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Editorial address

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Interdisciplinary Research Center of the University of Warsaw "Identity – Dialogue – Security"
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email: centrum.tozsamosc@uw.edu.pl

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İlhan Aras* Fatma Sağıncı**

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Gulf Countries' Palestine Policy and Jerusalem: So Close and Yet So Far

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Abstract

In this study, Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017 was accepted as the starting point. Thus, the study seeks to answer the question, "What is the Gulf Arab countries' policy towards Palestine since Trump's Jerusalem decision?" The study, which covers the period 2017-2024, also mentions the Gaza war that began in 2023. The policies of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates were examined in the study. Statements by country officials were evaluated chronologically and using Arabic sources. As a result, it has been observed that the Gulf Arab countries reacted jointly to Trump's decision and the Gaza war, and called for the establishment of a Palestinian state. In contrast, Bahrain and the UAE's normalization processes with Israel, and Jordan's neutral policy, have also shown that the Gulf Arab countries are unable to act in unison.

Keywords Gulf Arab Countries, Palestine, Israel, Jerusalem



Introduction

Ithough the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel occurred during US President Donald Trump's first term, the "Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995" is significant as it shows that the US's objective in this regard is a long-standing issue:

"(...) Since 1950, the city of Jerusalem has been the capital of the State of Israel. (...) The United States conducts official meetings and other business in the city of Jerusalem in de facto recognition of its status as the capital of Israel. (...) Jerusalem should be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel; and the United States Embassy in Israel should be established in Jerusalem no later than May 31, 1999. (...)"¹

The act adopted by the US Congress was repeatedly postponed by subsequent presidents and was not implemented until the Trump era. Presidents before Trump did not enforce the decision, signing waivers that continually delayed the relocation; however, during, the Trump administration, the embassy was opened in Jerusalem with a grand ceremony on May 14, 2018. With Trump's initiative, the US became the first country to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.² He announced his decision, which was described as a turning point in the Middle East, on December 6, 2017, as follows:

"(...) My announcement today marks the beginning of a new approach to conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. In 1995, Congress adopted the Jerusalem Embassy Act, urging the federal government to relocate the American embassy to Jerusalem and to recognize that that city — and so importantly — is Israel's capital. (...) Yet, for over 20 years, every previous American president has exercised the law's waiver, refusing to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem or to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital city. (...) After more than two decades of waivers, we are no closer to a lasting peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. It would be folly to assume that repeating the exact same formula would now produce a different or better result. Therefore, I have determined that it is time to officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. While previous presidents have made this a major campaign promise, they failed to deliver. Today, I am delivering. (...) Today, Jerusalem is the seat of the modern Israeli government. It is the home of the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, as well as the Israeli Supreme Court. It is the location of the official residence of the Prime Minister and the President. It is the headquarters of many government ministries. (...) But today, we finally acknowledge the obvious: that Jerusalem is Israel's capital. This is nothing

1. Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, https://www.congress.gov/104/plaws/publ45/PLAW-104publ45.pdf, (access 15.05.2025).

2. H. Shaker, Official Arab Positions
On The Trump Administration's Jerusalem Decision, in: Al-Quds History, Religion, And Politics, eds. A.a. El-Awaisi,
M. Ataman, SETA Publications 2021,
p. 134; F. Canan, ABD'nin Kudüs Kararı ve Yansımaları, Ortadoğu ve Afrika Araştırmaları Derneği 2017, pp. 5–6,
https://ordaf.org/wp-content/up-loads/2017/12/dd11-kudu%CC%88s.pdf, (access 15.05.2025).





more, or less, than a recognition of reality. It is also the right thing to do. It's something that has to be done. That is why, consistent with the Jerusalem Embassy Act, I am also directing the State Department to begin preparation to move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. (...)"³

Trump's declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel was also an important step to gain the support of conservative and pro-Israel lobbies in the European Union. Thus, the US sought to ensure that Israel's illegal presence in the region was accepted, contrary to UN resolutions. This decision, which sparked conflicts in Palestine and provoked reactions in many parts of the world, was an important step for the US.⁴ Trump's decision caused serious protests in Arab and Muslim countries, and the UN Secretary-General, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and many state leaders also reacted to it.⁵

Trump's decision had a significant impact, and reactions came from countries and international organizations in a short time. The Arab League stated that, with Trump's decision, the US had moved away from its role as "sponsor and broker" of the peace process in the Middle East and made the following statement: "a dangerous development that places the United States at a position of bias in favor of the occupation and the violation of international law and resolutions." Additionally, according to the organization, Trump's Jerusalem decision "undermines efforts to bring about peace, deepens tension and will spark anger that will threaten to push the region to the edge of the abuss of violence, chaos and bloodshed." The head of the Arab League called on all states to recognize Palestine as a sovereign state with Jerusalem as its capital.⁶ The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which held an extraordinary summit with the participation of 22 heads of state and government at the invitation of Turkey, the OIC term president, placed the issue on its agenda. Twentythree countries, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, attended the meeting by sending lower-level delegations. At the meeting held in Istanbul on December 13, 2017, Trump's decision was assessed by Muslim leaders as follows: "Reject and condemn in the strongest terms the unilateral decision by the President of the United States America recognizing Al-Quds as the so-called capital of Israel, the occupying Power." It was declared that "East Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Palestine" and a call was also made to all states to "recognize the State of Palestine and East Jerusalem as the occupied capital."7

- 3. U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Italy, 'Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem, U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Italy 2017, https://it.usembassy.gov/statement-president-trump-jerusalem-december-6-2017/, (access 15.05.2025).
- 4. Y.M. Aljamal, Trump's Decision to Recognize Jerusalem as Israel's Capital: Domestic Motivations and Regional Circumstances, "Journal of Al-Tamaddun", 2020, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 120–121, DOI: 10.22452/JAT.vol15no1.8.
- 5. H. Shaker, *Official Arab Positions...*, op. cit., pp. 135–136.
- 6. K. Bredemeier, F. Robinson, New Protests Erupt in Muslim, Arab World Against Trump's Jerusalem Decision, VOA 2017, https://www.voanews.com/a/lebanon-protest-met-with-tear-gas-water-canons/4157244.html, (access 15.05.2025).
- 7. D. Jones, Turkey Summit Blasts Trump Decision on Jerusalem, VOA 2017, https://www.voanews.com/a/islamic-world-meeting-regarding-trump-jerusalem-choice/4161688.html, (access 15.05.2025); Final Communiqué of the Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference, 'To Consider the Situation in wake of US Administration's Recognition of the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif as the So-Cal-



