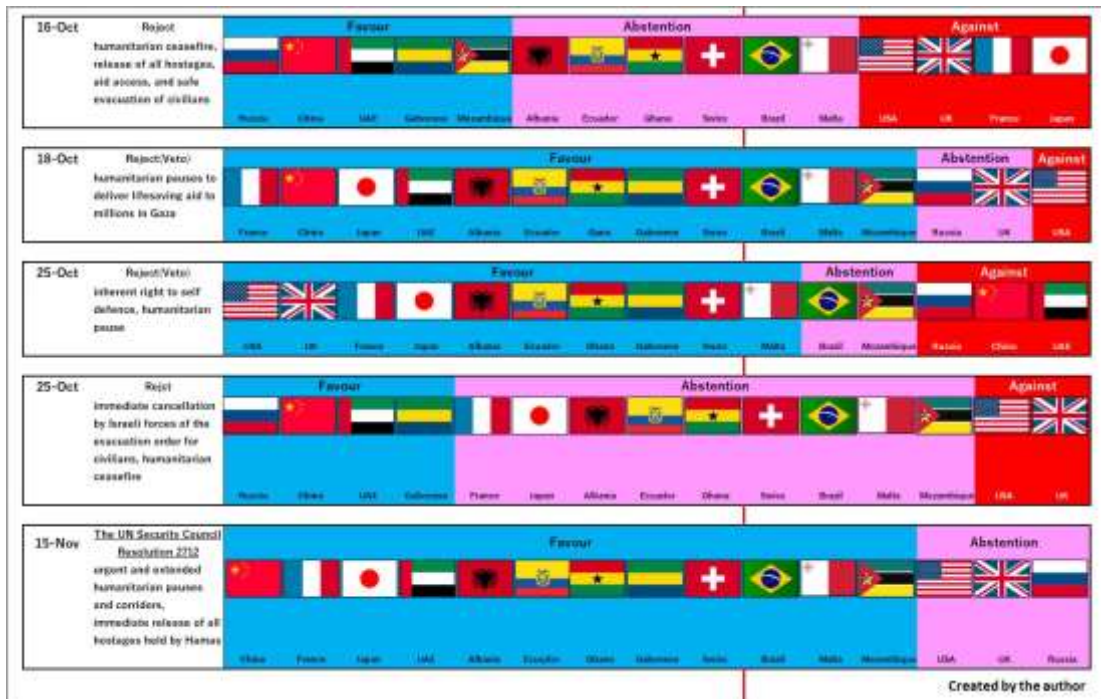
The Israel– Hamas conflict has further exposed the 'divisions' that have been occurring in various parts of the world. In this article, I will review this and consider what is required of Japan.

1. Straying of the UN Security Council

The conflict between Israel and Hamas has been ongoing for over 8 weeks since Hamas attacked Israel on October 7th. The fighting temporarily stopped on November 24th, with some hostages being released, but it ended on December 1st and the fighting resumed. The Biden administration initially supported Israel, just like previous US administrations. However, due to the sharp increase in civilian casualties in Gaza, they faced pressure from international public opinion, the American people, and the left-wing of the Democratic Party to call for a ceasefire. As a result, they called on Israel to exercise restraint in its attacks. Qatar and Egypt played a major role in negotiating the temporary ceasefire and the release of hostages in this conflict.



When the conflict began on October 7th, the United Nations Security Council could not agree on a unified response. In October, Russia, Brazil, and the United States proposed resolutions for a ceasefire or cessation of hostilities, but they did not receive enough votes or were vetoed by permanent members.^{1), 2), 3)}



