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The joint U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran has become a major multi-front regional conflict. Here are how some of the countries were affected in the first week of the war.

Iran is grappling with the sudden loss of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several high-ranking commanders killed in the initial waves of precision strikes by the US and Israel. Major cities, including Tehran, Isfahan, and Qom, have faced sustained aerial bombardment targeting nuclear facilities, ballistic missile sites, and command centres. Domestically, the regime faces a dual threat: external military pressure and the resurgence of internal civil unrest and student protests. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has also isolated the country's economy further.

ISRAEL, Israel is currently engaged in a full-scale regional conflict, operating on three primary fronts: direct strikes against Iran, a heavy air campaign in Lebanon, and ongoing operations in the Palestinian Territories. The sheer volume of Iranian ballistic missiles and Hezbollah rockets has caused casualties in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and central residential districts.

THE UNITED STATES, Though not a Middle Eastern nation, the United States is a primary combatant, using its regional bases to launch strikes against Iranian leadership and infrastructure. American forces in Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan, and Qatar have come under heavy retaliatory fire from Iranian missiles and proxy militias. The U.S. Navy has also been engaged in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, suffering hardware losses, including several F-15E Strike Eagles.

LEBANON, Lebanon has been drawn

into the centre of the storm following Hezbollah's entry into the conflict on March 2. The southern territories and parts of Beirut are under heavy Israeli bombardment as the IDF seeks to dismantle Hezbollah's rocket infrastructure. Over 80,000 civilians have been displaced in just the first few days of fighting.

IRAQ, Iraq serves as both a battlefield and a transit corridor for the conflict. Iranian ballistic missiles have frequently crossed Iraqi airspace to reach targets in Israel and Turkey, leading to debris falling in populated areas. Internally, Iraq-aligned militias (the PMF) have launched dozens of drone strikes against U.S. assets in Baghdad and Erbil.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, The UAE has faced unprecedented direct attacks. Iranian retaliation has targeted symbols of Emirati economic power, including the Dubai International Airport and residential districts like Palm Jumeirah. The U.S. consulate in Dubai was struck, resulting in several casualties.

SAUDI ARABIA, Despite its recent normalisation of ties with Iran, Iranian drones have targeted Aramco oil facilities, causing temporary shutdowns and a surge in global oil prices. The U.S. embassy in Riyadh also came under fire during the initial retaliatory waves.

KUWAIT, Kuwait has experienced some of the most chaotic military incidents of the war, including the accidental shoot-down of three American F-15E jets by its own air defenses during the confusion of an Iranian missile barrage.

SYRIA, Syria remains a transit point for Hezbollah supplies, making it a frequent target for Israeli "interdiction" strikes. Syrian airspace is a corridor for missiles and drones.

JORDAN, Jordan has been forced into a defensive posture, actively intercepting Iranian missiles and drones that violate its airspace en route to Israel. Jordan also remains the primary sanctuary for those fleeing the violence in neighbouring Syria and the West Bank.

YEMEN, Houthi forces have effectively paralyzed the Red Sea. Shipping carriers have abandoned the Suez Canal route entirely, reverting to the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa as the Houthis threaten to weaponise the Bab al-Mandab strait in support of Iran.

QATAR, Hosting the massive U.S. Al Udeid Air Base makes Qatar a direct military target. Two ballistic missiles were fired at the facility on March 4. The closure of Qatari airspace has also disrupted one of the world's most important transit hubs for international air travel.

BAHRAIN, Bahrain host to the U.S. Fifth Fleet, has faced sustained drone and missile attacks from both Iran and Iraqi militias. The Sheikh Isa Air Base has been a primary target, and civilian infrastructure, including a luxury hotel in Manama, has been hit by Shahed-type drones.

CYPRUS, Cyprus has been unexpectedly drawn into the conflict due to the presence of British Sovereign Base Areas at Akrotiri and Dhekelia. On March 2, a drone strike hit the Akrotiri airbase, marking the first time the current war reached a territory associated with a European power.

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*Views expressed by the writers are not necessarily those of the editorial board
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Closure of Masjid al-Aqsa Is an Act of War

Ebrahim Moosa – Palestine Information Network

The unprecedented closure of Masjid Al-Aqsa by Israeli occupation authorities during Ramadan represents a grave escalation and must be understood as part of a deliberate political and Jewish supremacist religious project aimed at consolidating Israeli control over Islamic holy sites in Al-Quds.

As detailed by Jerusalem affairs researcher Ziad Ibhais, within one hour of the American–Israeli aggression against Iran, Israeli authorities ordered the closure of the Ibrahimi Mosque in Al-Khalil under emergency directives from the Israeli Home Front Command. Less than an hour later, at approximately 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, 28 February 2026, Israeli police stormed Masjid al-Aqsa, expelled worshippers, and announced its closure until further notice, citing wartime “precautionary measures.”

This justification is deeply disingenuous. Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem lack public shelters and protective infrastructure, while nearly 46% of Palestinians living in the territories occupied in 1948 reportedly have no access to air-raid shelters. Preventing worshippers from entering Al-Aqsa while leaving them exposed in homes, markets, and streets cannot plausibly be framed as a measure for their protection. Moreso, after the genocidal war in Gaza, any claim that such measures are motivated by concern for Palestinian safety rings hollow—indeed, to the point of laughability.

