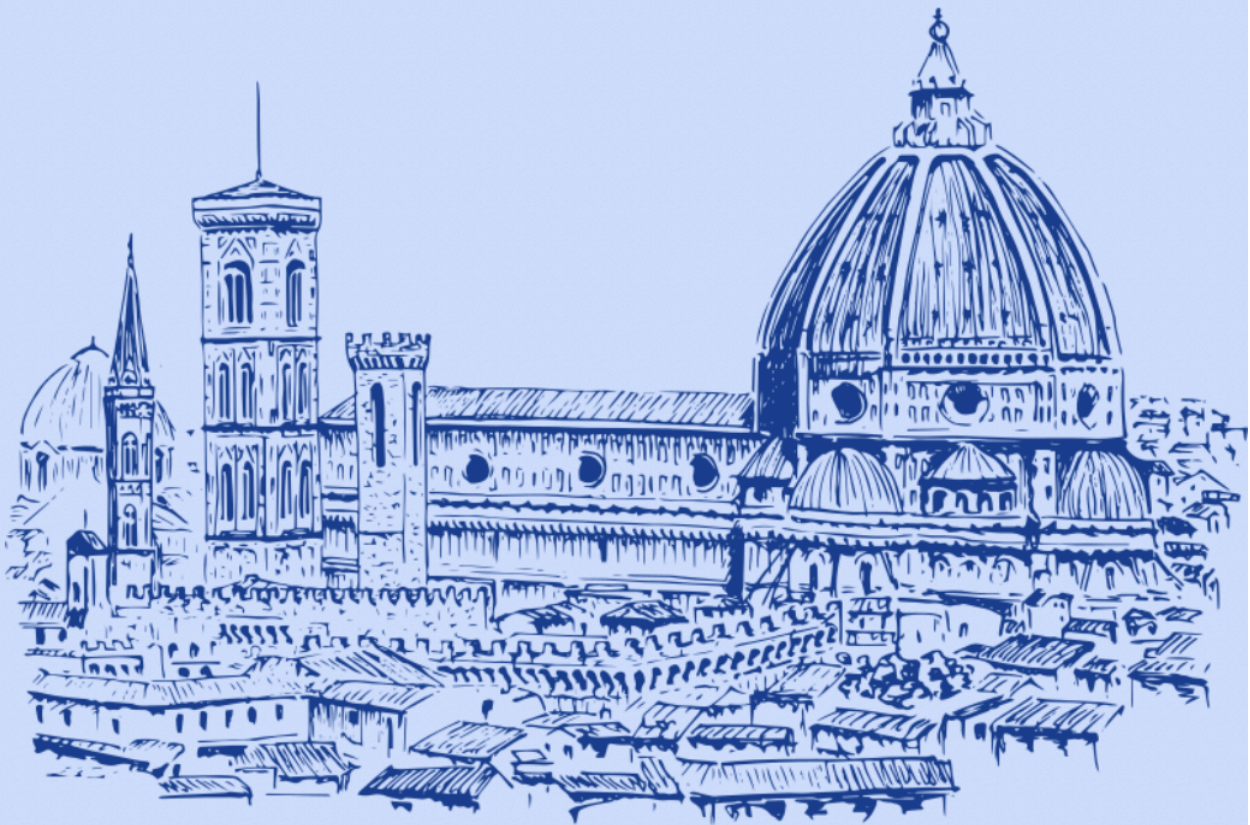


RESEARCH GUIDE

Security Council



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FloMUN 2024

Committee: Security Council (SC)

Topic: (1) The issue of the Israeli-Palestinian situation

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I. Introduction:

The issue of the situation between Palestine and Israel is a long-lasting and therefore deeply rooted problem located in the southern Levant. The dispute began almost 76 years ago, in May of 1948 when the state of Israel was created after the United Nations (UN) adopted resolution 181, “which sought to divide the British Mandate of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states.”¹ The creation of the Israelian state began the first major war of the conflict, which Israel won while 750.000 Palestinians were displaced. The end of this war also brought forth the creation of three main territories which split up the region: The State of Israel, the West Bank (of the Jordan River), and the Gaza Strip.¹ Multiple conflicts arose between the neighbouring countries and progress was made through ordeals such as the Camp David Accords

which helped relations. However, all parties involved failed to properly solve the issue at hand. In 2000 when Palestine launched the second intifada (refer to key terms) the conflict steadily but surely escalated further catalysed by the election of the Hamas Government through the Palestinian Authority’s parliamentary elections. It saw a massive surge of direct military confrontations between the Palestinian Government ruled by Hamas, and the State of Israel, in just 7 years from 2014 to 2021, three clashes occurred. In these, an estimated 86 Israelis died, 10.683 Palestinians were injured, 2.683 of them fatally and an estimated 72.000 Palestinians were displaced during that period. The last three years played a pivotal role in further accelerating the issue, particularly through the Trump Administration's change in policy toward the UN Relief and Work agency by cancelling funding. As well as brokering the Brahams Accord which had arguable effects on the tensions between the Palestinian Government and the State of Isreal. Moreover, December 2022, saw the inauguration of the most far-right and religious Israelian government yet.^{2,1} Notably, wanting to further expand settlements in the West