Most Arab peoples and governments support the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. However, resolving the decades-old Arab-Israeli conflict has not been a priority for these countries.⁸ Hossam Shaker outlined the attitude of the Arab world regarding Trump's decision under the following headings:

"(...) the rejection of the decision and the assertion of its illegitimacy and confliction with the 'peace process'; the refusal to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the insistence that East Jerusalem shall remain the capital of Palestine; the emphasis of the importance of complete and permanent peace in the Middle East as a strategic option and commitment to the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative; the increase of the number of states opposing the U.S. decision and keeping other states from following suit; and the call for expanding international recognition of the State of Palestine and East Jerusalem as its capital."

The Palestine question has been an identity issue in the Gulf countries throughout history, based on the interest of Gulf communities in the Palestine issue and the historical ties established with the Palestinians, and has maintained its place as a priority issue in their foreign policies. When the literature is examined, it is evident that there are few studies on the approaches of the Gulf countries to the Palestine issue in general and to the declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in particular. Zahlan's pioneering studies on the Gulf countries and Palestine are historical studies that generally focus on developments in the 20th century. Qavuşoğlu discusses the historical approaches of the Gulf countries to the Palestine issue. Rakipoğlu and Baycar, Khalid and Mat, and Horinuki discuss the Gulf countries' policies towards Palestine after the Gaza war in 2023 and highlight the differences in these countries' approaches. On the other hand, as far as can be determined, there is no study on the Gulf countries' approaches to Jerusalem. The official discourses of Arab countries against Jerusalem becoming the capital of Israel were examined by Shaker. For this reason, the study will be one of the pioneering works in the literature on both Gulf countries-Palestine relations and the Gulf countries' Jerusalem policies.

Since Jerusalem is an issue that dates back centuries and concerns dozens of countries, the study will have some limitations. In the study, Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017 was taken as the starting point; the Jerusalem policies of the Gulf Arab countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates) are discussed chronologically. Thus, the study seeks to answer the following question: "What is the Gulf Arab countries' policy

- led Capital of Israel, The Occupying Power, And Transfer Of The Us Embassy To Al-Quds', OIC/EX-CFM/2017/PAL/FC, https://www.oic-oci.org/docdow-n/?docID=1699&refID=1073, (access 16.05.2025).
- 8. J.H. Ferziger, G. Bahgat, *Israel's Growing Ties with the Gulf Arab States*, Atlantic Council 2020, p. 7.
- 9. H. Shaker, Official Arab Positions..., op. cit., p. 141.
- 10. E. Çavuşoğlu, Körfez Ülkeleri ve Filistin: Güçlü Tarihsel Bağlar Temelinde Körfez Siyaseti, "Uluslararası Politik Araştırmalar Dergisi", 2022, Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 30, DOI: 10.25272/icps.1137102.
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- 13. M. Rakipoglu, H. Baycar, Gulf Cooperation Council's Reaction to Israeli Aggression Since October 7, in: VII.
 Ortadoğu'da Siyaset ve Toplum Kongresi Tam Metin Kitapçığı, ed. Y. Turan, Sakarya Üniversitesi Yayınları 2024, pp. 1–10.
- 14. N. Khalid, B. Mat, Responses of Gulf States to the Palestine-Israel Conflict in post 7th October 2023, "SINERGI: Journal of Strategic Studies & International



towards Palestine since Trump's Jerusalem decision?" After examining the policies of six Gulf countries on Palestine in general and Jerusalem in particular, a comparison of their policies will be made in the conclusion section, emphasizing similarities and differences.

Bahrain's Policy

Bahrain's Foreign Ministry stated that Trump's Jerusalem decision threatens the peace process in the Middle East; it hinders peace initiatives, negotiations between the parties, and efforts to resolve the problem.¹⁷ Bahrain's Foreign Minister Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa made statements to the Times of Israel newspaper in the context of the "Bahrain Peace Workshop" organized by Washington in 2019 and boycotted by the Palestinians. It was stated that Israel has the right to live within safe borders, that Bahrain and some Arab countries want to establish normal relations with Israel to bring peace to the region, that the Arab Peace Initiative was offered to Israel, which is neither an island country nor distant from the region, and that the Bahrain Workshop is an extremely good opportunity for peace.¹⁸

In his speech at the UN General Assembly on the subject of "The Question of Palestine," the Kingdom of Bahrain's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Jamal Faris Al Ruwai, stated that the international community must intensify its efforts, which have been ongoing for years, to find a just, comprehensive, and lasting solution to the Palestinian question. He emphasized that the Kingdom of Bahrain has been continuously contributing to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNRWA) to alleviate the hardships faced by Palestinian refugees in the Middle East and to support stability in the region.¹⁹

Following the signing of the Abraham Accords at the White House on September 15, 2020, Bahrain and Israel have opened their embassies, signed numerous bilateral agreements, and strengthened trade relations. However, Bahrain, like other Arab states party to the Abraham Accords, faces a serious dilemma due to Israel's ongoing attacks on Gaza and the risk that these attacks could affect other parts of the Middle East.²⁰ Anti-normalization protests continue in Bahrain, indicating that the majority of the population remains undecided about normalization with Israel.²¹

Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa met with Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz at Sakhir Palace on February 2, 2022. It was the first visit of an Israeli Defence Minister to Bahrain. During the visit, a defense agreement was signed between Bahrain and Israel. It was the first defense

Affairs", 2024, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 82–105, DOI: 10.17576/sinergi.0402.2024.07.

15. K. Horinuki, From Oil Weapon to Mediation Diplomacy: An Examination of the Gulf States' Responses to the Gaza War, in: Gaza Nakba 2023–2024: Background, Context, Consequences, eds. H. Suzuki, K. Sakai, Springer 2024, pp. 103–122.