The closure must instead be viewed within the ideological framework guiding the current Israeli government and the broader Zionist right. Increasingly influenced by the movement of Religious Zionism, Israeli policy treats Al-Aqsa as the site of a future “Temple,” while the Ibrahimi Mosque is framed by the same movement as the “Cave of Machpelah.” This worldview promotes a now-accelerated process of religious replacement, seeking to displace the existing Islamic reality of these sacred spaces.

According to a recently unearthed interview, United States Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, who is leading the US charge on Iran, shares in the dream of establishing a Jewish temple upon Al-Aqsa.

“There’s no reason why the miracle of the re-establishment of the temple on the Temple Mount is not possible,” Hegseth said during a 2018 speech at the Arutz Sheva conference in Jerusalem, according to the Times of Israel.

Imposing Israeli emergency regulations on these most significant masajid serves two strategic objectives. First, it attempts to entrench Israeli sovereignty over the sites by establishing that decisions to open or close them lie solely with the Israeli government, thereby marginalizing the Islamic authorities responsible for their administration—namely the Islamic Waqf in Al-Quds and the Palestinian Waqf in Hebron. Second, it deepens the isolation of these mosques from their worshippers, especially during the sacred month of Ramadan, testing the feasibility of controlling and closing them whenever political circumstances allow.

This closure does not occur in isolation. For more than a decade, Israeli authorities have steadily sought to seize the authority to regulate access to Al-Aqsa from the Waqf administration. Key precedents include the 2017 crisis surrounding the installation of

electronic gates at the mosque’s entrances, the COVID-19 closures in 2020, and the unprecedented closure of Al-Aqsa during the twelve-day confrontation with Iran in June 2025. Each stage has gradually normalized Israeli control over decisions affecting the Masjid.

In the weeks preceding the current escalation, a series of measures signalled an intensification of pressure on Al-Aqsa. These included halting the entry of all supplies for worshippers and staff until the head of the Waqf Council appeared before occupation police, extending the daily settler incursions by an extra hour during Ramadan, renewed efforts at spatial division targeting Dar al-Hadith near Bab al-Rahma, bans on i’tikaf during the first Friday and Saturday nights of Ramadan, proposals to place the Masjid under the Israeli rabbinate, and daily police patrols inside the masjid that harassed, searched, and intimidated worshippers.

Taken together, these developments point to a systematic policy aimed at reshaping the status of Al-Aqsa through four main avenues: controlling its administration, expanding the temporal division of prayer times, advancing spatial division within the compound, and entrenching permanent security domination over worshippers.

For these reasons, the closure of Al-Aqsa must be recognized for what it is: an act of war carried out through administrative and security measures.

As Kamal Khatib of the Islamic Movement in Palestine has warned:

“Whatever the rounds and arenas of this war may be—its beginnings, its endings, and even its very trigger—are tied to what is happening in the Palestinian arena in general, and in Masjid al-Aqsa in particular. Here lies the gateway to war, or the doorway to peace.”

Our eyes must remain unwaveringly fixed on Masjid al-Aqsa, with relentless focus and awareness, and we must urgently escalate both physical mobilisation and spiritual action, together with dua. This belligerent closure will not—and cannot—be tolerated.

Masjid al-Aqsa is a trust upon the necks of the entire Ummah, and that negligence regarding its sanctity or silence regarding its closure is a crime for which the Ummah will be held accountable before Allah.





AND THEREAFTER

by: Faizel Khamker

The Israeli/American criminal syndicate launched an attack on the Republic of Iran. This war like all the conflicts which they have started and acted in was by any definition illegal, immoral and in breach of international law. The illegality was simply swept in under the carpet and one senior Republican went on record to say that there are no boundaries that need to be followed in this war. With these maniac regimes there never was any desire to follow any convention. Possibly in doing so they may be mistaken for being human.

Having being buoyed by their success in Venezuela they planned something similar for Iran. The idea that when decapitating the political leadership then every organ of state becomes paralyzed is an immoral policy which has failed time and time again when in the conflict the victim is defending a cause based on sound moral grounds and where such morality has been embedded in the psyche of the victims for centuries. Where the political leadership of the victim nation is corrupt and nefarious than the use of the decapitating of political leadership can be successful. The first few hours of the attack on Iran were strategized according to this plan and the Supreme Leader of Iran was martyred together with some other high-level officials. This plan which should have according to its planners lead to a quick victory, however this

quickly proved to be disillusionment for the reasons outlined above. With no other plan to fall back on, no exit strategy and even worse no goals for the war on the table the natural question to ask would be: "What next?" The answer is that once more it is the innocent laymen who will get the short end of the stick. The following possibilities should be examined.

A cease-fire or a temporary cease-fire is agreed upon. This would simply allow for a period of recovery and not create a space where possible lasting solutions can be sought. It should be remembered that in their posturing as the super-men of their time the war mongering aggressors have boxed themselves in when it comes to options. A cease-fire with the intention of facilitating a peace deal would not be on the cards because of the dastardly actions of using "talks" as a smokescreen or diversion to gaining military advantage. This trick was carried out twice, once in lead up to the twelve-day war and the second as a prelude to the start of aggression in the current war. Taking this into account it is highly unlikely that the Iranians will agree to a cease-fire. The one exception being that the Iranians will agree to a cease-fire only when they have assessed that they are in a stronger position to negotiate a better outcome.