¹ <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/22/>

Bank.³ On the 7th October of 2023, Hamas launched a military operation into the State of Israel, marking the most recent incident of Israel-Palestinian violence, and one of the first formal declarations of war between Israel and Palestine since the conflict in 1948. An emergency meeting of the Security Council was called however, it did not succeed in resolving the issue at all. During the making of this guide, Feb 2, 2024 , more or less five months after the start of the most recent war, at least 27.131 Palestinians have been killed, and over 66.287 people injured. While at least 1.139 Israelis have died, and at least 8.730 are injured. Furthermore, this conflict caused millions of Palestinians to be displaced and at the current, it seems as such they have nowhere to go. Primarily due to Egypt and other nations being afraid that the refugees would not be allowed to return after they leave, and also because of the fear that Hamas militants would continue military attacks out of the country they fled to. This leaves multiple sub-topics regarding the issue of the Israel-Palestinian conflict which all need to be addressed to find a solution effectively:

1. Humanitarian Issues and Settlements
2. International Law and Human Rights Violations
3. Security and Violence
4. Two-State Solution Viability
5. Refugee Rights and Return

³<https://www.dw.com/en/israel-new-netanyahu-government-vows-to-expand-settlements>

II. Definition of Key Terms:

- **Intifada:** a violent act of opposition by the Palestinian people to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip ⁴
- **Two-State Solution:** A proposed solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict envisioning an independent State of Israel and an independent State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security
- **Settlements:** Communities established by Israel in territories it occupied during the 1967 Six-Day War, including the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. The international community generally considers these settlements illegal under international law, though Israel disputes this.
- **Zionism:** “a movement for (originally) the re-establishment and (now) the development and protection of a Jewish nation in what is now Israel.”⁵
- **Balfour Declaration:** (November 2, 1917), statement of British support for “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”⁶
- **Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT):** “The Occupied Palestinian Territories are those areas of historic Palestine occupied by the state of Israel in June 1967 (i.e. the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem). They comprise approximately 22 percent of the land of Palestine, which was controlled by the British Mandate authorities prior to 1948.” ⁷

⁴<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/intifada#:~:text=Bedeutung%20von%20intifada%20auf%20Englisch&text=a%20violent%20act%20of%20opposition,spread%20to%20the%20West%20Bank>

⁵ OXFORD DICTIONARY

⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Balfour-Declaration>

⁷ https://remix.aljazeera.com/aje/PalestineRemix/occupied_territories.html

- **Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO):** An organization founded in 1964 with the purpose of the "liberation of Palestine" through armed struggle. It is recognized as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people" by over 100 states and has held observer status at the United Nations since 1974.
- **Other Interesting Terms Can be Found here:**
<https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ngos/jointngo3.pdf>

III. General Overview/Concerns:

After Hamas attacked the State of Israel back in early October of 2023, the conflict has been only getting worse with a complete military occupation of the Gaza Strip seeming inevitable. Even so, it does not appear that Israel has a clear endgame in mind on what to do after they have taken most of the Gaza Strip. The Humanitarian precedent is also significant to mention. There are approximately 2 million Palestinians in Gaza, each not having access to proper medical care, water, food, or other basic necessities. Although Israel did order Palestinians to evacuate, they brought no feasible solution to where. Egypt is not willing to accept Refugees, and therefore they do not have anywhere to go and are still subject to bombardment and military attacks. Another problem is the fear of other militias or even countries joining the war based on defending the Palestinian people and their rights. Especially in Lebanon, Hezbollah has seen a surge in recent activity fighting the Israelian Defence Forces (IDF), which could raise further concerns about a potential two-front war. Nevertheless, the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital by certain countries, the ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and the normalization agreements between Israel and several Arab states stand out as pivotal. These developments have not only intensified discussions around sovereignty and international law but have also raised questions about the viability of the two-state solution long envisaged as the cornerstone of peace in the region.