16. H. Shaker, *Official Arab Positions...*, op. cit., pp. 133–162.

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[Condemnation Reactions from Arab and International Community Regarding Trump's Decision on Jerusalem],
Al-Quds 2017, https://www.alquds.co-.uk/قطر-تدعو-إلي-آلية-عربية-إسلامية-لمواجه/, (access 17.05.2025).

18. إسرائيل وجدت لتبقى».. البحرين تعلن رغبتها في التطبيع، الجزيرة الجزيرة الجزيرة [Israel has existed and will remain" ... Bahrain Declares Desire for Normalization], Al Jazeera 2019, https://www.aljazeera.net/politics/2019/6/27/البحرين-/(access 17.05.2025).

19. مملكة البحرين تؤكد موقفها الثابت والراسخ في دعم مملكة البحرين، القضية الفلسطيني وكالة الأنباء البحرين، [The Kingdom of Bahrain Reaffirms Its Resolute and Unwavering Stance in Support of the Palestinian Issue], Bahrain News Agency 2022, https://www.bna.bh/مملكة البحرينتؤكدموقفها الثابتوالراسخفيدعمالقضية aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDqWnh%2FtYB5iOOBGsXsJo-RZo%3D, (access 17.05.2025).



agreement signed between Israel and Bahrain since the normalization of diplomatic relations and their accession to the Abraham Accords. It aims to deepen security and cooperation between the two countries, especially in the areas of intelligence sharing, equipment purchases, and military training. Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz also stated that this agreement is an important step that will increase regional stability.²²

In November 2023, Bahrain recalled its ambassador from Israel over the war in Gaza. Thus, the good relations established with Israel suffered a serious blow.²³ On November 11, 2023, the Arab-Islamic Summit was held in Riyadh upon the invitation of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia to discuss developments in Gaza. Bahraini Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, who attended the summit, stated in his meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas that the Kingdom of Bahrain's stance on the Palestinian cause has not changed and that they support the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital within the borders of June 4, 1967, based on the two-state solution and UN resolutions.²⁴

Kuwait's Policy

Luwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah emphasized that the humanitarian tragedy in Gaza has deeply shaken everyone and that the only way to end the violence that has continued for years is to establish a sustainable and comprehensive peace plan based on two states.²⁵

The previous Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Jaber al-Sabah, held a stance on the Palestinian question that was one of the cornerstones of Kuwait's foreign policy. The statement that "Kuwait will be the last country to normalize relations with occupying Israel" was repeatedly emphasized by Kuwaiti leaders, especially the previous Emir al-Sabah. While there is a growing trend towards normalizing relations with Israel in the Arab world, especially in the Gulf countries, Kuwait has moved against this trend, rejecting any form of normalization and decisively declaring that it will not be part of this process.²⁶

The then Foreign Minister, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Sabah, stated that Trump's Jerusalem decision contradicted international law. Al-Sabah, at the Emergency Meeting of Arab Foreign Ministers held at the Arab League General Secretariat in Cairo, emphasized that it undermines the peace process in the region and poses a threat to the region. He also stated that it was condemned by all Arab

20. جورجيو كافيرو، البحرين أمام خيارات صعبة بسبب الحرب على غزّة

[Bahrain Faces Tough Choices in War on Gaza], Middle East Council on Global Affairs 2024, https://mecouncil.org/ar/blog_posts//-بالحرين-أمام-خيارات-صعبة-بسبب-الحرب, (access 20.05.2025).

21. فيرات صعبة أيلان ولاط و يوئيل غوزنسكي، البحرين أمام خيارات صعبة غزّة بسبب الحرب على غزّة

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https://aawsat.com/home/article/3454541/- اتفاق البحرين - وإسرائيل - توقعان - أول - اتفاق - (access 22.05.2025).

23. Bahrain recalls ambassador from Israel amid escalating assault on Gaza, Al Jazeera 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/2/bahrain-recalls-ambassador-from-israel-amid-escalating-assault-on-gaza, (access 22.05.2025).

24. وكالة الأنباء البحرين، سمو ولي العهد رئيس مجلس الوزراء: موقف البحرين تجاه القضية الفلسطينية ثابت وهو ما يؤكده دوماً جلالة الملك المعظم بدعم الحقوق المشروعة للشعب الفلسطيني في إقامة دولته المستقلة [Bahrain Crown Prince and Prime Min-



countries and that the legal and political status of Jerusalem should not be harmed. Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq al-Ghanim arranged a special parliamentary session regarding the Jerusalem issue and declared that it was unacceptable.²⁷

Trump's decision was protested in Al-Irada Square; it was emphasized that the historical rights of the Arab and Islamic world were violated, that the Kuwaiti people will never and under no circumstances establish relations with the Zionist regime, that Kuwait will stand by the Palestinian people, and that Jerusalem will always remain the capital of Palestine and the Arab world. Member of Parliament Osama Al-Shaheen stated that Jerusalem is not only an issue for Arabs and Muslims, but for all of humanity: "The decision of the American administration is unjust. In the face of this injustice, my call to Arab governments is to go beyond mere expressions of condemnation and protest. Because it is strength and courage that will bring back justice, otherwise normalization and a compromising attitude will never offer a solution." 28

Speaking at a high-level event titled "The International Court of Justice's Decision on Gaza" held at the OIC in Jeddah, Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Al Duaij Al Sabah said: "We reiterated Kuwait's continuous and undying support for the Palestinian cause, (...) we will continue to be at the forefront of this struggle until the Palestinian people achieve their full rights and continue to assist them against the oppression and attacks of the occupying Israel." She also highlighted the support of Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah al-Yahya for the regional conference titled "Arab Women, Peace and Security" organized by the Arab Women's League to address the situation in Gaza and discuss the role of women in achieving peace and security in the Arab world.²⁹

On November 30, 2022, a cultural event titled "Kuwait and the Palestinian Issue" was organized at Kuwait University on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in cooperation with the Center for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies at Kuwait University and the Embassy of Palestine. At the event, Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub explained Kuwait's support for Palestine from past to present as follows:

"What makes Palestine-Kuwait relations special is that Kuwait's support has no political agenda. Kuwait supports the Palestinian cause because it believes in the right of the Palestinian people to establish and live in an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. In addition, Kuwait has em-

ister: Bahrain's Position on the Palestinian Issue is Unchanging and is Always Reinforced by the Almighty King in Support of the Legitimate Right of the Palestinian People to Establish Their Independent State], Bahrain News Agency 2023, https://www.bna.bh/.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDiia435dCSTUaHHbAsTGTvU%3D, (access 25.05.2025).

