

How religion affects Muslims and Jews in Israel and Gaza's Current conflict.

Introduction

There has been a war between Hamas and Israel since 7th October 2023, and there are now hopes for an end to that conflict. This essay will explore the religious reasons for the conflict and the laws that religion

Main body

Muslims derive their religion primarily from two main sources: the Qur'an, which Muslims believe is the direct word of God, and the Hadith, a collection of the Prophet Muhammad's life teachings, sayings, and actions that offer guidance for how they live their lives. When discussing Palestine and Hamas, it is important to understand whose teachings Palestinians, particularly Sunni Muslims who make up approximately 85% of the population, follow and seek to emulate. Within these texts, there are statements such as: "The last hour will not come before the Muslims fight the Jews and the Muslims kill them, so that Jews will hide behind stones and trees and the stone and the tree will say, 'O Muslim, O servant of God, there is a Jew behind me; come and kill him.' The only exception will be the box-thorn, for it is one of the trees of the Jews."¹ This hadith is also reflected in Hamas's manifesto, specifically in Article Seven, which states that Israel "will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it."²

For Jewish people, Israel holds deep religious significance for historical, spiritual, and theological reasons. It is regarded as the Promised Land, given to them by their God according to the Hebrew Bible. The land is especially sacred as it was home to the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem—central places of worship where God's presence was believed to reside. Despite the destruction of the Temples being a devastating event in Jewish history, many Jews continue to regard the land itself as holy. The

hope for a Third Temple is often linked to the coming of the Messiah and the restoration of the Jewish nation.

One reason why Israelis desire their own country may stem from perceived threats rooted in Sharia law and the treatment of religious minorities under Hamas's rule. Since Hamas seized control of Gaza in 2006, no non-Muslim has been allowed to serve in the Palestinian Legislative Council, effectively erasing representation and rights for religious minorities, including Jews, to practice their faith or laws.^{^3} In contrast, Israel's parliament currently includes multiple minority representatives—Mansour Abbas, Iman Khatib-Yasin, Ahmad Tibi, and Ayman Odeh—highlighting the exclusionary policies of Hamas's governance. This systematic exclusion is rooted in Quran 98:6, which refers to non-Muslims as “the worst of creatures.”^{^4}

Moreover, repression under Hamas extends to women, who hold no political leadership roles within its governance. In contrast, women hold nearly a quarter of the seats in the Israeli parliament. This disparity reflects certain misogynistic teachings attributed to Muhammad, who declared, “Never will succeed such a nation in making a woman their ruler.”^{^5} He also said, “O women! Give alms, for I have seen that the majority of the dwellers of Hell-fire were you.” When asked why, he replied that women “curse frequently and are ungrateful to their husbands” and that he had “not seen anyone more deficient in intelligence and religion than you.”^{^6} He further decreed that the testimony of two women equals that of one man, effectively branding women as intellectually inferior, a claim contradicted by modern studies showing that, on average, females outperform males in autobiographical memory tasks.^{^7}

Under Sharia law, non-Muslims are compelled to pay a tax known as jizya to Muslims in exchange for protection. Ironically, protection from violence or punishment at the hands of the Islamic state itself. Historically, refusal to pay this tax often led to threats, coercion, imprisonment, or physical harm, drawing legitimate comparisons to mafia-style extortion, where individuals or businesses are forced to pay for "protection" under the looming threat of destruction. The amount of jizya is arbitrary, determined solely by the ruling caliph or Islamic authority, turning it into a tool not only of financial

exploitation but also a psychological attack . The Qur'an, in Chapter 9, Verse 29, commands: *“Fight those who do not believe in Allah or the Last Day... until they pay the jizya with willing submission and feel themselves subdued.”* (8) This verse is just one of at least 51 verses across 18 chapters of the Qur'an that instruct or encourage violence against disbelievers. It reflects a deeply entrenched ideological stance that casts non-Muslims not merely as outsiders but as targets of conquest and humiliation. The verse explicitly instructs Muslims to fight non-believers until they submit, pay, and accept a subservient status, showing the underlying religious justification for systemic domination. The intent behind *jizya* is not a neutral tax policy it is a religiously sanctioned method of control, intimidation, and degradation of non-Muslim populations. In stark contrast, Israel imposes no religiously-based taxes. Its legal and tax systems apply equally to Muslims, Jews, Christians, atheists, and others, regardless of belief. There is no Islamic-style jizya in Israel, nor are citizens burdened differently based on religious identity. This highlights a fundamental difference in governance: where one system imposes religious supremacy through coercion, the other upholds equal treatment under the law, regardless of faith or ideology.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the increasing Islamization of Middle Eastern countries, including Gaza, may compel many individuals, both non-Muslims and some Muslims to consider leaving these regions. This is largely due to the restrictive nature of Islamic law, which often oppresses non-believers and restricts women's rights. Under Hamas's rule, governance and social policies have embodied these doctrines, leading to jews, christians and other religions feeling unwelcome and second class. This environment of religious intolerance has contributed to the historical and ongoing justification for the existence of Israel as a refuge for the Jewish people .It is Hamas's opposition to the existence of Israel that has led to the Hamas-Israel war.

Footnotes

1. Sahih al-Bukhari 2926, accessed October 10, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2926>.
2. "The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas)," Avalon Project, Yale Law School, accessed October 10, 2025, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/21st_century/hamas.asp.
3. "Palestinian Legislative Council Members," Israeli Democracy Institute, accessed October 10, 2025, <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/58603>.
4. Quran 98:6, accessed October 10, 2025, <https://quran.com/98?startingVerse=6>.
5. Sahih al-Bukhari 7099, accessed October 10, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7099>.
6. Sahih al-Bukhari 304, accessed October 10, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:304>.
7. "Sex Differences in Autobiographical Memory," PubMed Central, accessed October 10, 2025, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6028920/>.
8. Quran 9:29 <https://quran.com/at-tawbah/29>