IV. Background Information:

- **Late 19th Century:** Emergence of Zionist movement advocating for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.
- **1917:** The Balfour Declaration by the British government supports the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.
- **1947:** UN proposes a partition plan to divide Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, leading to civil unrest.
- **1948:** Establishment of the State of Israel, leading to the first Arab-Israeli war. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians become refugees.
- **1964:** Formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).
- **1967:** Six-Day War results in Israeli control over the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem.
- **1987-1993:** The First Intifada, a Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation.
- **1993:** Oslo Accords signed, aiming for a two-state solution and establishing the Palestinian Authority.
- **2000-2005:** The Second Intifada, marked by intensified violence.
- **2005:** Israel's unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip.
- **2007:** Hamas takes control of Gaza, leading to a blockade by Israel and Egypt.
- **2014:** Significant conflict in Gaza following escalated tensions.
- **2020:** Normalization agreements between Israel and several Arab states under the Abraham Accords.
- **2021:** Israel-Hamas Crisis Evictions of Palestinians in East Jerusalem and clashes at al-Aqsa Mosque spark conflict between Israel and Hamas. Over two hundred people in Gaza and at least ten in Israel died.
- **2023:** Hamas Launches Surprise Attack on Israel. According to Israeli media, the conflict's initial strikes led to at least 250 people killed and 1,500 injured in Israel, making it the deadliest attack in the country in decades.

V. Major Parties Involved:

a) USA

- The United States has long sought a solution to the conflict that results in two states, although the Trump administration adopted policies that diverged from that goal.
- The Biden administration has reaffirmed U.S. support for a two-state solution but hasn't moved to restart negotiations. It has instead promoted Israeli-Arab normalization and resumed aid for Palestinians.⁸

b) Egypt and Jordan

- Both countries have peace treaties with Israel and often act as mediators in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Egypt, in particular, plays a key role in mediating between Israel and Hamas. However, at the current Egypt does not want to accept any refugees as it fears undermining a concrete Palestinian state.

c) Israel

- The new right-wing, religious government has prioritized territorial expansion and the strengthening of Jerusalem's status. It has taken steps to legalize settlements previously deemed illegal under Israeli law and has committed to the annexation of the West Bank, though no clear timeline has been provided. The government's actions have raised concerns about the prospects of resolving the conflict, particularly regarding the two-state solution that the international community has long supported. The government's approach has also sparked tensions within Jewish-Arab relations inside Israel, particularly following intercommunal violence in May 2021.⁹

d) Hamas

- As a Palestinian Islamist political and militant group, Hamas controls the Gaza Strip and has been involved in numerous conflicts with Israel. It is considered a

⁸ <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-us-policy-israeli-palestinian-conflict>

⁹ <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/01/what-does-israels-new-government-mean-israeli-palestinian-conflict>

terrorist organization by many western governments and seeks the establishment of an Islamic state in place of Israel. Hamas' stance often leads to violent confrontations, and it has been a significant barrier to peace negotiations due to its refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist¹⁰.

e) Hizbullah

- While not directly involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Hezbollah, a Shiite Islamist political and militant group based in Lebanon, supports Palestinian groups against Israel. Hezbollah's stance is generally antagonistic towards Israel, and it has been involved in conflicts with Israel, particularly in southern Lebanon.

f) Saudi Arabia

- Historically, Saudi Arabia has advocated for Palestinian rights and the establishment of a Palestinian state. It has supported peace initiatives such as the Arab Peace Initiative but has not formally recognized Israel. The normalization of relations between Israel and other Arab states, as part of the Abraham Accords, has put pressure on Saudi Arabia to consider its position, although recent tensions have affected the prospects of normalization between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

g) Syria

- Syria's stance has been historically hostile towards Israel, with the two countries still officially at war. Syria supports Palestinian rights to statehood and has hosted Palestinian refugee populations. The ongoing civil war in Syria has, however, limited its direct involvement in recent years.

h) Palestine

- The Palestinian Authority, led by Fatah, governs parts of the West Bank and seeks the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. It supports a two-state solution and has engaged in peace negotiations, although progress has been stymied by internal Palestinian divisions and Israeli settlement expansion.

