

The Israel & Palestine Conflict

United Nations Security Council

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Introduction:

Ever since the dusk of the Second World War, the borders of the newly-founded nation, Israel, and Palestine have been the center of conflict, controversy and argument. This divisive issue has been around since the birth of the United Nations. A simple background guide doesn't do the true scope of this complicated and immense issue justice. The true amount of information and background are going to fill entire history textbooks.

The core purpose of this background is to provide a basis for your further research of this ongoing issue. The guide will provide the basic history and the problem that you—the delegates—will be working to solve. Alongside the previous actions by the United Nations and the overall international bloc, resolutions and position papers should be complete and profound to procure formidable solutions.

Information on the Committee:

One of the six principal agencies of the United Nations and the priority body for maintaining international peace and security is the UNSC, or more formally known as the United Nations Security Council. Being founded in 1945 with the core United Nations, it also developed based on the failure of the previous League of Nations. The League failed to maintain international peace as a result of its lack of legitimacy and the ability to impose binding resolutions on its membership. It simply could not enforce the resolutions many worked so hard to create. For this reason,

the United Nations brought forth the Security Council to maintain the international peace that the League lost years before.

Its first member states consisted of Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, Netherlands and Poland, along with the permanent members of the USSR, the USA, the Republic of China, the UK and France.

The primary function of the Security Council falls under Article VII of the Charter, and is concerned with the application of legitimate military force to settle disputes, this force is known as the United Nations Peacekeepers. Because of its mandate, the Security Council is officially in constant session and as such has no fixed location for its meetings. As a result, the Security Council is able to convene at short notice at any location to create a response to any crisis. Historically, the Security Council has used its power to authorize collective action in a variety of situations.

Possibly the most defining aspect of the Security Council is its structure. The Security Council is made up of five permanent members, in addition to ten non-permanent members that serve two year terms. Each year, five of these non-permanent members are elected with seats based on region and confirmed by the General Assembly. These regions are Africa and Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean States, and Western Europe and Other States respectively. The five permanent members have the power to veto any resolution drafted by the Security Council. These 5 nations were originally

chosen based on their political, economical, military influence in 1945. Arguably, their reasoning still persists today.

Background & History of the Problem:

As noted previously, this conflict stems deep through the roots of history and is much too complex to describe in a mere background guide. Between 1896 and 1948, hundreds of thousands of Jews resettled from Europe to what was the British-controlled Palestine. After the second World War, large numbers of Jews began to follow suit. The Arabs living in Palestine at the time viewed this movement negatively and the two peoples fought for the land. The British, overwhelmed by the stress of the two peoples, came to the United Nations. Consequently, in 1947, the UN decided to split the two states into two separate countries.

Almost all of the roughly 650,000 Jews went to the blue territory in the map to the right, and a majority of the Arab population (a population nearly double the size of the Jews) went to the orange.

Of course, the Jews accepted this generous deal to be given their holy land once again. However, the Arabs were not as open to the idea. The surrounding Arab states of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, and Syria all later declared war on Israel. These are known as the 1948 Palestine War, the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War. Israeli forces, single-handedly defeated the Palestinian militias and Arab armies in a vicious conflict that turned 700,000



Palestinian civilians into refugees. The UN partition promised 56 percent of British Palestine for the Jewish state; by the end of the war, Israel possessed 77 percent. This was essentially everything except the West Bank and the eastern quarter of Jerusalem (controlled by Jordan), as well as the Gaza Strip (controlled by Egypt). It left Israelis with a state, but not Palestinians.

The astounding effects of this situation remain since most of the dislocated Palestinians currently live in Jewish-occupied territory (Israel) or in the Palestinian National Authority, whose legal status as a country is disputed among nations. Israel strictly restricts Palestinians from returning to their native homes because the country states it would become overwhelming and challenge their existence as a Jewish state.

Since the Arab-Israeli wars, Israel has occupied the lands of Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank and the Golan Heights. This made up nearly 60% of the proposed Arab state by the UN. Since 1967, mass settlements began to form within these Arab designated areas. Israel claimed the land and began to populate the region heavily. More than 500,000 Israelis currently reside in these settlements. Many moved for religious reasons, some to assert dominance over the land, and some because housing is cheap.

Many international lawyers have been called to discuss and question the legality of the settlements. The majority concluded that this action from Israel does indeed conflict with the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the transfer of population into occupied territories. Israel's government denies these claims.

Throughout recent history, there has been lots of violence between the two states. Negotiations and peace talks had always been difficult since Palestine had difficulty

creating a proper governing body to speak on their behalf. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was created in 1964 with harsh feelings towards Israel. However, in 1994 it confirmed the existence of Israel in exchange for being considered a proper representative of the Palestinians. Although the PLO controls Palestinian National Authority (PA), the government that controls the area of the West Bank, they don't control the Gaza Strip (shown below) which is governed by the Hamas.

Founded in 1987, the Hamas are a "Palestinian Islamist political organization and militant group", which has been increasingly active with violence towards the state of Israel over the last 40 years. Through suicide bombings, rocket launches and mortars, the region has been covered in conflict since their formation. Their separation from the PLO also complicates the possibility of a unified Palestinian existence.