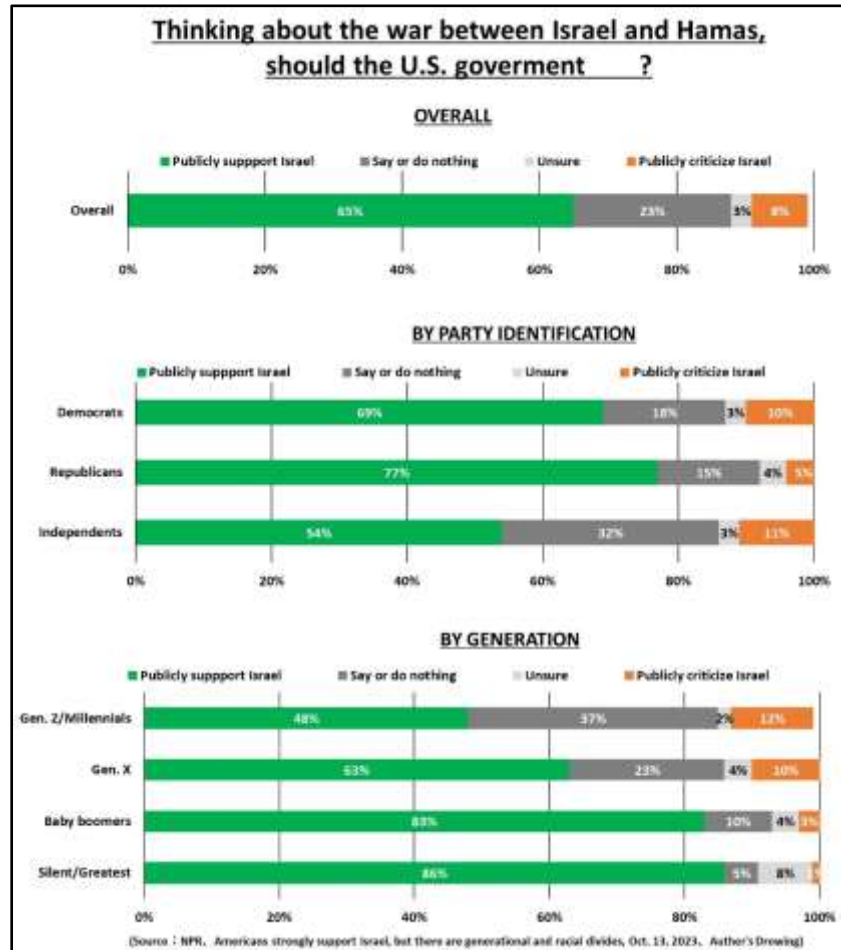
On November 15th, approximately 10 days after the UN General Assembly Emergency Special Session adopted a humanitarian ceasefire for Gaza on October 27th, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2712 calling for a temporary cessation of hostilities and the release of hostages^{4), 5)}. The resolution proposed by Malta did not condemn Hamas' attacks on Israel, so the United States did not support it. However, unlike when it exercised its veto power on Brazil's proposal on October 18th, the United States abstained this time and allowed the resolution to be adopted. Prior to this resolution, the United States had been negotiating a 4-hour daily halt to Israeli and Gaza attacks starting in November.

While there are criticisms of the United States' staunch support for Israel, the efforts of the Biden administration towards a temporary ceasefire and the release of hostages should be appreciated, even if the ceasefire period was short.

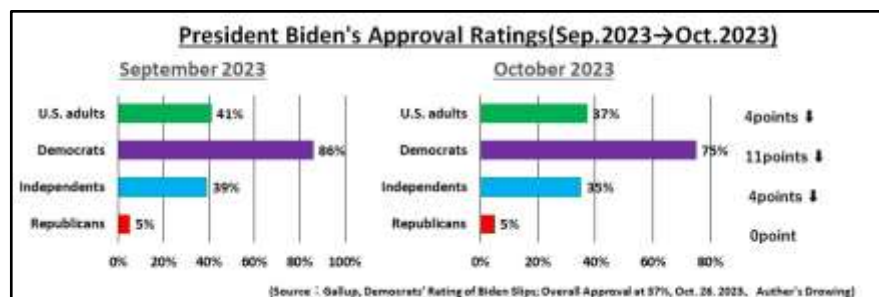
2. Divided US public opinion towards Israel

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu stated that even if all hostages were released, Israel would continue its attacks to annihilate Hamas. The attacks on Gaza by Israel are ongoing. Currently, the United States is the only country that can politically influence Israel. International public opinion, domestic public opinion, and the left wing of the Democratic Party have shifted the initial pro-Israel stance of the Biden administration towards calling for restraint in Israel's military actions.