¹⁰ <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>

i) Iran

- Iran is a staunch supporter of Palestinian groups opposed to Israel, including Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. It opposes Israel's existence and has been accused of providing military support to Palestinian militant groups.

j) Lebanon

- Lebanon hosts a significant Palestinian refugee population and has been involved in conflicts with Israel, particularly through Hezbollah. The Lebanese government's stance supports Palestinian statehood but is complicated by the presence of Hezbollah within its borders.

k) Arab League

- The Arab League, representing Arab states, supports Palestinian statehood and has endorsed peace initiatives such as the Arab Peace Initiative. The league's stance advocates for a two-state solution and the rights of Palestinian refugees.

l) EU

- The EU supports a two-state solution and has been involved in peace efforts. It considers Israeli settlements in the occupied territories illegal under international law and advocates for negotiations to resolve the conflict.¹¹

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict

VI. Relevant UN documents and Articles

1. **UN RESOLUTION 181 (1947)** - Recommending partition of Mandatory Palestine into Arab and Jewish states

- a. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Resolution-181>
- b. https://ecf.org.il/media_items/498

2. **UN RESOLUTION 194 (1948)** - Establishes Conciliation Commission and addresses the refugee issue

- a. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/IP%20ARES%20194.pdf>
- b. NOTE: For the above-mentioned link, you need to download the PDF and then scroll down to the second page. At the bottom, you will find the beginning of the Resolution. It will be labelled the following:

194 - (III) Palestine - Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator

3. **UN RESOLUTION 242 (1967)** - Emphasizes the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" following the Six-Day War.

- a. <https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SCRes242%281967%29.pdf>

4. **Oslo Accords (1993/1995)** - Framework agreements aimed at achieving peace.

- a. This is an interesting article discussing the Oslo Accords:
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2537958?seq=3>
- b. https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IL%20PS_930913_DeclarationPrinciplesnterimSelf-Government%28Oslo%20Accords%29.pdf

5. **UN RESOLUTION 338 (1973)** - Directly related to Resolutions 242 and the Oslo Accords, regards an emergency meeting of the UNSC for an immediate ceasefire in the Yom Kippur War.

- a. https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_res_3381973.pdf

6. UN RESOLUTION 2334 (2016) - Condemns Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories as a violation of international law and a major obstacle to peace

- a. <https://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/SRES2334-2016.pdf>

VII. Questions to Consider

1. What are the historical roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and how have they shaped the current territorial disputes?
2. How do Israelis and Palestinians view the concept of a two-state solution?
3. What is the role of international actors and organisations in mediating the conflict, and how effective have they been?
4. How do Israeli settlements in the West Bank affect the prospects for peace?
5. How does the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital affect the peace process?
6. How does the humanitarian situation in Gaza affect regional stability and the peace process?
7. What are the main obstacles to a lasting peace agreement between Israel and Palestine?
8. How do regional dynamics, such as Israel's relations with other countries in the Middle East, affect the conflict?

9. How do internal political divisions within Israel and Palestine affect the peace process?
10. How can international law be used to address issues such as the right of return of Palestinian refugees and the legality of settlements?

VIII. Conclusion:

When debating this issue, it is imperative to take into account the lives of millions that currently live in the southern Levant area. As no single nation is currently willing to offer asylum, it is difficult to decide on what to do with them. Leaving them as is, would be difficult due to the blocking of supply by Israel but at the same time would allowing them to take refuge in another country undermine the potential for a Palestinian sovereign state? This issue not only encompasses the humanitarian side, but also International relations, International Law, and International Security. It is clear that the core interests and concerns of both Israelis and Palestinians in terms of mutual recognition, security and the right to self-determination must be addressed in any viable and just settlement. The support of international actors and respect for international law are very important in ensuring a sustainable path to peace. It is therefore necessary to look to the past to understand how this problem arose and might be resolved while upholding what the United Nations stands for: peace and prosperity of the people.

IX. Sources Used:

- <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>
- <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/israels-war-hamas-what-know>
- <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/israel-hamas-war-humanitarian-crisis-gaza>
- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>
- <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-endgame-no-sign-post-war-plan-gaza-2023-10-18/>
- <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/01/what-does-israels-new-government-mean-israeli-palestinian-conflict>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict
- <https://www.cfr.org/programs/center-preventive-action> (Multiple good articles)
- <https://www.dw.com/en/israel-new-netanyahu-government-vows-to-expand-settlements/a-64228466#:~:text=Benjamin%20Netanyahu's%20incoming%20far%20right,Israel's%20ties%20with%20the%20US.>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/22/toff>
- <https://libguides.chaffey.edu/c.php?g=1355762&p=10029904>
- <https://theconversation.com/europe/search?q=Israel-Palestine> (Browse for articles)
- <https://www.britannica.com/event/Balfour-Declaration>
- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/9/whats-the-israel-palestine-conflict-about-a-simple-guide>
- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/27/israels-supporters-have-been-put-on-notice-say-experts-on-icj-verdict>
- <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-response-gaza-completely-dependent-palestine-refugee-agency-relief-chief-tells-security-council-urging-countries-restore-funding>
- <https://www.npr.org/2023/12/12/1218388766/egypt-israel-gaza-palestinians-hamas>
- <https://world101.cfr.org/understanding-international-system/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict-timeline>