

The Palestinian Issue from the Perspective of an International NGO: Looking Back on 30 years of Working with the Turbulent Middle East

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This report reassesses the Palestinian issue from the perspective of an international NGO and examines the nature of support in the context of Palestine, through a record of aid projects that the Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC), to which the author belongs, has implemented in Palestine since 1992. First, the 32 years of aid projects in Palestine were divided into three periods: (1) before and after the Oslo Accords in 1993, (2) before and after the second intifada in 2000, and (3) after the Arab Spring in 2010. The study also reviewed JVC's activities in each of the three time periods and identified that under what needs, with what objectives, and what results were achieved as a result of these activities. Then, using JVC's response to Israel's attack on Gaza, triggered by Hamas' surprise attack on October 7, 2023, as an example, we examined what international NGOs should consider important when providing humanitarian assistance in conflict areas such as Palestine. As a result, we found that the major roles of international NGOs in providing humanitarian assistance in conflict areas are (1) prompt implementation and continuation of assistance, (2) transmission of local voices, (3) promotion of correct understanding of the background of the conflict, and (4) lobbying the Japanese government toward an immediate ceasefire.

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U.S. Aid Restrictions to UNRWA: Examining the Intention of Suspending Contributions

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This paper examines how original mandates of the United Nations Relief and Works agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (hereafter "UNRWA") has been transformed in the face of legal and financial pressures from the United States. The paper first examines UNRWA's unique mandate in contrast to the role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereafter "UNHCR"). The differences between the mandates of the two agencies have important political implications, and UNRWA has resulted in having only a limited refugee protection mandate compared to UNHCR.

Second, the paper examines the relationship between the crackdown on Palestinian resistance movements under U.S. domestic legislations and subsequent anti-terrorism legislation. The crackdown on the Palestinian resistance movement was carried out through ensuring UNRWA to take measures to prevent the US contributions from assisting those who were involved with "acts of terror." It was the mechanism that later became the prototype for US anti-terrorism legislations that are now widely applied against people with Middle Eastern origins and Muslims.

Finally, the paper examines the agreement reached between the US and UNRWA when contributions, which were suspended in 2018 during the Donald Trump administration, were resumed in 2021. The Joe Biden administration's policy toward UNRWA is an important context for understanding the suspension of contributions during the current Gaza Genocide. Based on an analysis of these three points, this paper shows the US political intention to erase the Palestinian refugees' right of return by progressively diminishing the UNRWA's mandates UNRWA.

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Three Roads to a Solution of the Palestine Question: From the Perspective of Abdullah Öcalan's Analysis on the Kurdish Question

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The PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan had abandoned their armed struggle for independent Kurdistan. In his influential Prison Writings, he urged to transform the society by making the place of continuing face-to face discussion and decision-making with participation of all persons in every-day life at local community, without any discrimination of gender, ethnicity, or religious sects, i.e. according to the principle of "Nothing about us without us." By doing so, the present forms of sovereign state, nation, democracy, and capitalism remain the same but their contents will be changed radically. Such a perspective is suggestive for the solution of Palestine question, because the traditional nation-statist approach is now in a fiasco apparently. Öcalan's *The Road Map to Negotiations* can be used for Israeli and Palestinian people.

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