The second possibilities are to escalate the war by bringing into the war zone additional resources both men and military assets. This will leave big voids in the world by causing financial instability, political instability, and great sufferings to the masses. Bearing in mind that the aggressors despite all the hype that they have all the disposals at their doorsteps are in short supply when it comes to weaponry. This is largely because of the fuelling of wars and genocides to hold on to the hegemony that they currently have. This will cause untold hardships, leave many women widows and many children orphans. This could very well lead to the conflict becoming a global one as many key players worldwide will not sit by idly if their national security is threatened.

The third possibility is for the war to be dragged on in a never-ending war like the Vietnamese war and this will lead to a global world of uncertainty and with uncertainty distrusts and a regional war. The regional war because of its strategic minerals and natural resources will make the world a less safe place for the masses. We are witnessing a horror movie show in real time and it is time that sense prevails.

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SOUTH AFRICA NEEDS TO BE MORE FORCEFUL IN DECRYING US/ZIONIST AXIS OF WAR

by: Iqbal Jassat



In its latest statement the South African government has expressed deep concern over what it refers to as the escalating crisis in the Gulf.

It correctly points out that the crisis arises from the “use of force by the United States and Israel against Iran”. The understanding is unambiguous though the language appears to be couched in soft terms.

The “use of force” fails to convey the full extent of the brutal war imposed on Iran. Nor does it convey the reality of the illegality of the unprovoked military assault by the United States and Israel that plunged the region in a “crisis”.

As we enter the second week of the unjust and unlawful war, it would be shortsighted to not emphasise that the American-Israeli axis of aggression against Iran is a flagrant violation of Iran’s territorial integrity and national sovereignty.

Esmail Baghaei, spokesperson for Iran’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs has described the military assault launched on Saturday 28 February, an unprovoked, unwarranted act of aggression.

“They started this merciless aggression by targeting Iran’s Supreme Leader’s compound at the heart of the capital, Tehran. The leader, also a highly respected Shia religious jurist across the region and beyond, was martyred along with a number of his family members, including his 14-month-old granddaughter on the 10th day of the holy month of Ramadan”.

According to Baghaei, at the same time the US/Israel axis launched massive air and missile strikes across Iran against military and civilian targets. The most heartbreaking news broke when they struck an elementary school in Minab, south-western Iran, where 165 innocent schoolgirls and 26 teachers were brutally slaughtered.

“It is now clear that the US/Israeli targeting of this elementary school was deliberate and pre-planned. A detailed investigative report, based on satellite imagery, strike patterns, and geolocation analysis, has demonstrated that the attack directly struck the civilian school building during class hours. The purpose was to preoccupy Iran’s armed forces and emergency response capacity so that the aggressors could subsequently target other strategic sites”.

It is noted though that South Africa has previously condemned the unlawful attacks on Iran by Israel and the United States, which violate Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibiting the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

These principles are fundamental to the international rules-based order and must be upheld by all Member States.

However, the concern raised by South Africa about the subsequent retaliatory strikes by Iran across the region as “developments risking widening the conflict with grave implications for regional and international peace and security”, lacks context.

In exercising Iran’s lawful and legitimate right under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, Iran had no option but to target certain US military facilities in the region.

Baghaei points out that these defensive operations are not directed against host countries but are undertaken solely in defence of Iran. “The facilities targeted were used by the United

States to prepare and launch military attacks against Iran”.

While Iran fully respects the territorial integrity and political independence of Gulf countries every state has a responsibility, under international law and the principle of good neighbourliness, not to allow its territory, airspace, or facilities to be used for acts of aggression against the Islamic Republic.

The lack of context in South Africa’s statement is best understood by the facts expressly affirmed by the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

“... Any point of origin, base, or territorial platform from which acts of aggression against Iran are initiated—irrespective of the state in which such forces may be stationed—shall, consistent with Article 3(f) of the Annex to General Assembly Resolution 3314 (XXIX) on the Definition of Aggression, be regarded as a lawful military objective in the exercise of Iran’s inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations”.

On the other hand, South Africa being alarmed by Israel’s continued military operations in Lebanon, which have resulted in civilian casualties, the destruction of essential infrastructure, and the displacement of communities, is spot on.

“These attacks constitute a serious breach of Lebanon’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and further destabilise the region”.

The unprovoked imposed war has placed the world at a critical juncture.

It is clear that the Trump administration’s justifications for this war are based on lies. Most military analysts especially within the US have dismissed the notion that Iran posed an imminent threat to the US.

Indeed, former Israeli peace negotiator Daniel Levy has categorically argued that Trump’s incoherence has allowed Israel, a small settler-colonial state to pursue a far-reaching mission of domination in the region.

Levy asserts that over many decades, Israel, and Benjamin Netanyahu in particular (he has been Israel’s premier for almost 20 of the last 30 years), have tried to pull America into a war against Iran.

Netanyahu briefly succeeded last June when Trump launched the one-and-done Operation Midnight Hammer strikes. That appeared to only whet appetites.