25. ليوم السابع، وزير خارجية الكويت: حل الدولتين الطريق الوحيد لتسوية القضية الفلسطينية [Kuwaiti Foreign Minister: Two-State Solution Is the Only Way to Solve the

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غير-خارجية الكويت-حل-الدولتين-الطريق-الوحيد-لتسوية - 7108536 القضية-الفلسطينية - 25.05.2025), (access

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[Emir Sabah... has taken a determined role in supporting the Palestinian cause], Al Jazeera 2020, https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2020/10/1/-في-الثمير-صباح-دور-ثابت-في-(access 27.05.2025).

رأي اليوم، رفض كويتي رسمي وشعبي لقرار ترامب .72 الاعتراف بالقدس عاصمة لإسرائيل ونقل سفارة بلاده إليها.. وأمير العتراف بلقدة السطنبول

[Kuwait's Official and Public Rejection of Trump's Decision to Recognize Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel and Move the American Embassy to Jerusalem... The Emir of the Country Attends the Istanbul Summit], Raialyoum Arabic Independent Newspaper 2017, https://www.raialyoum.com/. https://www.raialyoum.com/, icocess 27.05.2025).



braced the Palestinian revolution. The Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah) was born here, and the first office of the Palestine Liberation Organization was established here. Kuwait is the only Arab country that allows Palestinians to conduct political activities on its territory."³⁰

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah al-Yahya announced that during the Gaza War, 112 million dollars of aid was provided to Palestine and that Kuwait will always help the brotherly Palestinian people and support them against the injustice they are subjected to.³¹ On the other hand, at the opening of the 45th Gulf Cooperation Council Summit in Kuwait, the Emir of Kuwait condemned Israel's attacks on Lebanon, Syria, and Iran. The Emir supported the contributions of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries to stability in the region, Saudi Arabia's leadership efforts to recognize the state of Palestine, and the efforts of Qatar, Egypt, and the US to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza.³² In response, the Permanent Representative of the State of Palestine to the UN, Ambassador Riyad Mansour, praised Kuwait's role in the Palestinian cause, its stance alongside the Palestinian people, and its efforts to stop the ongoing genocide in Gaza.³³

Oman's Policy

The Sultanate of Oman is one of the few Arab states in the Persian Gulf region that has pursued independent diplomacy in regional and international affairs over the past four decades, maintaining relations with different countries by pursuing a policy of neutrality. An example of this is the hosting of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Muscat in October 2018.³⁴

The "33rd Arab Summit" was held in Bahrain on May 16, 2024. At the end of the summit, it was requested that an international conference be held under the auspices of the UN for peace in the Middle East, and that this conference should result in the international recognition of Palestine as an independent state as it was in June 1967. At the Arab League meeting, Oman stated that a more effective Arab policy should be adopted to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to achieve full international recognition of the Palestinian state. Oman assessed Israel's policies towards the Palestinian people as "historic oppression," and Deputy Prime Minister Asad bin Tariq al-Said said, "Without these rights, there is no lasting stability and sustainable prosperity in our region; this is the common desire of both the peoples of the region and humanity around the world." Oman also emphasized to the international community that urgent steps should be taken for the rapid implementation of the Two-State Solution and that international legal standards should be effectively implemented.³⁵

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- 29. الجريدة ، الكويت تنتصر لفلسطين: القدس عاصمة العرب [Kuwait gives victory to Palestine: Jerusalem is the capital of the Arabs], Aljarida 2017, https://www.aljarida.com/articles/1512838911411892700, (access 27.05.2025).
- 30. الجزيرة، تأكيدا على محورية القضية ورفض التطبيع.. هكذا الميح الفلسطيني أحيت جامعة الكويت اليوم العالمي للتضامن مع الشعب الفلسطيني [Kuwait University celebrated the day of solidarity with the Palestinian people, emphasizing the centrality of the issue and expressing its opposition to normalization], Al Jazeera 2022, https://www.aljazeera.net/politics/2022/11/30/, (access 27.05.2025).
- 31. وشعبية الكويت والقضية الفلسطينية.. دعم متواصل في ألف وشعبية الكويتية، المحافل الدلية وفزعات إنسانية رسمية وكالة الأنباء الكويتية، [Kuwait and the Palestinian Issue: Continuous Support in the International Arena, Official and Public Humanitarian Aid Campaigns], Kuwait News Agency 2024, https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=3167476, (access 27.05.2025).
- 32. قبل بيانها الختامي.. القمة الخليجية تتحول إلى جلسة سرية الحرة، [Gulf Summit Turns Into 'Secret' Session

[Gulf Summit Turns Into Secret Session Before Final Statement], Alhurra 2024, https://www.alhurra.com/arabic-and-



Qatar's Policy

Immediately after Trump's decision, Qatar's Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani made a statement on December 7, 2017, calling for the establishment of an Arab and Islamic mechanism to oppose Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. He emphasized that to oppose this decision, "the attitude of the Arab and Islamic world should go beyond mere condemnation," that Arab countries should act together, and that relations should be established with the US. Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani spoke on the phone with Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh, emphasizing his country's determined stance on Jerusalem and rejecting Trump's decision. He also stated that "they stand with the Palestinian people at this critical stage" and that "Jerusalem is a matter of destiny for a nation." ³⁶

When the UAE and Bahrain signed normalization agreements with Israel in Washington on September 15, 2020, it became a matter of curiosity whether Qatar would also join this normalization. In response, Qatar's Deputy Foreign Minister Lolwah Al-Khater stated that normalization with Israel could not be a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that the solution was to implement UN Security Council resolutions and ensure that Palestinians achieved their rights and found a fair solution to their problems.³⁷ Qatar stands out among the Gulf countries as the one that has taken a more critical stance against Israel and a more active role in the region on behalf of Palestine. The normalization agreement between the UAE and Israel, led by the US, was met with huge backlash in the Qatari media in 2020. Qatar directly criticized the UAE for this diplomatic move and kept the Palestinians' reactions on the agenda.³⁸

Q atar welcomed Australia's initial decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel following Trump's Jerusalem decision, and later its reversal of that decision, arguing that it would "support international efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive and sustainable peace." Qatar's Foreign Ministry has also expressed its desire for other countries not to recognize Jerusalem as the capital. The Ministry warned the parties against unilateral policies that could harm the two-state solution principle, stating that Qatar supports the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people and "the establishment of their independent state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital." ³⁹

In January 2024, Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, in an interview with the American Fox News channel, said:

بيانها-الختامي-القمة-/12/01/2024 international الخليجية-القمي-القمة-سرية (access 27.05.2025).