President Biden, who aims for reelection in the next presidential election, must pay attention to public opinion in the United States. While the majority of Americans support Israel, criticism of Israel is growing, especially among young people and liberals. According to a survey by NPR in October⁶⁾, over 80% of Americans aged 60 and above (Baby Boomers and older) support Israel, but only 48% of Generation Z youth support Israel. According to a CNN poll⁷⁾ conducted in mid-October, 81% of Americans aged 65 and above believe that Israel's retaliation against Hamas is "justified," but this number drops to 56% among those aged 50 to 64, 44% among those aged 35 to 49, and 27% among



those aged 18 to 34. Protests against Israel have also taken place at several universities, and some American Jews are critical of Israel. Support for Biden among Arab American voters has significantly decreased. Within the Democratic Party, criticism of Israel is increasing among the left wing. As a result, Biden's approval rating dropped to 37% in a Gallup poll in October⁸⁾, the lowest since he took office. The approval rating among Democratic Party supporters also decreased by 11 points from 86% in September to 75%. The situation in Palestine has had a significant impact on the Democratic Party's electoral strategy, which aims to gather support from women and young people and secure Biden's reelection.



3. European societies in turmoil

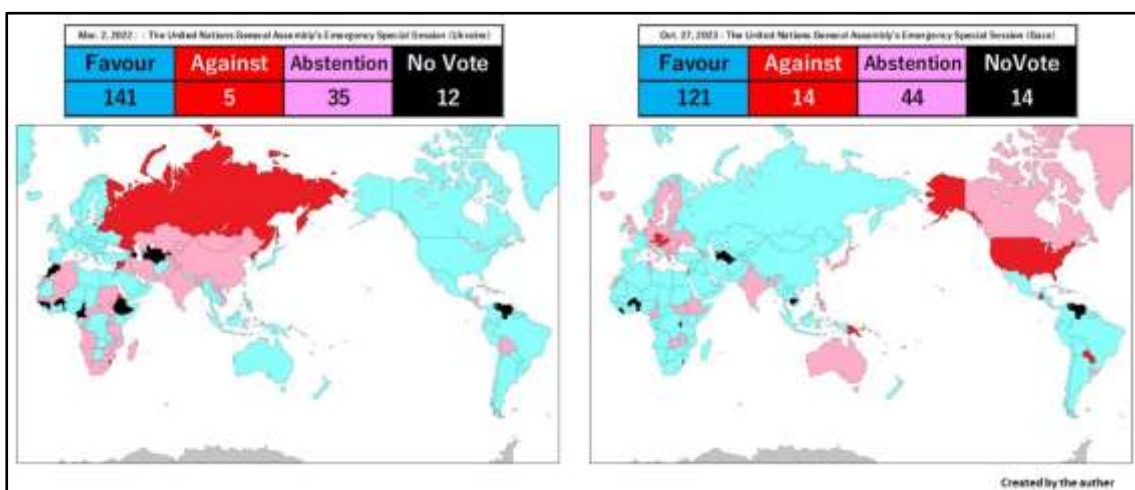
The armed conflict between Israel and Hamas has deeply shaken European society. The roots of this conflict can be traced back to historical events in Europe, such as religious persecution and discrimination against Jews. The Zionist movement, which led to the establishment of Israel, was born in late 19th-century Europe, where anti-Semitism was rising. The culmination of this anti-Semitism was the Holocaust by the Nazis. European governments feel a historical responsibility for their involvement in the establishment of Israel.

In addition to historical factors, Europe also faces social challenges related to the conflict. The number of Islamic immigrants in Europe has significantly increased in recent years, surpassing 25 million. This has led to increased support for far-right parties opposing immigration.