Israel’s campaign to induce a full-scale American assault on Iran became relentless.

Levy reminds us that Secretary of State Marco Rubio let slip that America’s supposed case for pre-emptive use of force in the face of a threat was, in fact, necessitated by Israeli (rather than Iranian) imminent military aggression.

Hence, unless these factual arguments are emphasised in statements of “concern” by South Africa, the result will regrettably be stuck in soft-peddling without the desired effect.

Failure to act against the US-Israeli axis of terror is to allow a global order dictated and ruled by merciless bullying and force.



When the Enemy is Forgotten: A Call for Conscience in the Muslim World

by: Moulana Muhammad Hussain Noori

words:

"If you stretch your hand against me to kill me, I will not stretch my hand against you to kill you. Indeed, I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds." 5:28

Whether it is Pakistan or Afghanistan, the reality remains the same: modern borders were drawn by human hands. Many of them were shaped by colonial history, geopolitical agreements, and political convenience. But the sanctity of Muslim blood was established by Allah.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: "When two Muslims confront each other with swords, both the killer and the one killed will be in Hell."

The Companions were astonished. They asked: "O Messenger of Allah, we understand the killer—but why the one who is killed?" The Prophet ﷺ replied: "Because he also intended to kill his brother."

This narration is not merely a warning about violence. It is a profound moral mirror placed before the Muslim Ummah in which we are afraid to see our own reflection.

The enemy is no longer recognized as the enemy, and we have turned our Muslim brothers into enemies. We have sown seeds of hatred into our hearts, whose only fruits are blood, tears, and dead corpses

Accountability does not begin when the sword is raised or when the first bullet is fired. It begins with an intention. Muslims who raise weapons against other Muslims, believing they are acting in defense of a cause, a nation, or an ideology have forgotten that Allah knows the moment when the first evil intention took root in the heart.

The politics of this world: race, language, tribe, and borders are all temporary! What is not temporary are the intentions and the blood spilled which will both will be weighed on the scale of justice on the Day of Qiyamah.

Internal disagreements must never blind the Muslim community to larger moral responsibilities.

The challenge facing the Ummah today is not merely political—it is spiritual and ethical.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has warned: "Abusing a Muslim is disobedience to Allah, and fighting him is disbelief." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Muslims must not only protect themselves from the deception of external enemies who exploit internal divisions. But they must also protect themselves from something even more dangerous: the normalization of hatred toward one another.

In a time when political tensions and conflicts dominate headlines across the Muslim world, a powerful reminder recently emerged from a Palestinian preacher. He stated clearly:

"We do not accept the ideology of Iran, nor do we agree with its policies, nor do we forget its oppression and injustices. But if an external disbelieving force attacks it, the demand of our religion is certainly not that we rejoice at the dominance of the disbelievers, support them, or wish that any Muslim land should fall under their control."

This statement captures an important distinction that is often lost in modern discourse: disagreement within the Muslim world does not justify the empowerment of forces hostile to Islam itself. Criticism, advice, and opposition are part of intellectual and moral responsibility. However, the necks of Muslims cannot be handed over to an enemy that targets the entire Muslim Ummah. The preacher's message reminds us that there are lines that should never be crossed. Disagreement can exist. Opposition can exist. Warnings and sincere counsel can exist. These are part of a healthy intellectual tradition. Muslim civilization has always contained debate among scholars, schools of thought, and political authorities. Yet the sanctity of Muslim life stands above all such disputes.

The Qur'an speaks with unmistakable clarity about the gravity of taking a believer's life:

"And never is it for a believer to kill a believer except by mistake. And whoever kills a believer by mistake – then the freeing of a believing slave, compensation presented to his family...whoever does not find [one] – then fasting for two months consecutively, seeking repentance from Allah..." 4:92

The warning becomes even more severe in the next verse: "But whoever kills a believer intentionally – his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, Allah has become angry with him, has cursed him and has prepared for him a great punishment." 4:93

The seriousness of this command was further emphasized by the Holy Prophet ﷺ on the Day of Arafat he made it very clear that the life, wealth, and honor of a Muslim are sacred, and violating any of these is a grave transgression against the command of Allah.

The Qur'an itself provides one of the earliest moral lessons about violence between human beings through the story of the sons of Adam: Habil and Qabil. When Qabil intended to kill his brother, Habil refused to respond with violence. The Qur'an records his

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Eid al-Fitr:

A Day of Gratitude, Worship, and Compassion

By: Mufti Muhammad Usman Solehri Ziyaae

Eid al-Fitr is one of the most joyful and spiritually uplifting occasions in the Islamic calendar. It marks the completion of the blessed month of Ramadan, a period devoted to fasting, prayer, charity, and self-purification. For Muslims around the world, this day is not only a celebration but also a reminder of gratitude to Allah for granting the strength and guidance to complete a month of devotion. The essence of Eid al-Fitr lies in worship, unity, forgiveness, and care for the less fortunate.

This blessed occasion is also deeply connected with Allah's mercy and forgiveness. According to Islamic teachings, throughout the month of Ramadan countless believers are forgiven and saved from the punishment of the Fire. As Ramadan comes to an end, the final night before Eid is known as Lailatul Jaizah, meaning the "Night of Reward." It is a night in which Allah grants immense rewards to His servants for their fasting, prayers, and acts of devotion during the month. On this night many people receive salvation from the fire of Jahannum through the mercy of Allah.