وكالة الأنباء الكويتية، المندوب الفلسطيني بالأمم المتحدة: .33 نثمن عمل الكويت الموتاوصل لإيقاف حرب الإبادة الجماعية بقطاع غزة

[Palestinian Representative to the United Nations: We Applaud Kuwait's Efforts to Stop Genocidal War in Gaza Strip], Kuwait News Agency 2024, https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=3206222&language=ar#, (access 28.05.2025).

34. الحرة، ظريف: عمان أخبرتنا مسبقا بزيارة نتانياهو [Zarif: Oman Informed Us About Netan-yahu's Visit], Alhurra 2019, https://www.alhurra.com/iran/2019/01/03/ ظريف-عمان-(access 28.05.2025).

على «الأشقاء» مراجعة علاقاتهم مع إسرائيل"، القمة. 35. العربية تدعو لمؤتمر دولي للسلام.. ومحمود عباس: على «الأشقاء جريدة عمان،

 $[Arab\ Summit\ Calls\ for\ International\ Peace\ Conference.\ Mahmoud\ Abbas:\ "Brother\ Countries"\ Should\ Review\ Their\ Relations\ with\ Israel],\ Oman\ Daily\ 2024,\ https://www.omandaily.om/lland-\lumber lland-\lumber

36. قطر تدعو إلى آلية عربية إسلامية لمواجهة قرار ترامب بشأن القدس العربي، بشأن القدس العربي، Qatar Calls for Establishment of Arab-

Islamic Mechanism Against Trump's Decision on Jerusalem], Al-Quds 2017, https://www.alquds.co.uk/-قطر-تدعو-إلى-آلية-, (access 30.05.2025).



"A political office for Hamas was opened in Doha many years ago. This was a way for Hamas to communicate with different parties, such as the United States and even Israel. This office was actually used as a means of communication for [Hamas], and Qatar contributed to this in coordination with the American administration. (...) Qatar's position has been clearly defined since the 1990s, since the Oslo Accords. We were the first country to normalize relations with Israel, and there was hope for peace at that time. We started to establish trade relations with Israel in 1997 and then the Israeli Prime Minister visited our country; many diplomatic visits followed. We continue to work with the Israelis today, but we had disagreements with them during the Gaza war in 2008 and decided to close our offices at that time. If there is a political future for the Palestinians, Qatar is ready to normalize its relations with Israel. We want to have normal relations with everyone, including Israel."

The Arab Parliamentary Union Conference hosted by Algeria was held on 26-27 May 2024. The Union commended Qatar's efforts under the leadership of Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to ensure a ceasefire in Gaza and highlighted its contributions to the unconditional delivery of humanitarian aid to the region. The conference commended Qatar for treating 1,500 Palestinians in its hospitals as part of its support for the Palestinian people in Gaza.⁴¹

The head of Hamas' political office, Khaled Meshaal, moved from Damascus to Doha after the outbreak of the civil war in Syria. Qatar has been criticized by Israel and accused of financing Hamas. Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, said that the Hamas office in Doha was conducting negotiations and that Qatar would allow the office to continue as long as it was beneficial.⁴² In November 2024, the spokesman for the Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Majid al-Ansari, announced that the Hamas leader had left Doha, but his office had not been permanently closed. The reason for the "temporary" closure of the office established for mediation was stated as the fact that the office did not need to be active since there was no mediation process between the parties.⁴³

Saudi Arabia's Policy

In Saudi Arabia's official statements, Israel's activities in the Palestinian territories were condemned, and the protection of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people was emphasized.⁴⁴ Following Trump's Jerusalem decision, Saudi Arabia stated that recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel was a dangerous step and that it had deep concerns about it. It also stated that it would create extremely dangerous consequences, deepen the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and disrupt efforts

37. قطر: لا تطبيع مع إسرائيل قبل حل الصراع مع الفلسطينين الجزيرة

[Qatar: No normalization with Israel until conflict in Palestine ends], Al Jazeera 2020, https://www.aljazeera. net/politics/2020/9/15/- قطر-لا-تطبيع-مع-(access 30.05.2025).

38. الحملة الإعلامية القطرية ضد الصفقة الإماراتية العرق الإوسع الحرة الإسرائيلية تعكس التصدع الخليجي الأوسع الحرة [Qatar's Media Campaign Against UAE-Israel Deal Reflects the Enormity of Gulf Divide], Alhurra, https://www.alhurra.com/different-angle/qatars-media-campaign-uae-israel-deal, (access 30.05.2025).

39. الجزيرة ، قطر ترحب بتراجع أستراليا عن الاعتراف بالقدس عاصمة لإسرائيل، عاصمة لإسرائيل،

[Qatar welcomes Australia's decision to reverse Jerusalem's recognition as Israel's capital], Al Jazeera 2022, https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2022/10/18/قطر-ترحب-بتراجع-أستراليا-عن-الاعتراف (access 30.05.2025).

40. قطر تكشف موقف تطبيع العلاقات مع إسرائيل.. وأسباب . وكتب حماس سكاي نيوز عربية، [Qatar Explains Its Position on Normalizing Relations with Israel... and the Reasons of the Hamas Bureau], Sky News Arabia 2024, https://www.skynewsarabia.com/middle-east/1689755, (access 30.05.2025).

41. الاتحاد البرلماني العربي يثمن جهود قطر في نصرة فلسطين مجلس الشورى دولة قطر، [Arab Parliamentary Union Applauds Qatar's Efforts to Support Palestine], The Shura Council State of Qatar 2024, https://www.shura.qa/ar-qa/Pages/Media-



to create a peace process through intense efforts.⁴⁵ Similarly, Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the US, Prince Khalid bin Salman, said in a statement on the issue: "Any American statement on the status of Jerusalem will harm the peace process and increase tension in the region before a final solution is reached."

