

Advanced Security Council II



Situation in the Middle East
(Palestinian Question)

Background of Committee:

The United Nations Security Council is one of the six primary organs of the United Nations and is its most effective body. Charged by the Charter with the task of maintaining international peace and security, its powers include the authorization of peacekeeping missions, sanctions, and military action through Security Council resolutions. It is the only UN organ with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states. It has 15 members—with ten rotating members elected on a region basis on two year terms and five permanent members: Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the United States. The permanent members have the power to veto any Security Council resolution.

As the Security Council, the primary responsibility pertains to world issues in maintaining international peace and security. With the proposed topic, we have stepped outside of the confines of a common theme to open debate on wider, long withstanding problems that the Security Council has responsibility for. Each nation will be permitted to make an opening statement (General Debate) followed by a period of Substantive Debate. There is no formal speaking list and instead it will be round robin style speaking. Each Council member may speak for up to five minutes, each in turn until all 15 members have been given an opportunity. A delegate may pass once per round-robin. Unmoderated caucuses will take place periodically. There may be Moderated Caucuses as well, depending on the flow of the committee and time. In regards to policy, Security Council nations are responsible for representing their entire region, not just their specific country.

Goals of the Committee:

The goal of the Security Council is to construct a comprehensive solution that touches upon most, if not all aspects of the Palestinian issue, while maintaining a sense of specificity and clarity. As a part of the United Nations, we seek peace above all else - in order to do so, we must understand the root causes that contributed to the situation from both factions. While long term solutions are typical of committee, we will be expecting delegates to understand and find comprehensive, short term solutions to diffuse the conflict. In doing so, we hope to better understand the depth and nature of the Palestinian question and move forward into the future with greater insight.

Background of the Topic:

Of the numerous situations within the Middle East at this point in time, the most longstanding is that between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The Security Council has been working towards a settlement for the Palestinian question for decades, and this territorial conflict reaches back to World War I. This question and resulting conflict have proved to be the catalyst for multiple regional conflicts in the past. The main conflict arises between the call for a separate Palestinian State and Israel. Palestine existed before 1948 as ten-thousand square mile land bordered by Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, the Mediterranean, and the Jordan River. After the British mandate with the territory ended in 1947, Israel gained its independence as a country. The international community has been divided in its support of either Palestine or Israel and past attempts at two-state compromises have failed.

The necessary components for any deals between the Palestinians and Israel include mutual recognition, borders, security, water rights, control of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, Palestinian freedom of movement, and Palestinian right of return. Some of the most disputed areas include those won by Israel during the Six Days War in 1967. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip were two of the territories won by Israel after the war. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip remain under the Palestinian Authority and under the jurisdiction of the Palestinians. However Israel still holds the main authority and both the territories are not under the complete control of the Palestinians. The current conflict and any attempts at peace have been brokered between the current Israeli government leader Benjamin Netanyahu and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Internal conflict within Palestine between the Fatah and Hamas groups have also created further instability within the region.

In more recent times, there has been an escalation of violence - one where there seems to be no room for peace to be brokered. If we look at the current situation in the Gaza Strip, we realize just how vast this problem continues to seem. More so than the political aspects of the Israeli blockade against the citizens of Gaza, we can see the humanitarian issues that take their toll. Over 2 million persons are living in adverse conditions, and according to a report made by the United Nations, the Gaza Strip will be uninhabitable by 2020. The fluctuating views of the international community and the staunch opposition between the Palestinians and Israel has created an extremely long drawn conflict that must be resolved to ensure security and stability for the region and the international community.

UN Involvement:

This situation between Palestine and Israel has been monitored by the United Nations since the beginning of the formation of the supranational body - more or less, the United Nations has strived to maintain a sense of peace, diplomacy, and a regard for humanitarian rights for the situation. An instance of this was the creation of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) as a method of mediating discussions between the two factions. In other aspects, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has become one of the largest, if not the largest forces working to combat social, educational, and health issues that stem from the region. The United Nations and Security Council alike continues to find measures of deescalating the situation in hopes of finding a long-awaited peace.

However this is not to say that everything has been smooth sailing for the United Nations, as evidenced by 2012 resolution, A/RES/67/19. The results of the resolution shook the very core of the Palestinian crisis as an overwhelming majority of UN members voted in favor of recognizing Palestine as a state. This led to further discord amongst the Israeli and Palestinian forces because as the Israeli faction would have it, the resolution violated the agreements set during the Oslo I accords in 1993. In the eyes of the Israelis, the entirety of the United Nations was an enemy to their cause.