Unfortunately, many people today treat the night before Eid merely as a time for worldly celebration. Instead of appreciating its spiritual significance, some spend the night standing in streets, shopping centers, garages, or public places, engaging in idle talk, smoking, or other worldly activities. In reality, this precious night should be spent in worship and remembrance of Allah. Lailatul Jaizah is an opportunity for believers to perform extra prayers, recite the Qur'an, make supplications, and seek forgiveness. By dedicating this night to Ibadat, Muslims can hope to receive the full reward and blessings promised by Allah.

The day of Eid itself also carries many important responsibilities and etiquettes. It is a day of unity, love, and reconciliation. Islam encourages believers to strengthen family ties and mend broken relationships on this day. If there are relatives, friends, or neighbours who are upset with us, Eid provides the perfect opportunity to approach them with kindness and humility, to forgive and seek forgiveness. Making others happy and spreading smiles is one of the true spirits of Eid. By giving Sadaqatul Fitr, Muslims purify their fasts and share their blessings with those who are less fortunate.

The morning of Eid should begin in a spiritually uplifting manner. Muslims are encouraged to start their day by performing the Fajr prayer and engaging in the recitation of the Holy Qur'an. Visiting the graveyard is also recommended, as it reminds believers of the reality of the Hereafter and allows them to pray for their departed loved ones. After this, one should perform ghusl (ritual

bathing), wear clean or new clothes, and prepare for the Eid prayer.

While going to the Eid prayer ground (Eid Gah) or mosque, Muslims should keep their tongues busy with the remembrance of Allah by reciting the Takbeerat and other tasbeeh. Greeting fellow Muslims with warmth and kindness is an important part of the day, strengthening the sense of community and brotherhood.

It is also important that believers arrive at the Eid gathering on time and remain until the end, listening attentively to the sermon, participating in the collective supplication (dua), and exchanging greetings with others. Leaving immediately without taking part in these aspects may cause one to miss out on the blessings and unity that the gathering brings.

In essence, Eid al-Fitr is far more than a social or cultural celebration. It is a day of gratitude, spiritual reflection, generosity, and compassion. By observing the night of Lailatul Jaizah with worship, strengthening family ties, caring for the needy through Sadaqatul Fitr, and performing the Eid prayer with sincerity, Muslims can truly experience the beauty and purpose of this blessed occasion.

On this blessed occasion, Muslims should also remember in their prayers those brothers, sisters, and children who are suffering in different parts of the world, especially in Palestine. At the same time, our responsibility should not remain limited to prayers alone; we should assist them as much as possible through charity, aid, and support.

May this Eid bring peace, forgiveness, and blessings to all, and may it remind us of the true values of faith, humility, and unity. Eid Mubarak to all.



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Two fronts: Taliban courts India while strategically blasting Pakistan

by: Rashid Siddiqui

Behind the ramped-up border fighting lies a calculated Taliban effort to distract from its harboring of terror group militants.

In the rugged terrain along the Durand Line, the contested border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, a fresh wave of violence has erupted, pitting Pakistani forces against the Taliban government in Kabul.

What began as Pakistani airstrikes on February 21 targeting alleged militant camps in eastern Afghanistan has spiraled into a wider ongoing conflict, with retaliatory drone strikes, border skirmishes and artillery exchanges claiming dozens of lives on both sides.

As of early March, residents in border areas report heavy shelling and explosions, forcing many to flee their homes amid fears of further escalation.

This is not merely a border dispute, but a calculated maneuver by the Taliban to divert attention from their continued harboring of anti-Pakistan militant networks while sending pointed signals to regional powers, particularly India.

For Pakistan, long positioned as a frontline state against extremism spilling over from Afghanistan, the clashes underscore a persistent security dilemma: how to confront a government that shelters groups like the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) without igniting a full-scale war.

Pakistan has framed itself as a bulwark against terrorism emanating from Afghan soil since the Taliban seized power in 2021. Despite repeated diplomatic overtures — including cease-fires and talks brokered by regional players — Islamabad accuses Kabul of providing safe haven for groups like the TTP, al-Qaeda and the Islamic State Khorasan Province.

United Nations monitoring reports have documented these sanctuaries, contrasting sharply with the Taliban's denials and highlighting a structural problem that is fueling cross-border instability.

Established by Pakistani militants in 2007, TTP seeks stricter enforcement of Islamic laws, the release of its members in Pakistani government custody and a reduction in Pakistani military presence in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the province bordering Afghanistan that it has long used as a base.

The latest flare-up followed a series of terrorist attacks in Pakistan, including bombings in Islamabad, Bajaur and Bannu, which Pakistani officials attributed to militants based in Afghanistan. In response, the Pakistan Air Force struck targets in Nangarhar, Paktika and Khost provinces.

The Taliban retaliated on February 26, launching drone attacks and ground offensives along the border, prompting Pakistan to launch Operation Ghazab Lil Haq — a campaign that has included strikes on Kabul and Kandahar, the Taliban's political and spiritual heartlands. Afghan officials claimed 55 Pakistani soldiers killed and 19 posts seized, while Pakistan reported neutralizing Taliban movements and destroying security outposts.