The 29th Arab Summit, held in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, on April 15, 2018, was named the "Jerusalem Summit" as a reflection of the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to achieve the rights of the Palestinian people and establish an independent state. The fact that the 29th Arab Summit was named the Jerusalem Summit showed that Saudi Arabia has a determined stance on protecting the Arab and Islamic identity of Jerusalem and defending the rights of the Palestinian people.⁴⁷

At a press conference held at the White House, attended by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Trump announced the plan to achieve peace between the Palestinians and Israelis, known as the Deal of the Century. Saudi Arabia has highlighted the decisive role of the US by calling for direct negotiations between Palestine and Israel to begin under American supervision. The Saudi Arabian Foreign Ministry expressed its appreciation for the Trump administration's efforts to develop a comprehensive peace plan between Palestine and Israel, stressing that direct peace negotiations should be held between the two sides and that disagreements in the implementation of the proposed plan should be resolved through negotiations.

Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Palestine, Naif bin Bandar al-Sudeiri, presented his credentials during an official meeting with Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki in Ramallah on October 24, 2023. At a press conference held during the visit, al-Sudeiri reiterated that Saudi Arabia's approach to the Palestinian issue is as follows: "ensuring international legitimacy and a two-state solution." Al-Sudeiri's visit to the Palestinian territories is important as it is the first visit by a Saudi official to Palestine in decades. ⁵⁰

The Arab-Islamic Summit held in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, on November 11, 2023 condemned the Israeli aggression against Gaza and the crimes committed by the occupying forces in the West Bank. It also called for a decision to be made regarding Israel's bombing of hospitals in Gaza, its obstruction of humanitarian aid, and the cutting off of water, food, fuel, electricity, communications, and the internet. In the final statement of the summit, the leaders declared that Israel is responsible for the continuation and escalation of the conflict.⁵¹

Center/News/27052024-2, (access 26.05.2025).

42. الخارجية القطرية: جهود الوساطة بين إسرائيل وحماس BBC [Qatar Foreign Ministry: Mediation Efforts Between Israel and Hamas Currently Suspended], BBC News 2024, https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/cqlrzv075pxo, (access 26.05.2025).

43. D. Gritten, R. Abualouf, Hamas leaders no longer in Doha but office not permanently closed, Qatar says, BBC 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c86qd99nqgyo, (access 23.05.2025).

المملكة العربية السعودية وقضية فلسطين: تاريخ من .44
 الوقوف الثابت والدعم المتواصل، مركز حقائق للدراسات
 القانونية

[The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian Issue: A History of Patient Stance and Continuous Support], Prince Sultan University 2023, https://apis.clspsu.com/storage/ef8a4a9a-33bf-4cf5-ba4e-d79a324ae690.pdf, (access 23.05.2025).

45. السعودية: الاعتراف بالقدس عاصمة لإسرائيل خطوة . خطوة العربية

[Saudi Arabia: Recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's Capital is a Dangerous Step], Al Arabiya 2017, https://www.alarabiya.net/saudi-today/2017/12/05/- السعودية-(ac-day/2017/12/05/), الاعتراف-بالقدس-عاصمة-لإسرائيل-استفزاز-للمسلمين (ac-cess 20.05.2025).

، كواليس قرار مرتقب عن القدس.. ضغوط دولية ورسالة . 46. العربية العربية

[Behind the Scenes of the Long-Expected Jerusalem Decision: International Pres-



Following the bombing of Kamal Adwan Hospital by the Israeli army on October 25, 2024 and the detention of surviving patients and hospital staff, the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued the following statement: "We strongly condemn the Israeli occupation forces setting fire to the hospital in Gaza and forcing the evacuation of patients and medical staff, which is a clear violation of international law, humanitarian law, and the most basic human and moral values." Saudi Arabia has underlined the importance it attaches to the Palestinian cause, stating that Palestine is its priority. It has also emphasized that it has made every effort to alleviate the current crisis in Gaza and improve the humanitarian situation since the beginning of the crisis. The Saudi Foreign Ministry's statement also noted that the humanitarian and development aid provided by Saudi Arabia to the Palestinian people in recent years is a continuation of its support for Palestine. It was announced that the total amount of aid provided by Riyadh to the Palestinian people in recent years has exceeded 5.3 billion dollars.

The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs conveyed Saudi Arabia's position to the US administration as follows: "Diplomatic relations will be established with Israel on the condition that Palestine is recognized as an independent state within its 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, Israel's attacks on Gaza are stopped, and all Israeli occupation forces are withdrawn from Gaza."⁵⁴ The Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs also called on the international community, especially the permanent members of the UN Security Council, to recognize the state of Palestine, stressing that "the recognition of the state of Palestine is necessary so that the Palestinian people can achieve their legitimate rights and a comprehensive and just peace can be achieved for all."⁵⁵

The first session of the "Global Alliance for the Implementation of a Two-State Solution" was held in Riyadh on October 30, 2024. More than 90 countries and UNRWA participated in this meeting. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the steps to be taken towards the establishment of the Palestinian state. In his opening speech, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud stated that regional security is completely dependent on the resolution of the Palestinian issue and the establishment of the Palestinian state. ⁵⁶

sures and the Palestinian Message],
Al Arabiya 2017, https://www.alarabiya.
net/arab-and-world/american-elections-2016/2017/12/05/.
كواليس-قرار-مرتقب-عن-(access), القدس-ضغوط-دولية-ورسالة-فلسطينية
20.05.2025).

47. Ibidem

48. هل تعود «صفقة القرن» إلى الواجهة مع رجوع دونالد BBC ترامب إلى البيت الأبيض؟ عربي BBC [Will the Deal of the Century Come to the Agenda with Donald Trump Returning to the White House?], BBC News 2024, https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/cqxwlvqnlyno, (access 21.05.2025).

49. ..بالعربية، السعودية عن صفقة القرن: نقيم جهود ترامب.. CNN وندعو المفاوضات مباشرة برعاية أمريكية CNN إكمudi Arabia on the "Deal of the Century": We Assess Trump's Efforts and Call on the US to Hold Direct Negotiations], CNN 2020, https://arabic.cnn.com/middle-east/article/2020/01/29/saudiarabia-comments-on-trumps-peace-plan-and-calls-for-direct-negotiations, (access 21.05.2025).