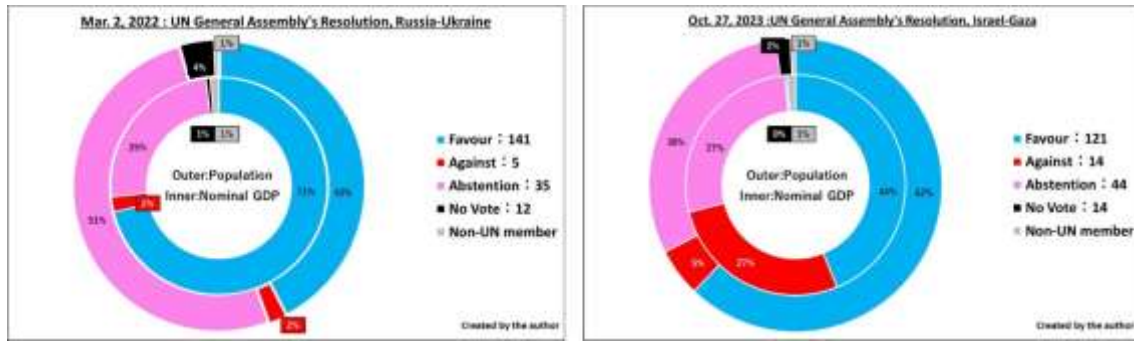
The conflict between Israel and Hamas has further exacerbated social divisions in Europe and poses a threat of chaos in many regions. European governments are particularly concerned about the potential for anti-Semitic incidents arising from this conflict.

4. The UN General Assembly debate is a mirror of world public opinion – Resolutions on Gaza ceasefire by the UN General Assembly Emergency Special Session –

In October, the United Nations held an emergency special session of the General Assembly to address the conflict in Palestine and Gaza. Resolutions calling for the establishment of humanitarian corridors and humanitarian ceasefires, proposed by Jordan and others, were adopted. This resolution has received support from 121 countries, accounting for more than two-thirds of the votes required for adoption^{5), 9)}. On the other hand, Canada's proposed amendment to condemn Hamas' terrorist



attacks did not garner enough support for approval. The resolution has garnered support from 62% of the world's population, surpassing the support for last year's resolution condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine.^{10), 11)}



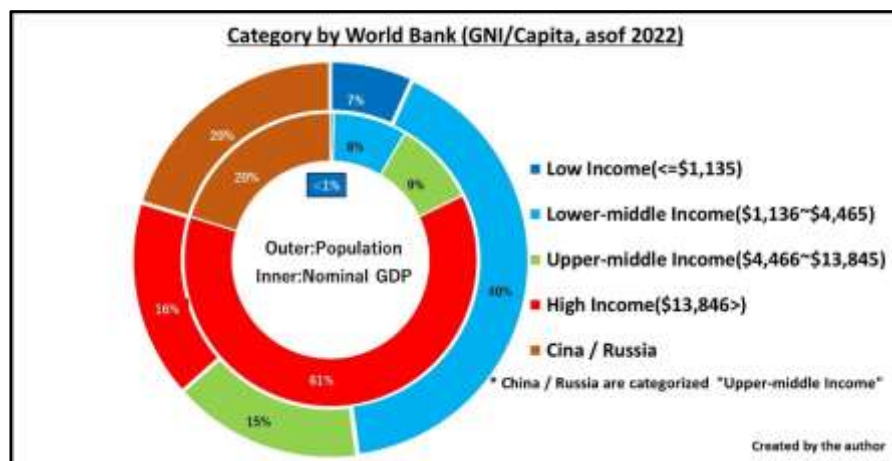
In the previous resolution condemning Russia, advanced countries in Europe, the United States, and Japan were united in favor, while China abstained and global South countries like India were divided between supporting and abstaining. In the current Gaza ceasefire resolution, the United States opposed it, but Western countries were divided between supporting and abstaining, and most countries in the Global South, except for India, supported the resolution. If the United Nations is seen as a platform for shaping international public opinion as a mirror of the world, then this time, the double standards of Israel, the United States, and Western Europe were criticized by the Global South.

