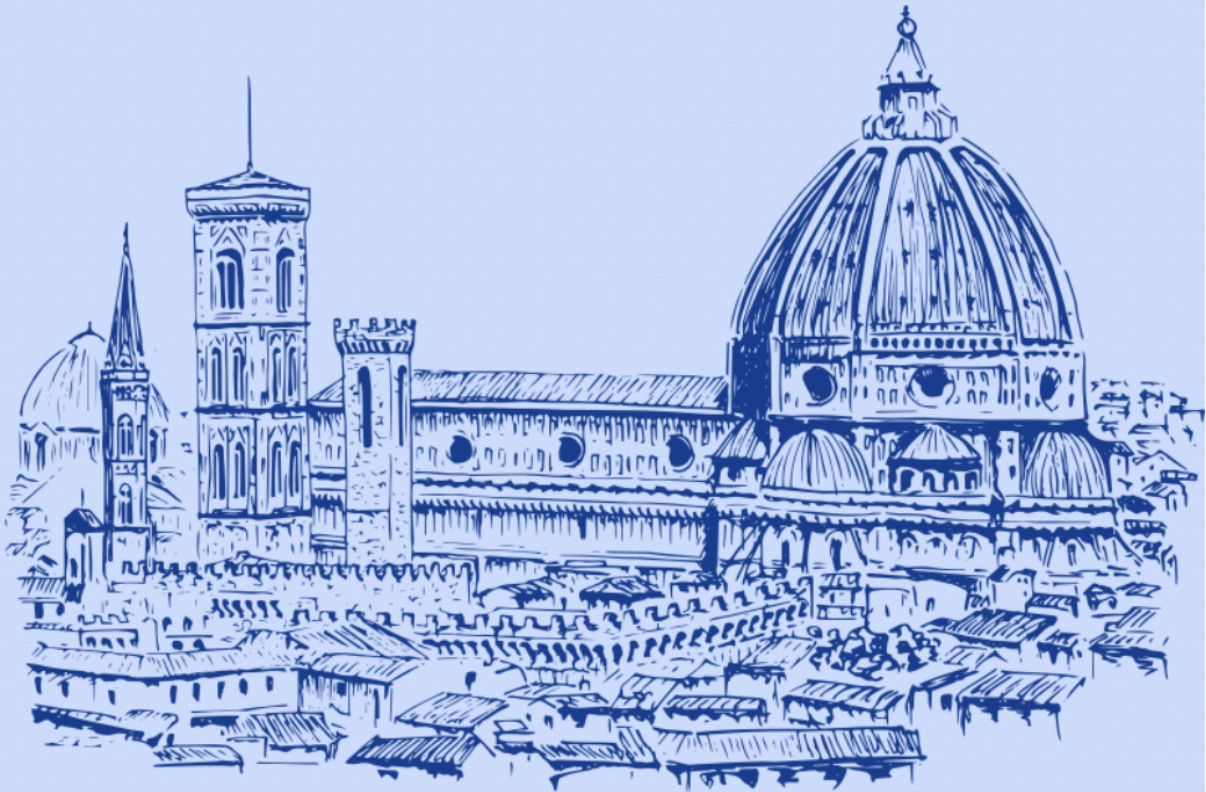


RESEARCH GUIDE

HRC



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Topic: (2) Discussing the issue of war refugees and humanitarian corridors in the Israeli-Palestinian situation

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I. Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a long-standing political and territorial issue, has resulted in a significant refugee crisis over the past two decades. The conflict has displaced numerous Palestinians, making them one of the largest and longest-standing refugee groups worldwide. This displacement has led to a myriad of social, economic, and psychological challenges for the refugees, including lack of access to basic services, unemployment, poverty, and trauma. The establishment of humanitarian corridors, safe passages for civilians, aid convoys, and the wounded in conflict zones, has been proposed as a solution to alleviate the suffering of these refugees. These corridors are intended to provide a lifeline to those trapped in conflict zones, allowing the delivery of essential supplies such as food, water, and medical aid, and facilitating the evacuation of the wounded and vulnerable. The concept of humanitarian corridors is not new, having been used in various conflicts around the world. However, its application in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is fraught with challenges. These include the ongoing political dispute between Israel and Palestine, which complicates negotiations and agreements on the establishment and management of these corridors. Security concerns also pose a significant challenge. Ensuring the safety of those using the corridors, as well as the aid workers and peacekeepers managing them, is paramount. This requires cooperation from all parties involved in the conflict, which is often difficult to achieve. Logistical issues, such as determining the location and operation of the corridors, also present challenges. These corridors need to be strategically located to be accessible to those in need, and their operation requires careful planning and coordination. Despite these challenges, the international community continues to advocate for the establishment of these corridors as a means to provide immediate relief to those affected by the conflict. Various international organizations, including the United Nations and the Red Cross, have been instrumental in this advocacy, highlighting the urgent need for these corridors and the positive impact they can have on the lives of refugees. They argue that while the corridors are not a solution to the conflict itself, they are a crucial measure to mitigate its devastating humanitarian impact. The hope is that with continued advocacy and negotiation, these humanitarian corridors can become a reality, providing much-needed relief to the Palestinian refugees affected by this protracted conflict.

