

## **1. Conflict between Israel and Syria**

**Prelims Syllabus:** Places in News

**Mains Syllabus:** GS-II Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.



### **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.

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## **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.