Although United Nations General Assembly resolutions do not have legal binding, they have the potential to influence international public opinion. In response to this resolution, President Biden called for a temporary ceasefire in Israel, and the Security Council adopted a resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the immediate release of hostages.

5. The Global South

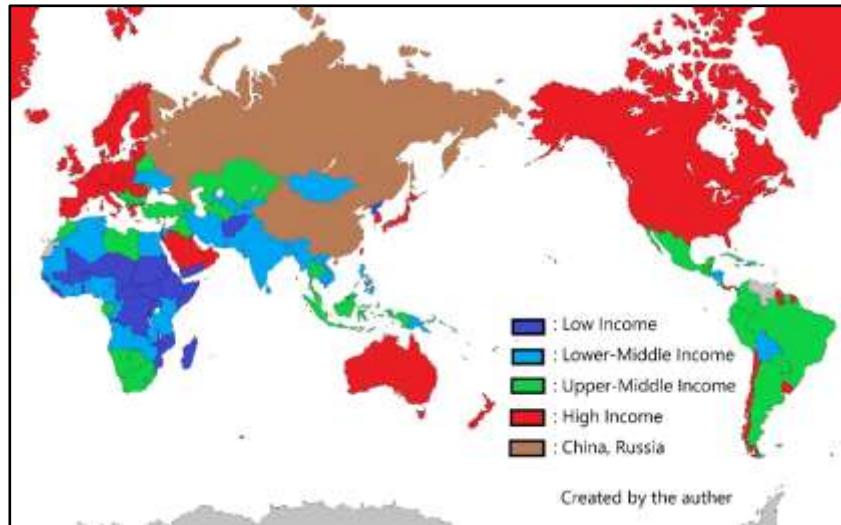
There is no universally agreed definition of the term "Global South." It is a concept based on geographical, economic, and political factors, and its meaning varies. In many cases, it refers to a group of low-income and middle-income countries, but it also includes high-income oil-producing countries in the Gulf region. Furthermore, in many cases, China and Russia, despite being middle-income countries, are excluded from this group. Political factors also play a role, with some seeing the Global South as a group between Western democracies and China and Russia's authoritarianism.

According to the World Bank's income classifications¹²⁾, the Global South accounts for 62% of the world's population and 18% of GDP. High-



income countries account for 16% of the population and 61% of GDP, while China and Russia account for 20% of the population and 20% of GDP. Among the 193 member states of the United Nations, 59 are considered high-income countries, and 132 are considered part of the Global South.

In this year's G7 Hiroshima Summit, chaired by Japan, Session 4 focused on "Enhancing Engagement with Partners (Global South, G20)." The G7 discussed how they can align



themselves with the Global South, as regions and countries in this category have experienced economic growth, become more autonomous, and gained increased influence and presence. This means they are no longer seen as subordinate to the advanced countries of the "North" and cannot be led from a superior position. On the other hand, when countries identified as part of the Global South refer to themselves as the "South," it often includes criticism of the "North" countries, with the United States being the primary target. There is a growing trend of challenging the previous world order, which was centered around the advanced countries of the "North," by voicing objections to human rights issues based on Western values and expressing resistance to past colonial rule, among other things.

6. 'Joint Statement of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting' and 'Resolution of the Emergency Joint Summit of the Arab League and Organization of Islamic Cooperation'

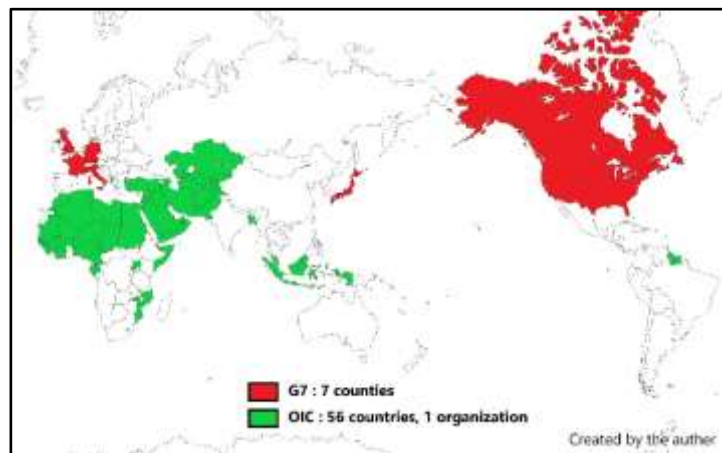
The G7 represents the "North," while the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is a major force in the Global South. These two organizations have each issued statements and resolutions calling for a temporary ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and the cessation of hostilities. G7 foreign ministers held a meeting in Tokyo¹³⁾, emphasizing the unity and responsible role of the G7 in the international community through their statement. The OIC held an extraordinary summit in Riyadh, attended by leaders of Islamic countries, reaffirming their commitment to the Palestinian cause and a two-state solution.¹⁴⁾