II. Definition of Key Terms

- a. **Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:** This is a long-standing political and territorial dispute between Israelis and Palestinians that began in the mid-20th century. Key issues include mutual recognition, borders, security, water rights, control of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, Palestinian freedom of movement, and Palestinian right of return.
- b. **Refugee:** A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. In this context, it refers to Palestinians who have been displaced due to the conflict.
- c. **Humanitarian Corridors:** These are safe passages for civilians, aid convoys, and the wounded in conflict zones. They allow for the delivery of essential supplies and evacuation of vulnerable individuals.
- d. **Displacement:** The forced movement of people from their locality or environment and occupational activities. It is a phenomenon often associated with war and conflict.
- e. **International Community:** In this context, it refers to countries and organizations outside of Israel and Palestine, including the United Nations, the Red Cross, and others, who can play a role in advocating for and establishing humanitarian corridors.
- f. **Advocacy:** The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal. In this context, it refers to the efforts of the international community to establish humanitarian corridors.
- g. **Negotiation:** A dialogue between two or more parties intended to reach a beneficial outcome over one or more issues where a conflict exists with respect to at least one of these issues.

III. General Overview

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to be a significant issue of concern. As of January 2024, Israel announced it had successfully destroyed the fighting force of Hamas in northern Gaza and is shifting its focus to the central and southern parts of the territory. Almost two million Gazans, more than 85% of the population, have fled their homes since Israel began its military operation. The dire situation in Gaza has been exacerbated by relentless attacks on medical infrastructure, which have left only nine functioning hospitals, all located in the south¹. The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported nearly 600 attacks on healthcare facilities in Gaza and the West Bank since the conflict began¹. These attacks have affected 94 healthcare facilities, including 26 out of 36 hospitals, and 79 ambulances.

The human toll of this crisis is staggering. As of late December 2023, approximately 30,000 victims have been reported, with the majority being civilians, including 11,422 children and 5,822 women. The death toll within health facilities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since October last year stands at 613 people - 606 in Gaza and seven in the West Bank¹. More than 770 have been injured. The humanitarian crisis extends beyond the immediate casualties. Nearly 85% of Gaza's population, or up to 1.9 million people, were estimated to be internally displaced as of December 2023. Over 1.920 million people in the Gaza Strip remain without a safe shelter amid inhumane conditions. Furthermore, 62% of Palestinians in Gaza, or about 1.3 million people, require food assistance. The UN has declared Gaza to be "the most dangerous place in the world to be a child". Children in Gaza face a deadly triple threat to their lives, as cases of diseases rise, nutrition plummets, and the escalation in hostilities continues¹. Thousands of children have already died from the violence, while living conditions for children continue to rapidly deteriorate. Meanwhile, the United States is conducting shuttle diplomacy amid simmering regional tensions. Israel has killed Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon, and increased its air strikes against alleged Iran-linked targets in Syria. Iran-backed groups have launched dozens of attacks on U.S. military positions in Iraq and Syria, and Yemen's Houthi rebels have targeted missiles at Israel and commercial ships in the Red Sea. The main United Nations relief agency in Gaza said it will likely be forced to shut down its operations in the region by the end of February if funding from nearly 20 countries remains suspended. This situation underscores the urgent need for resolution and humanitarian aid in the region.

The current humanitarian corridors in Gaza have been largely inefficient. Despite the urgent need for aid, the delivery of humanitarian assistance has been severely hindered. The blockade imposed by Israel and the ongoing bombardments have crippled the delivery of much-needed aid. Since the start of the conflict, Israel has allowed only a fraction of the required daily trucks carrying aid to enter Gaza. This has led to a scarcity of food, water, and medicine, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. The situation in Gaza is dire, with basic human needs not being met. Prior to the conflict, 80% of Gaza's inhabitants relied on international aid. However, the conflict has led to an increase in the number of people requiring aid, with about 1.3 million people, or 62% of Palestinians in Gaza, requiring food assistance. Furthermore, the entire population is living with crisis-level hunger, and more than half a million people are facing catastrophic conditions. Access to clean water is also a major issue, with only one out of the three water pipelines from Israel being operational. The United Nations and other organizations have made numerous attempts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These include voting in favor of an international peace conference under the auspices of the UN, and the signing of the Oslo accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which set out a peace process based on previous U.N. resolutions. However, these attempts have not led to a lasting resolution, and the conflict continues. The UN has called for a package of parallel measures by both sides and the international community, rather than piecemeal responses. Despite these efforts, the conflict remains unresolved, underscoring the complexity of the issue and the urgent need for a sustainable solution.

