



Conflict between Israel and Syria

For Prelims: Conflict between Israel and Syria, [Al-Aqsa Mosque](#), [Middle East](#), [Golan Heights Law](#), [UNSC](#).

For Mains: Impact of the ongoing Syria-Israel conflict on the stability of the [Middle East region](#).

Why in News?

Recently, Israel has fired retaliatory rockets after three rockets had been launched towards **Israel from Syria**.



What is the Background of Recent Conflict between the Two?

- The situation in Israel and its neighboring countries has been tense for several months now, with an **ultra-nationalist government coming to power in Israel**, raising concerns among its neighbors.
 - The recent raid on the [Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem](#) by Israel sparked a **wave of rocket attacks from Lebanon, Gaza Strip, and Syria**.
- Israel fears that **arch-rival Iran is using the [long-running war in Syria](#) to station its fighters and weapons** close to Israel's borders.
 - Israel has been conducting strikes in Syria in recent weeks, targeting **both Iranian-linked figures and infrastructure**, including the airports of Damascus and Aleppo.
- The situation in the region is complex and volatile, with multiple actors involved and competing interests in the play.
 - The ongoing conflicts have resulted in the **displacement of millions of people** and the loss of countless lives.

- The international community has called for calm and a peaceful resolution to the conflicts, but the situation remains tense and uncertain.

What is the Timeline of the Conflict between Israel and Syria?

▪ Six-Day War in 1967:

- The conflict between Israel and Syria goes back to the [Six-Day War in 1967](#), in which Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria, which **it has occupied since then**.
 - The fertile plateau of the Golan Heights overlooks both Israel and Syria, offering a **commanding military vantage**.
- In 1973, Syrian forces made an **unsuccessful bid to recapture the area during the Yom Kippur War**. Although a ceasefire agreement was **reached in 1974**, most of the Golan Heights remains under Israeli control.
 - Yom Kippur War, also called the **October War was fourth of the Arab-Israeli wars**, which was **initiated by Egypt and Syria** on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur.
 - The war eventually **drew both the US and the erstwhile USSR into indirect confrontation** in defense of their respective allies.

▪ Israel's Golan Heights Law:

- In 1981, Israel passed the Golan Heights Law, extending its **"laws, jurisdiction and administration" to the area** and effectively annexing it.
- A [United Nations Security Council \(UNSC\)](#) resolution was passed declaring Israel's imposition of law in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights "null and void and without international legal effect".
 - However, it has not changed the situation on the ground, but the **frontier has not seen major hostilities for more than 40 years**.
- In 2000, Israel and Syria **attempted to negotiate a settlement but failed**.

▪ Syrian Civil War:

- Israel and Syria's long-standing conflict escalated after the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011.
 - Iran, which **denies Israel's right to exist**, **emerged as a key player in the conflict** and has been providing weapons, money, and fighters to support the Syrian **President's regime**.
- As a result, rockets sometimes land in Israel as **"errant fire" during the fighting in Syria**.

▪ Targeted Strikes in Syria:

- Israel has been accused of carrying out targeted strikes in Syria in recent years, although it **does not acknowledge them**.
- The recent wave of attacks, however, has raised concerns of an escalation in the conflict, further destabilizing the already volatile region.

What is India's Position in the Conflict?

- **India maintains a balanced position in the Syrian Israeli conflict** and has urged all parties to exercise restraint and resolve their differences peacefully through negotiations.
 - India has consistently **supported the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and called for an end to external interference in its internal affairs**.

▪ Implications of Conflict for India:

- The conflict between Syria and Israel could have implications for India, primarily in terms of energy security.
 - India is heavily dependent **on oil imports from the Middle East, including Syria**, and any disruption in the oil supply chain could have a significant impact on the Indian economy.
- The conflict could also have security implications for India, as extremist groups in the region could exploit the situation to further their agenda.
 - India has a significant Muslim population, and any escalation of the conflict could lead to sectarian tensions within the country.

Way Forward

- From an international perspective, the **Syrian conflict is seen as a proxy war between major powers** such as the US, Russia, and Iran, each supporting different sides in the conflict. The situation in Syria remains complex and unresolved, with no clear path to peace.
 - It **requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes** of the conflict and takes into account the concerns and interests of all parties involved.
- One possible way forward could be through diplomatic efforts aimed at finding a peaceful and just solution to the conflict.
 - This could **involve engaging with all the parties involved**, including **Israel, Syria, Iran, Hezbollah, and other regional and international actors**.
- Another approach could be through **regional cooperation and dialogue**, which could help build trust and confidence among the parties and reduce tensions in the region.
 - The recent **Abraham Accords** signed between Israel and several Arab states could provide a positive example of such cooperation and dialogue.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. Consider the following pairs: (2018)

	Towns sometimes mentioned in news	Country
1.	Aleppo	Syria
2.	Kirkuk	Yemen
3.	Mosul	Palestine
4.	Mazar-i-sharif	Afghanistan

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 1 and 4
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 3 and 4

Ans: (b)

Q2. Which one of the following countries of South-West Asia does not open out to the Mediterranean Sea? (2015)

- (a) Syria
- (b) Jordan
- (c) Lebanon
- (d) Israel

Ans: (b)

Q3. The area known as 'Golan Heights' sometimes appears in the news in the context of the events related to (2015)

- (a) Central Asia
- (b) Middle East
- (c) South-East Asia
- (d) Central Africa

Ans: (b)

Q4. Yom Kippur War was fought between which sides/ countries? (2008)

- (a) Turkey and Greece
- (b) Serbs and Croats
- (c) Israel, and Arab countries led by Egypt and Syria
- (d) Iran and Iraq

Ans: (c)

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