"This is not random escalation," said a senior Pakistani military official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "It's strategic cover for the Taliban's permissive environment toward TTP and affiliated groups."

Complicating the picture is the Taliban's simultaneous projection of hostility toward Pakistan and warming ties with India. Just days before the February clashes intensified, the Taliban appointed Noor Ahmad Noor as their first chargé d'affaires in New Delhi — a diplomatic milestone nearly five years after their return to power.

This followed India's decision to reopen its embassy in Kabul in

October 2025, after high-level meetings between Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and his Indian counterparts.

New Delhi's engagement, driven by pragmatism amid its own tensions with Pakistan and China, has condemned Pakistani airstrikes and affirmed Afghanistan's sovereignty during the recent hostilities.

For the Taliban, this outreach reinforces a perception of a hostile regional posture toward Islamabad, suggesting that two-front pressure on Pakistan — from Afghanistan in the west and India in the east — is coalescing.

Analysts see this as part of a broader Taliban strategy. "The pattern suggests political signaling and operational facilitation intersect at the border," said Husain Haqqani, a former Pakistani ambassador to the United States and director for South and Central Asia at the Hudson Institute. "By escalating with Pakistan while courting India, the Taliban mask their support for proxies and deepen regional polarization."

This dynamic echoes historical rivalries. India, which supported the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance in the 1990s and provided aid to the ousted Afghan republic, has shifted toward engagement to counter Pakistani influence and secure its economic interests, including access to Central Asia via Afghanistan, thus bypassing Pakistan. The Taliban, isolated internationally, now view India as a counterweight to Pakistani pressure.

The Afghanistan-Pakistan clashes have erupted amid a cascade of ongoing conflicts in South Asia, a region already strained by nuclear rivalries, insurgencies and border disputes.

In 2025, India and Pakistan engaged in their most serious confrontation in decades, triggered by a deadly terrorist attack in Indian-administered Kashmir that killed 26 people. Retaliatory missile strikes and drone attacks escalated tensions, pushing the nuclear-armed neighbors to the brink.

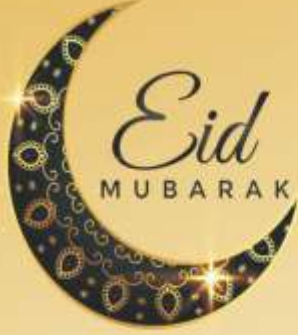
Further afield, Myanmar's civil war continues to spill over into India's northeast, disrupting supply chains and complicating economic integration efforts. The Line of Actual Control between India and China sees intermittent confrontations, while insurgencies in Pakistan's Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces add layers of internal volatility.

"Regional stability cannot coexist with simultaneous sanctuary, signaling and selective diplomatic alignment," the Pakistani official said. This sentiment reflects broader warnings from conflict analysts: South Asia's interconnected flashpoints — from Kashmir to the Durand Line — risk a domino effect, exacerbated by great-power rivalries involving the United States, China and Russia.

Pakistan has vowed to defend its territorial integrity, responding proportionately to provocations and taking calibrated defensive measures against terrorist infiltration disguised as border engagement.

Yet as the Taliban signal willingness for talks amid the fighting — with spokesmen calling for dialogue to resolve differences — the path to peace remains uncertain. Rather than dismantling cross-border militant infrastructure, the Taliban would likely rather sustain the cycle of volatility that benefits the extremists they harbor.

In a region where old grievances is fueling new battles, the Durand Line skirmishes serve as a stark reminder: without addressing the root causes of sanctuary and cross-border militancy, South Asia's stability will be tested as the conflict risks spilling over and igniting new flashpoints.



Eid-ul-Fitr

The Festival

By: Moulana Sayed Yusuf

The following is Mustahab on Eid's Day:

- To trim the nails
- To have a bath
- To brush the teeth with a Miswaak
- To wear nice clothing- preferably new, if not, then freshly washed clothing
- To use Attar (scent)
- To perform Fajr Salaah in the Masjid
- To pay Fitra before the Eid Salaah
- To walk to the Masjid or Eid Gah in one route and to return on another
- To eat dates or something sweet before going for the Eid Salaah
- To express joy and donate generously
- To recite the Takbeer on route to the Eid Gah or Masjid

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ط
اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ الْحَمْدُ ط

Allahu Akbar Allahu Akbar. Laa Illaha Illallahu
Wal Laahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar Wa Lillahil Hamd
"Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest. There is none worthy of worship besides Allah and Allah is the Greatest and to Allah belongs all Praise.

The Eid Salaah

The Eid Salaah is Waajib upon every person on whom the Jummah Salaah is Waajib. There are only two Rakaats in the Eid Salaah. These two Rakaats are offered as an expression of thanks to the Almighty Allah for giving us the strength, courage Taufeeq to keep fast, perform Taraweeh and I'tikaf etc. during the Mubarak month of Ramadhaan. This is also where Allah rewards us for our fast, patience and sacrifices.