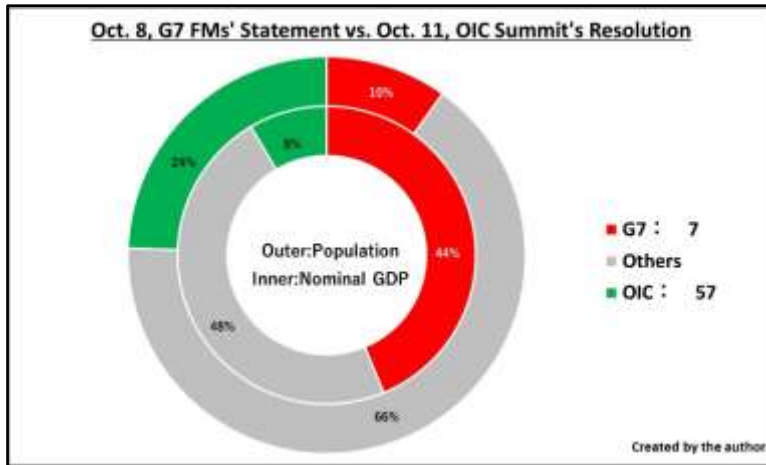


Both the G7 and OIC statements agree on the fundamental solution being a two-state solution.

However, there are differences in their positions regarding condemning Hamas attacks, whether the interruption of combat should be temporary or permanent, the release of hostages, or the lifting of the Gaza blockade by Israel. Neither the G7 statement nor the OIC resolution directly intervene or impose sanctions on Israel. Some countries participating in the OIC still maintain economic relations with Israel, including the Abraham Accords. The proposal made by Iran for an oil embargo on Israel and the suspension of economic relations was not supported at the OIC summit.

	G7 Foreign Ministers' Joint Statement (November 8, 2023)	Arab League & Organization of Islamic Cooperation Emergency Summit Resolution (November 11, 2023)
Hamas condemnation	<u>Condemning terrorist attacks</u> by Hamas and others	
Combat Pause / Ceasefire	<u>Humanitarian pause</u> and establishment of corridors	Immediate cessation of invasion of Gaza (<u>Immediate ceasefire</u>)
Israel's Right to Self-Defense	Defending Israel's <u>Right to Self-Defense</u>	<u>Rejecting the legitimacy</u> of a retaliatory war
Hostage release by Hamas	<u>Immediate release of all hostages</u> without preconditions	
UN General Assembly		<u>Welcome UN Resolution A/ES-10/L.25</u>
Humanitarian Assistance in the Gaza Strip	Urgent Action to Address the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip	<u>Lifting of the siege on Gaza.</u> International humanitarian aid teams into the Gaza Strip
International Law and International Humanitarian Law, War Crimes	Protection of civilians <u>Compliance with international law and international humanitarian law</u> <u>Condemnation of extremist settler violence</u> against Palestinian <u>Rejection of anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism</u>	Mass Forced Displacement and Deportation of Palestinians is a War Crime Investigation of <u>Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity</u> by the International Criminal Court <u>Condemns double standards</u> in the application of international law
Jerusalem		<u>Condemns Israeli attacks on holy sites in Jerusalem</u>
Fundamental Solutions	Stressed that a <u>two-state solution</u> of Israel and a Palestinian state is the only way forward	International Legitimacy. Initiation of a peace process in line with <u>the Arab Peace Initiative Framework</u>





The OIC resolution refers to the widely supported United Nations General Assembly resolutions. The condemnation of Israel by the OIC and criticisms to the West reflect the perspectives of many countries in the Global South.