Current Situation & Statement of Problem:

In the past ten years, there have been many developments in this more than century long conflict. The Hamas currently maintain control of Gaza, protesting weekly

on the border, which is usually responded by Israeli troops acting in "self-defense". Which usually results in violence and conflict between the two groups. Although, due to the funding and resources of the Israeli forces, there tend to be more Palestinian casualties.

The Trump Administration made it one of their goals to promote peace in the region. The now former President conducted actions to cancelling funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency, which provides aid to Palestinian refugees, and relocated the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Although Israel favoured this major decision, it was condemned by the Palestinians, Middle Eastern countries, and even some in Europe. This is because while Israel declares Jerusalem their capital of the future Palestinian State. In January 2020, the Trump administration released its long-awaited "Peace to Prosperity" plan, which has been rejected by Palestinians due to its support for future Israeli annexation of settlements in the West Bank and control over an "undivided" Jerusalem.

Despite many attempts of peace by foreign nations and within the two states themselves, the central issues still remain. The question of the Israeli settlements in UN declared Palestinian territory, Israeli security, Palestinian refugees, and the question of the city of Jerusalem.

International Bloc & UN Actions:

The United Nations had always been a major player in this conflict, arguably being one of the factors that actually led to modern complications. Although, in the beginning, apart from creating the state of Israel in 1948, it's involvement in the politics has been quite miniscule. Apart from UN peacekeepers being stationed on the Israeli-Egyptian border, and UNRWA, (the UN Refugee Works Agency) providing

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for the refugees until they were able to return home, there was little involvement of the UN in actual political decision-making.

The true decisions were made by the powerful members of the Security Council, specifically, Britain, the US, Soviet Union, and France. In the 60s, the US began to supply Israel with missiles and other violent resources, which soon after helped them in the Six Days War.

Following the war, the UN passed Resolution 232 which unequivocally called for "the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict". The resolution was drafted largely by the four powers of the Security Council. One of the criticisms of this resolution was the lack of reference towards Palestinian refugees which only further demonstrates the immense influence the US had on the proceedings.

Over and over again, there were many committees that attempted to bring attention to this conflict but the US would continue to object. Never allowing peace discussions to occur.

During the 80s and the 90s, the diplomacy in the region was controlled more so by the United States. During this period, the UN stayed out of most political discussions leaving it to the US to moderate (although this is not exactly an impartial judge). In 1992, the US initiated the Oslo Accords, where the leaders of both sides could meet to find a conclusion, particularly a two-state one. However, the talks failed miserably, and the two states were no closer to a solution. Soon after, more violence incurred in the region and peace seemed further away. Other administrations including Bush, Obama, and Trump did not do so favorably as well.

Proposed Solutions:

Being so deeply rooted throughout history, this is one of the most complicated issues that our world faces today. A solution would affect people far and wide. The world has come up with a variety of possible solutions to the issue. Although none of them have been agreed on by both parties, they could be adapted on to form a new solution.

The two-state solution is by far the most popular. Being favoured by the US, it is probably the most feasible. The better of two options rather. For lack of a better explanation, it quite literally means to have two states: Israel and Palestine. The land would essentially be divided between the two equally based on concurrent foundations and populations. The two-state solution favours both sides in the sense that they would be able to run their countries the way they desire.

On the other hand, there is the one-state solution. There are two possible ways for this. The first one being to create a single democratic state, however, the Palestinians would outnumber the Israelis stripping it from being a Jewish state. The other version consists of Israel completely annexing the West Bank by either forcing the Palestinians out, or getting rid of their right to vote. This version is not very popular among the international community (and even many Zionists) as it would be a human rights violation.

The final less talked about solution is of withdrawal. As it quite plainly states, this solution results in the extraction of one of the two states indicated. With a coordinated withdrawal it would consist of Israel leaving the greater portion of the West Bank or vice versa. They would then relocate somewhere else, that doesn't affect the Palestinians. However, this option would cause issues as the Israelis see this land as holy and are not likely to relocate.

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While formulating a solution keep in mind past actions and what worked. Using the ideas of these three solutions, one can use other United Nations resolutions and diplomatic actions from the United States to form a formidable and *realistic* solution that both states can profit and prosper from.

Questions & Tips for Further Research:

What are the intifadas?

What have other groups/countries (ie. the European Union, Japan) done to work for a solution?

What are the demands of both countries?

How far back in history does this conflict really go?

What is the geography of the area like? How does that affect a solution?

How do you create a unified Palestinian State?

What are the most popular solutions right now? How can we adapt to those?

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“Charter of the United Nations”, United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>.

“Members of the United Nations Security Council”, United Nations Security Council, <http://www.un.org/en/sc/members/>.

Think about economic consequences. Do these countries have the budget for your solutions? We recommend this site to help work out the fiscal aspects of your solution: <https://www.rand.org/international/cmepp/costs-of-conflict/calculator.html>

When forming a solution, take into consideration how other countries will be affected by it.

Nations of the Security Council:

The current United Nations Security Council consists of 5 permanent members and 10 non-permanent members. Countries with an asterisk are permanent members.

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Member States:

- United States*, Russia*, China*, France*, United Kingdom*, Estonia, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, and Vietnam.

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