IV. Major Parties Involved and their Views

- a) **Israel:** The state of Israel was established in 1948 in part of what was formerly British Mandate Palestine. It has been involved in significant attacks against Palestinian civilians, particularly in Gaza, leading to a high number of casualties and exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. The attacks have been indiscriminate and often without warning, affecting residential areas and media workers. Despite international calls for an end to these attacks and a resolution to the conflict, the situation continues to escalate.

- b) **Palestine:** The Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip are the main regions where Palestinians live. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestinian National Authority represent the Palestinian people in the conflict.

- c) **Hamas:** A Palestinian Sunni-Islamic fundamentalist organization, currently governing the Gaza Strip. It has been involved in several conflicts with Israel. On October 7, 2023, Hamas, a Palestinian Sunni-Islamic fundamentalist organization, led a series of coordinated attacks on Israel. This assault, which involved land, sea, and air incursions into Israeli territory, initiated the Israel–Hamas war. The attacks began in the early morning with a rocket barrage of at least 3,000 rockets launched against Israel and incursions into its territory¹. Hamas fighters breached the Gaza–Israel barrier, attacking military bases and massacring civilians in neighboring Israeli communities. The attacks resulted in 1,139 deaths—695 Israeli civilians (including 36 children), 71 foreign nationals, and 373 members of the security forces¹. Approximately 250 Israeli civilians and soldiers were taken as hostages to the Gaza Strip, including 30 children. This attack, which came on a Jewish holiday, was the deadliest day for Israel since its independence. It led to Israel declaring itself in a state of war for the first time since the Yom Kippur War in 1973. The war began with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conducting air strikes on the Gaza Strip, followed weeks later by the incursion of ground troops and armored vehicles.

- d) **United States:** The U.S. has been a key player in mediating peace negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. It is a major ally of Israel and provides significant aid to both Israel and Palestine.

- e) **United Nations:** The UN has been involved in the conflict since its beginning, providing aid to Palestinian refugees through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and attempting to mediate the conflict through resolutions and peacekeeping missions.

- f) **Egypt and Jordan:** Both countries share borders with Israel and have been involved in past wars with Israel. In the current situation, they are involved in mediating for the two sides of the conflict.

- g) **Iran:** Iran is alleged to provide support to Hamas and other groups opposing Israel.

V. Relevant UN Documents and Articles

1. [Action by UN System and Intergovernmental Organizations Relevant to the Question of Palestine \(May 2021 Monthly Bulletin\)](#)
2. [Addressing Israeli-Palestinian Tensions as They Arise Cannot Replace Efforts to Resolve Core Issues, Deputy Special Coordinator Tells Security Council](#)
3. [Risk of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Threatening Stability of Wider Region](#)
4. [Until Palestine Question Is Resolved, Arab-Israeli Conflict Will Continue](#)
5. [Israeli-Palestinian Conflict | Global Conflict Tracker](#)

VI. Questions to Consider

- a. How can humanitarian corridors be established and maintained in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

- b. What role can the international community play in supporting the establishment of humanitarian corridors?

- c. How can the concerns of Israel regarding security be addressed while ensuring the rights and safety of Palestinian refugees?

- d. What are the potential legal and diplomatic challenges in establishing humanitarian corridors in the Israeli-Palestinian context?

- e. How can international humanitarian law be applied to protect war refugees in this situation?

- f. What successful examples from other conflict zones can be studied and possibly applied to the Israeli-Palestinian situation?

- g. How can non-governmental organizations contribute to the establishment and maintenance of humanitarian corridors?

VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a complex and urgent issue, marked by recent escalations and humanitarian concerns. The establishment of humanitarian corridors is proposed as a vital solution to address the significant challenges faced by Palestinian refugees. While the concept is not new, its application in this context is hindered by ongoing political disputes, security considerations, and logistical challenges. The international community, including organizations like the United Nations and the Red Cross, advocates for the creation of these corridors to mitigate the humanitarian impact of the conflict. The latest developments in the conflict, with Israel's military operations in Gaza leading to mass displacement and critical shortages, underscore the pressing need for resolution and humanitarian aid. The involvement of major parties, such as Israel, Palestine, the United States, and regional actors, adds layers of complexity to the situation. The United Nations' continued efforts, as evidenced by relevant documents and articles, highlight the ongoing international concern. The questions posed for consideration emphasize the multifaceted nature of the issue, ranging from legal and diplomatic challenges to the role of non-governmental organizations. Despite the complexities, the hope persists that concerted international efforts can pave the way for the establishment of humanitarian corridors, providing a lifeline for those affected by this protracted and devastating conflict.

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