Niyah- Intention

Before beginning the Eid Salaah, ensure that you have Wudhu. Say the Niyah as follows:

نَوَيْتُ أَنْ أُصَلِّيَ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى رُكْعَتَيْنِ مَعَ سِتَّةِ تَكْبِيرَاتٍ
صَلْوَةً عِيدِ الْفِطْرِ اِقْتَدَيْتُ بِهَذَا الْإِمَامِ مُتَوَجِّهًا
إِلَى جِهَةِ الْكَعْبَةِ الشَّرِيفَةِ ط

Nawaytu an usalliya Lillahi Ta'aala Rak'atini ma'a Sittati Takbeeraati Salaata Eidil Fitri Iqtadaytu Behaazal Imaami Mutawajjihan Ila Jihatil Ka'batish Shareefah.

"Oh Allah I am performing two Rakaats Eid-ul-Fitr Salaah with six extra Takbeers for You, as a follower behind this Imam facing towards the Holy Ka'bah.

Method of the Eid Salaah

After the Imam says the first Takbeer (Takbeer-e-Tahreema), recite Thanaa (SubhanakAllah Humma). Thereafter the Imam will say three extra Takbeers, raising the hands to the ears each time and releasing them to your side after the first and second extra Takbeers. Now, after the third extra Takbeer, fold and place your hands below the navel. The Imam will read Surah Fatiha and a Surah and complete the Rakaat in the usual manner.

In the second Rakaat after Surah Fatiha and the Surah, before going into Ruku, the Imam will say three extra Takbeers, raising your hands to the ear and releasing them to the sides each time. Thereafter, the Imam will say Allahu Akbar and go into Ruku, complete the Salaah in the usual manner.

After the Salaah the Imam will make a Duaa, and deliver a Khutba.

There is no Azaan nor Iqaamah for the Eid Salaah.



Hazrat Abu Ayyub ؓ reported that Rasullullah ﷺ said : "If anyone who has kept the fasts in Ramadhaan, follows them up with six(optional) fasts of Shawwaal then (he will get reward for the fasts of a year but if he does that always) it is as if he fasted all his life. (Muslim)

Hazrat Sauban ؓ reported that Rasullullah ﷺ has said that: "Joining six days of the fasts of shawwaal is equal to the fast of the whole year. Each good act is equal to ten such acts." (Ibn Majah, Nasai)

It means that the reward of each good deed is atleast multiplied ten times. Therefore, thirty days of the fasts of Ramadhaan is thus equal to three hundred days and the six days of Shawwaal is equal to sixty. Thus, making the total of three hundred and sixty, which is the number of days in the lunar Islamic year.

THE SAINT OF CHARLESTOWN

Hazrat Mohammed Ismail Pochee Qadri Sabri (RA) of Charlestown KZN is revered as one amongst the famous Auliya-Allah (Friends of Allah) in South Africa. His abode of rest under a majestic dome at the newly renovated mazaar attracts many followers of the sufi path and visitors from various places, placing the humble country-set Charlestown (adjacent to the famed battle hills of the historical Majuba pass) prominently on the tourist route.

A first time visit to the tomb is an altogether overwhelming experience, taking in the vast stretch of rural landscape, the crisp air chilled but charged with a strange exhilaration, as one reaches the sacred grounds of the shrine. Even more strange is the forlorn sense of isolation and emptiness from worldliness, bringing sharply into focus a perception of eternity in awe of the Almighty Creator. The connection of the saint with the Supreme Being is remarkably sensed on entering the building.

Historical accounts place Hazrat Pochee Bawa as a contemporary of the great spiritual pioneers of Sufism in Natal, Hazrat Badsha Peer and Hazrat Soofi Saheb (RA) of Durban, and that it was the close relationship and friendship with the former that ultimately led to his entrenchment upon the spiritual journey which was to take him to the the mentorship of the respected luminary and Guide, Hazrat Shah Fazle Hassan Rampuri (RA), who initiated him into the Qadri Sabri Farooqi spiritual order, granting him Khilafat and authorisation to establish the Khanqah (spiritual retreat, in Charlestown.

Many supernatural encounters of travelers through the mountainous Majuba Pass are recounted in sufi legends that point to the saintly presence and achievements of the Charlestown mystic, to this day. Nowadays more and more adherents from different spiritual affiliations take the longer route to Durban by driving through Charlestown so as to visit the tomb and seek blessings from the great Friend of Allah. On leaving the mazaar they pause a short distance further to pray at the Mosque established by Pochee Bawa, and are shown outstanding hospitality by the family and descendants of the saint, also affording them the opportunity to visit the preserved hujra (spiritual chamber) where the saint had spent precious moments in prayer, meditation, and intimacy with his search for the Divine Presence.

Certainly the timeless legacy of Hazrat Pochee Bawa (RA) based on the love and strict principles of the Holy Prophet of Islam, and propagation of the Qur'anic values of the religion as taught by the illustrious Khwajegaan (Sufi Masters) is still upheld presently by his devotees particularly by the present custodian Sufi Mehmood Suleman Pochee, his grandson.

Hazrat Pochee Bawa (RA) breathed his last on 29 Ramadaan (5 April 1959) and was laid to rest on the day of Eid. His Urs is celebrated annually on this day.



TEACHINGS OF POCHEE BAWA

"Obey Allah, Obey His Messenger, and those in Authority over you" (Qur'an)

Foundation of spirituality begins at home. Parents must instill Love, Respect, and Discipline in their children.

