Seeing the Gaza violence through Singaporean eyes

It’s important to remain clear-eyed and cool-headed because the conflict is not a straightforward religious fight but one interwoven with complex, intra-Palestinian and geopolitical issues.

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For The Straits Times

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War always stirs strong emotions. But sometimes, our understanding is lost. Singaporeans should not view the events of the Middle East with a wide-angle headlight. The humanitarian aspects of the Gaza conflict are important to maintain objectivity, but there are deep-seated geopolitical dynamics and politics that need to be understood.

The Israeli-Palestinian dispute is not an intrinsically religious conflict. The political tension between armed factions, Hamas and its political affiliate, the Islamic Jihad, and Israel is not just about religion, but also about power, territorial control and ideology.

The current Gazan unrest started with Israel’s military operations against Hamas and its allies in the West Bank, which were seen as a response to rocket fire and terror attacks from Gaza. These operations were initiated to deter Hamas and its allies from carrying out further attacks against Israeli civilians.

Israel, in self-defense, went on to destroy a number of Hamas military targets in Gaza, including its commanders and facilities, to prevent further attacks. However, the attack on Gaza and the subsequent economic sanctions have escalated tensions and led to a humanitarian crisis.

Hamas and its allies have responded by firing rockets and anti-aircraft fire into Israel, leading to a cycle of violence that has lasted for more than a decade.

The root of the conflict lies in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is a decades-old dispute over the status of the Israeli-Palestinian territories. Israel declared its independence in 1948, and since then, the territories have been occupied by Israel.

Israel’s military operations against Hamas and its allies have been condemned by the international community, which considers these actions illegal. The United Nations has called for an end to the violence and a return to negotiations.

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