50. سفير السعودية يبدأ مهامه في الأراضي الفلسطينية لأول BBC يقود عربي، BBC منذ عقود عربي، [Saudi Arabian Ambassador Begins His Duty in the Palestinian Territories for the First Time in Years], BBC News





United Arab Emirates's Policy

On December 7, 2017, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, Anwar Gargash, stated that the Arab and Islamic world is facing a great challenge regarding "Holy Jerusalem." Following Trump's decision, he said, "Will this crisis be used for narrow interests and imaginary political gains? (...) Will we unite? Our aim should be to achieve results, not to deepen wounds."⁵⁷

The UAE became the first Gulf country to normalize relations with Israel in 2020. On June 9, 2021, the UAE and Israel agreed to strengthen their relations and advance the peace process in the region. During their meeting in Abu Dhabi, UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid emphasized the importance of establishing peaceful and friendly relations between the two countries and their peoples. They also stated that the Abraham Accords will be a guide for other countries to join the peace process and that this process will increase stability and prosperity in the region. Lapid opened Israel's first embassy in the Gulf in Abu Dhabi on June 29, 2021. It was an important step that came just one year after the normalization between the two countries. On September 15, 2022, Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid hosted UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan in his office in Jerusalem, where the parties discussed strengthening relations between the countries, celebrated the second anniversary of the signing of the Abraham Accords, and expressed their expectation of an increase in trade volume.

Poreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan stressed the need for greater efforts to halt the developments in Gaza in his telephone conversations with the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Turkey and France. On October 8, 2023, one day after the start of the war, the official website of the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that Hamas' attacks on Israeli cities and villages near the Gaza Strip and the firing of thousands of rockets at residential areas constituted a serious and dangerous development. The Ministry emphasized that civilians on both sides must be fully protected under international humanitarian law and must not be the target of the conflict. The Ministry expressed its deep sorrow for both Israeli and Palestinian casualties and called on both sides to de-escalate the tension.

The UAE has advocated for a just and sustainable solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This process includes steps towards a two-state solution, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and living in peace and security with Israel. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE

 $\frac{2023, \underline{https://www.bbc.com/arabic/}}{articles/cpvldrv50xeo,} (access \\ 18.05.2025).$

51. ١١ أسعودية تدعو لعقد قمة عربية إسلامية مشتركة في ١١ نوفمبر الشرق نوفمبر الشرق [Saudi Arabia Calls for Joint Arab-Is-

[Saudi Arabia Calls for Joint Arab-Is-lamic Summit on November 11], Asharq News 2024, https://asharq.com/politics/105102/- السعودية-تدعو-لعقد-قمة-عربية-إسلامية (access 18.05.2025).

سياسي/ وزارة الخارجية: المملكة تدين وتستنكر بأشد .52 العبارات حرق قوات الاحتلال الإسرائيلية مستشفى في وكالة الأنباء السعودية، غزة وإجبار المرضى والكوادر الطبية على إخلائهف

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Kingdom Strongly Condemns and Protests the Israeli Occupation Forces' Setting Fire to a Hospital in Gaza and Forced Evacuation of Patients and Medical Staff], Saudi Press Agency 2025, https://www.spa.gov.sa/N2234246, (access 19.05.2025).

السعودية: دعم مالي شهري لفلسطين لمعالجة غزة. دعم مالي شهري لفلسطين لمعالجة غزة وحصيطها الشرق الأوسط، [Saudi Arabia to Provide Monthly Financial Support to Palestine to Improve Situation in Gaza and Surrounding Areas], Asharq Al-Awsat 2024, https://aawsat.com/5065979-التعربي/الخليح/-65979 العالم-العربي/الخليح/-65979 ومحيطها [مدحه-مالي-شهري-لفلسطين-لمعالجة-غزة-ومحيطها], (access 19.05.2025).

54. الخارجية السعودية ترد على تصريحات كيري بشأن التطبيع مع إسرائيل الحرة، مع إسرائيل الحرة، [Saudi Arabian Foreign Ministry Re-

sponds to Kirby's Statements on Normalization with Israel], Alhurra 2024, https://www.alhurra.com/saudi-ara-



Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, stated that the priority is the establishment of a Palestinian state, without which it will not support a solution after the war in Gaza. ⁶² UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation Reem Bint Ebrahim Al Hashimy attended the Gaza Humanitarian Maritime Corridor meeting held in Cyprus. She also stressed that the UAE will continue to provide aid to the civilian population in Gaza in cooperation with the international community and that the maritime corridor is of vital importance to the people of Gaza. Reem Bint Ebrahim Al Hashimy stated that the UAE continues its efforts to provide urgent humanitarian aid to Gaza, in line with its historical commitment to the Palestinian people; the UAE sent 39,756 tons of emergency aid to Gaza via eight ships, 1,271 trucks, and 337 flights following the Gaza War. ⁶³

The UAE has become the most important Arab country to establish official relations with Israel in the last 30 years, within the framework of the Abraham Accords signed with US mediation in 2020. The UAE maintained its relations with Israel for seven months from the beginning of the war in Gaza, and following the normalization of relations, Israeli businesspeople began to travel to the UAE on direct flights from Tel Aviv. According to a statement by the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the first official meeting between the UAE and Israel since the outbreak of the war in Gaza was held between UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid. During the meeting, the UAE Minister stressed that "it is urgently necessary to establish a serious political perspective to restart negotiations for a comprehensive peace based on the two-state solution."

Conclusion

In this study, which examines the approach of the Gulf Arab countries to the Palestinian question, the basic approaches of the countries can be explained as follows:

Bahrain, like the UAE, has followed a two-sided policy on the Palestinian question. It first criticized Trump's decision on Jerusalem but later became the second Gulf country to sign an agreement normalizing relations with Israel in 2020. Historically, it has been a country that supports the Palestinian cause, but in recent years it has shifted its policies to focus on its regional and international interests. The normalization of relations with Israel has not changed Bahrain's support for Palestine, which continues to defend the independence and sovereign rights of the Palestinian people while also taking steps to promote regional peace and security.