7. Eyes from the Middle East and Arab countries – To Japan, To China –

Japan

Ahead of the G7 foreign ministers' meeting and the joint emergency summit of the Arab League and OIC, Arab countries reached out to Japan for an immediate ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas conflict.¹⁵⁾ Following the meetings of the G7 and OIC, the Arab diplomatic delegation held discussions with the

TOKYO: The Council of Arab Ambassadors in Japan, speaking for all Arab countries, held a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs TSUJI Kiyoto on Friday to stress that only international intervention would bring about an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The Council said that the violence of the past 42 days had killed close to 12,000 Palestinians, including 4,700 children and 3,200 women, and the numbers were growing every day. The Council expressed its appreciation for Japan's participation in the United Nations Security Council resolution but disappointment that Japan had not asked for a ceasefire. They added that the international community had allowed Israel to ignore international laws for too long and it was time to hold them to account for their actions. They pointed out that Japan could use its influence in the international community to demand that the Security Council adopt resolutions that would protect the civilians of the Gaza Strip, allow humanitarian aid and basic supplies to reach the people, and prevent more destruction of hospitals by Israel's military forces. The Council also said that Japan could support legal steps to hold war criminals responsible and advocate for a two-state solution, as per UN resolutions. The meeting ended with the Council reiterating its concern over Japan's lack of clear support for the Palestinian suffering at the hands of Israel and indicating that it could affect Japan's image if it did not prioritize support to end the violence. (ARAB NEWS, November 17, 2023)

Japanese government in Tokyo¹⁶⁾. While expressing disappointment and criticism towards Japan's response as the G7 chair, they also urged Japan to exert its influence in the international community

to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza based on UN resolutions. They also called for Japan's support for legal initiatives to hold war criminals and those responsible for humanitarian crimes accountable.

China

On November 20, a joint delegation of Islamic countries' foreign ministers visited Beijing and held talks with Foreign Minister Wang Yi.¹⁷⁾ Wang Yi expressed support for Palestine and emphasized China's continuous efforts to calm the fighting in Gaza and alleviate the humanitarian crisis.¹⁸⁾ On November 30¹⁹⁾, the Chinese Foreign Ministry published a document explaining "China's position" on resolving the Palestinian issue. On November 29, as the President of the Security Council for November, Wang Yi chaired a ministerial-level meeting on the Gaza situation.²⁰⁾

China's position on the Israel-Hamas conflict is complex. Initially, China called for calm and opposed acts that harm civilians but did not directly condemn Hamas. It also called for an immediate ceasefire and emphasized the need for an independent Palestinian state. China has traditionally provided political support to the Palestinians and recognized them as a state. However, its relationship with Israel has deepened in terms of technology and economic cooperation. China's involvement in the conflict stems from its interest in Middle East stability and its desire to enhance its political status in the world. It can be seen as implicitly criticizing the United States and gaining sympathy from the Islamic world and the Global South. However, many Arab and Islamic countries still consider the United States as their primary provider of security and do not have high expectations for China in resolving Middle East issues.

How will Japan respond?

Japanese diplomacy is often seen as aligning with the United States, but its recent stance seems to be in line with the framework of the G7. While placing diplomatic emphasis on Europe and the United States, Japan has also prioritized "balanced diplomacy" in its relations with the Middle East due to its energy dependence on the region. However, Japan's response to the Israel-Hamas conflict is viewed as disappointing by Arab society. It is important to listen to the voices of the OIC and the Arab diplomatic delegation. The voices of countries in the Global South are gaining influence, and the world is changing. Japan's current policy should be based on a global perspective, rather than relying on established concepts and inertia. Diplomacy should consider multiple perspectives, as it is not determined by a single issue alone.

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