Show appreciation to the helping hand never forgetting any favour.

Friendship should be out of love and not because of fulfilling a need.

It is better to recite a small section of the Holy Book with intense love and concentration than mindlessly racing through chapters without focus and clarity.

Respect the Auliya-Allah (Friends of Allah), every one of them, and display respect and humility when entering their presence.

Characterise Respect because Love and Respect is Ibadah (worship)





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A Kausar

Hazrat Khadim Ghulam Jilani Baba Sabri (RA)

"SABRI...I'm just a Sabri!"

Those who met him, no matter how briefly, will testify to the uplifting experience only a saint could show. A rare quality of attending to one and all at the same time a reception leaving you feeling as if you were his favourite person. Intense affection and detailed attention, oozing charm and fragrance. Yet his appearance commanded awe, recognition, and a respect surpassing leaders and societal hierarchs, even with his pauper-like image. He worked as caretaker of the Sabri shrine in Kalyar Shareef, India, and also served as a senior Peer and elder in the Sabri sufi line. I am prevented from any further prais only in respect of a direct order he issued me...

"I am Ghulam Jilani the khadim of Sabir Paak. If you want to write or say anything about me, that is all you should say!"

- Irshad Ahmed Siddiqi Sabri

WISAAL DATE:

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AL-AQSA Cries in the Last Ten Nights

by: Saadia Gani



Shawaal 1447 / 2026

When devotion becomes resistance, and the sacred stones weep for the Ummah.

The green door would open quietly, and before us stood the Dome of the Rock, glowing beneath the Ramadan night. For the past three Ramadans, I walked the courtyards of Al-Aqsa, feeling the sacredness of a place that has echoed with prayers for centuries. We would share iftar with hundreds of Palestinian families, pray Taraweeh, and remain inside the Al-Aqsa sanctuary through the night the gates closed by the guards until 4 a.m., when they the Israeli soldiers would reopen and we would return to the hotel for suhoor.

Then, after Fajr, something beautiful would happen. Elderly Palestinian women from the surrounding neighborhoods would form Qur'an circles, reading and reciting the Qur'an and engaging in Quranic discussion. These circles became a form of resistance their presence and prayers silently guarding Al-Aqsa, a testament that devotion could protect what force could not.

Even in these moments, a quiet sorrow lingered. Deep down, I knew that every visit could be my last. Every year, the shadow of encroachment grew heavier; every year, the sanctity of Al-Aqsa felt more fragile. The presence of those who do not belong in Al-Aqsa became more apparent. I witnessed Jews entering the courtyards, permitted to remain and pray for hours at a time. Last year, this presence stretched for hours a stark reminder of the shifting realities within our sacred space. And now, with the escalation of war in Iran and the ensuing closures, Al-Aqsa has been silenced during the holiest month of Ramadan a time meant for worship, reflection, and closeness to Allah.

Al-Aqsa now cries, and her voice echoes through her empty courtyards. It is not a loud cry, but a subtle, heart-wrenching whisper felt in the hearts of those who have loved her for generations. Her tears fall in the last ten nights of Ramadan, when our hearts are meant to be closest to Allah, when devotion is meant to illuminate every corner of our souls. Her cry is a lament for sanctity violated, for the silence of the Muslim Ummah, and for the interruption of a resistance long woven into her walls. She mourns the loss of leaders like Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar, and the countless martyrs who

dedicated their lives to protecting her. She grieves for the suffering of the people of Gaza and for those who endure life under occupation around her sacred walls.

But beyond grief, her cries are also a mirror. They reflect our own spiritual condition and the state of the Islamic Ummah fragmented, divided, and disempowered. For centuries, Muslims stood as guardians of this sacred space, striving for justice, sanctity, and freedom. Today, as the courtyards and surroundings of Al-Aqsa echo with absence rather than worship, we are called to reflect: have we lost touch with the essence of our responsibility?

The liberation of Al-Aqsa is not merely a political endeavor; it is a spiritual imperative. It is a call to uphold justice, protect sanctity, and act with courage. Yet this responsibility begins within. Each tear that falls from her sacred stones reminds us that our faith, our devotion, and our awareness are our first instruments of resistance.

As we enter the last ten nights of Ramadan, let us not only seek forgiveness and mercy for ourselves but also for Al-Aqsa for her sanctity, her preservation, and for the countless faithful who have long awaited her liberation. Let her cries awaken us not to despair, but to devotion; not to resignation, but to resolve. May these nights inspire reflection on our purpose, our faith, and our duty. May we honor Al-Aqsa not only with words, but with hearts committed to justice, sanctity, and courage.

As the last ten nights descend, Al-Aqsa's cry is not merely a lament it is a call. A call to awaken our faith, to renew our devotion, and to remember the trust that rests upon this Ummah. Her courtyards may stand empty, but her light has not dimmed. It lives in the prayers of those who remember her, in the hearts that refuse to forget her sanctity, and in the souls that rise in the night seeking Allah's mercy. Al-Aqsa cries in these sacred nights and her tears ask only that we remember our duty, renew our faith, and answer her call with courage, devotion, and unwavering hope.

Saadia Gani is an attorney with her Master's in English and Multi-disciplinary human rights