 $\frac{bia/2024/02/07$ -تصريحات--ترد-تصريحات--السعودية - الخارجية - السطودية - المحاوية (access 19.05.2025).

55. السعودية: لا علاقات مع إسرائيل قبل الاعتراف بالدولة ، السعودية: لا علاقات مع إسرائيل قبل الاعتراف على غزة الجزيرة الفلسطينية ووقف العدوان على غزة الجزيرة [Saudi Arabia: Recognition of Palestinian state and cessation of attacks on Gaza will ensure relations with Israel], Al Jazeera 2024, https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2024/2/7/. السعودية-لا-علاقات-مع-/2/7/ (access 24.05.2025).

وزير الخارجية السعودي: أمن المنطقة مرتبط ارتباطاً كاملاً . بحل قضية فلسطين الشرق، المرق، المرق، المعلان الشرق، المعلن الشرق، [Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister: Regional Security is Completely Linked to the Solution of the Palestinian Issue], Asharq News 2024, https://asharq.com/politics/105088/-أمن-أمن-أمن-فلسطين وزير-خارجية-السعودية-أمن-أمن-بحل-قضية-فلسطين (access 24.05.2025).

57. بعد إعتراف ترامب بالقدس عاصمة لإسرائيل.. قرقاش: أدام. بعد إعتراف ترامب بالقدس عاصمة لاسرائيل.. قرقاش: CNN هل سيتم تسييس الأزمة لإستغلالها بالعربية CNN هل المجتمع المجتمع (After Trump Recognizes Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel... Gargash: Is It Possible to Use the Crisis for Political Purposes?], CNN 2017, https://arabic.cnn.com/middle-east/2017/12/07/anwargargash-jerusalem-decission, (access 24.05.2025).

58. غيمارات وإسرائيل: «الاتفاق الإبراهيمي» منارة تمهد ألم الشرق الأوسط، لتوسيع دائرة السلام الشرق الأوسط، [UAE and Israel: 'Abraham Accords' a Beacon for Expanding Peace Framework], Asharq Al-Awsat, https://aawsat.com/home/arti-cle/3056261/- الإمارات-وإسرائيل-«الاتفاق-الإبراهيمي»-/1956



Kuwait is one of the countries in the Arab world that strongly defends the Palestinian cause. It supports Palestinian independence while also strongly opposing Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories. Kuwait sharply criticized the normalization processes undertaken by the UAE and Bahrain with Israel in 2020, arguing that this process would harm Palestinian rights. In this context, it is one of the leading Arab countries that oppose normalization of relations with Israel. Kuwait has generally aimed to defend the sovereignty and independence of Palestine in the Arab world, and to provide humanitarian aid and financial contributions to Palestine. It defends the principle of a two-state solution and supports Palestine's right to establish an independent state within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. It emphasizes that Palestine's right to establish an independent state is necessary not only for the Palestinian people but also for peace and stability in the region. Moreover, it also carries out diplomatic efforts to gain international recognition and support for Palestine.

Oman has traditionally pursued a more neutral policy, particularly in the Gulf Arab countries and generally within the Arab countries. The country has also made statements on the Palestinian issue that have not attracted much attention. Indeed, it has advocated for Palestine to become an independent state, but at the same time has tried to maintain relations with Israel. Due to Oman's stance and its neutral policy, only a limited assessment can be made of the country's Palestine policy.

Saudi Arabia is one of the countries in the Arab world that defends the Palestinian cause and advocates the principle of a two-state solution. It supports Palestine's right to establish an independent state within its 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Saudi Arabia predicts that this solution will ensure the protection of the rights of the Palestinian people and promote peace in the region. It opposed Trump's decision to declare Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and stated that the decision was a dangerous step for the region. It has announced that it will establish diplomatic relations with Israel on the condition that Israel's attacks on Gaza are stopped and that all Israeli occupation forces withdraw from Gaza. Despite this, Saudi Arabia remained the most important ally of the US in the Middle East during the Trump era. It is possible to state that this relationship was not negatively affected by the Jerusalem decision or the Gaza War.

A mong the Gulf countries, Qatar has been the strongest supporter of the Palestinian cause. Humanitarian aid provided to Palestinians, activities related to Palestine, and statements by the Qatari royal family and other state officials all demonstrate this commitment. Its support for Hamas

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59. لابيد: العلاقات الاستراتيجية مع دولة الإمارات ستتعزز عربية سكاي نيوز عربية الكتابية (Lapid: Strategic Relations with the United Arab Emirates Will Be Strengthened], Sky News Arabia 2022, https://www.skynewsarabia.com/middle-east/1555559- البيد-العلاقات-الاستراتيجية-دولة-1855559), الإمارات-ستتعزز (access 24.05.2025).

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Following Trump's Jerusalem decision, the United Arab Emirates' policy towards Palestine took different directions. The UAE, like other Gulf countries, opposed and criticized Trump's Jerusalem decision in 2017. However, in 2020, the UAE became the first Gulf Arab country to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel and sign the agreement known as the "Abraham Accords." This normalization was criticized by the Palestinian Authority and some Arab countries. Palestinian officials considered this policy of the UAE as "a betrayal of the Palestinian cause." The UAE, on the other hand, claimed that it would continue to defend the interests of the Palestinian people, pressure Israel through this agreement, and contribute to the peace process.

Bahrain and the UAE have sought to improve their relations with Israel through the Abraham Accords signed in 2020. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have attracted attention with their harsh statements against Israel. Oman, on the other hand, has preferred a more neutral policy, as usual. This situation is noteworthy in the following respect: it is evident that the Gulf Arab countries do not have a common policy on the Palestinian cause. Nevertheless, these countries generally support the Palestinian cause in response to Trump's Jerusalem decision and the Gaza War; on the other hand, some of them normalize their relations with Israel and do not pursue an active policy towards resolving the Palestinian problem.

As a result, when the six countries covered in the study were examined, it was observed that the Gulf Arab countries reacted similarly to Trump's Jerusalem decision and the Gaza War, calling for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. On the other hand, unlike the other countries, Bahrain and the UAE, which have normalized relations with Israel, and Oman, which has a more neutral policy compared to the others, demonstrate that the Gulf Arab countries have differing policies.

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