Key Questions:

- How can the Security Council more actively aid in this issue as a United Nations body with special privileges (for example, dealing with security issues and issuing legally binding resolutions)?
- Considering that the Palestinians and Israel consider the other to be infringing upon territory, how can a clean territorial separation be achieved?
- What does the fact that treaties, ceasefires, and negotiations have not yet worked suggest about how to proceed when considering solutions?
- Has your country done anything to assist the Palestinian or Israeli government? If so, can your country assist the Israeli or the Palestinian government?
- How can the ethnical-religious conflicts be addressed within Israel without creating animosity between the peoples of the region?

Works Cited

Cook, Jonathan. "Palestinians Ask Israeli Court to Reject Land Grab Law." Israel | Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera, 10 Feb. 2017. Web. 13 Apr. 2017.

This article details a land grab law imposed by the Israeli government allowing settlers to take land within Palestinian Territory within the West Bank. Palestinians are protesting this law and have appealed to the Israeli Supreme Court for its repeal. The article provides background on the conflicts between the government and Palestinians.

"General Assembly Plenary on Question of Palestine and Situation in the Middle East - General Assembly of the United Nations." United Nations. United Nations, n.d. Web. 13 Apr. 2017.

This statement in the General Assembly on this conflict highlights the issue and provides policy based solutions that have been and are being implemented. It outlines the position of nations that support aid for Palestinians and long term resolution to the conflict.

"Israel Profile - Timeline." BBC News. BBC, 25 Jan. 2017. Web. 13 Apr. 2017.

Timeline of Israeli history starting from the seizure of Palestine from the Ottomans in 1917 along with the Balfour Declaration. Provides history of Israel with all Palestinian background.

"Israel/Palestine." Human Rights Watch. N.p., 27 Jan. 2016. Web. 13 Apr. 2017.

This article provides comprehensive information on the conflict throughout the year 2015 and early 2016. The complete summary includes information about actions taken by Israeli authorities, armed groups, legislature, and any policy changes within the conflict.

"The Office Of The Prosecutor." The Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court (n.d.): 243-76. Web.

A brief summary of a petition brought by the Minister of Justice of the Government of Palestine in regards to activities within Palestine, giving the ICC full discretion in dealing with the issues.

"An Overview of Relations Between Israel and Palestine." N.p., n.d. Web. 13 Apr. 2017. <<http://connection.ebscohost.com/politics/israel-palestinians/overview-relations-between-israel-and-palestine>>.

This brief article provides a short summary of key points to know when dealing with both Israel and Palestine as well as an explanation as to the relations between the two parties of the conflict.

"Palestine News." The Telegraph. Telegraph Media Group, n.d. Web. 13 Apr. 2017. These articles, some dated to early this month itself, provide insight to some of the events occurring between Palestinians, armed groups, and the Israeli government. The articles include information on the state of relations between Palestine and Israel as well as information on physical conflicts.

"Palestinian Territories - Timeline." BBC News. BBC, 08 July 2015. Web. 13 Apr. 2017.

Timeline of Palestinian history starting from the seizure of Palestine from the Ottomans in 1917 along with the Balfour Declaration. The timeline follows events within the area considered as Palestine and follows all conflicts, including those with Israel.

"QUESTION OF PALESTINE AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL." United Nations. United Nations, n.d. Web. 13 Apr. 2017.

Provides Security Council Resolutions passed pertaining to the Palestine-Israel issue. Also provides verbatim records of Security Council briefings on the Middle East and the Palestinian question.

"The Question of Palestine and the United Nations." (2008): n. pag. United Nations, 2008. Web. 13 Apr. 2017. <https://unispal.un.org/pdfs/DPI2499.pdf>

This publication provides a full explanation of the history of both Israel and Palestine, the actions and status of both nations, and the actions of the United Nations in regards to the two nations. Provides the perspective of both Israelis and Palestinians in regards to the conflict.

Works Cited

- <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/sc.htm>

- <http://www.un.org/pga/71/2016/11/29/general-assembly-plenary-on-question-of-palestine-and-situation-in-the-middle-east/>
- <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/israel/palestine>
- <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/02/palestinians-israeli-court-reject-land-grab-law-170209081244613.html>
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