

Forum: Security Council

Issue: The situation in Israel-Palestine

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Introduction

The diplomatic, social, and political history of Israel-Palestine initiated long before the establishment of the United Nations itself. One of the biggest causes of this conflict was the birth of major nationalist movements among the Jewish as well as the Arabs whereby both wished to form a sovereign state for their people in similar regions in the Middle East.

During the late 19th and early 20th century, there was a global nationalist movement going on as people from around the world began to identify themselves as nations and strive to become independent. Imperialist colonizations were beginning to diminish in power as people of the same land protested, rioted, and politically began attempting to be their own states. Furthermore, exiled Jews of different backgrounds sought to create their own state with real borders, rather than being a nation spread around the world.

After World War II, this new movement in which they tried to identify a place where Jews could form an independent nation grew stronger. The region of Palestine with significant religious sites such as the city of Jerusalem seemed, for many, to be the best option. The Jewish nationalist movements, also referred to as Zionist movements, had already started in 1882 with the initial mass immigration of European Jews.

Conflict started to escalate in 1947 with the emergence of Palestinian nationalism, and further increased when other Arab states started to get involved. This conflict developed into a crisis between Israelis and Arabs in the region.

Today, Hamas in Gaza and the Israeli army are engaged in exchanges of rocket fire and airstrikes, civilian violence, and diplomatic disputes. Both Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas are leading their people with inagreeable desiderata.

Definition of Key Terms

Anti semitism

Anti semitism is used to refer to the prejudice or stance against Jews. It may take the form of religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, for instance, or political efforts to isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them. It may also include prejudiced or stereotyped views about Jews.

Settlements

In the Israel-Palestinian context, settlements are communities of Jews that have been moving to the West Bank since it landed under Israeli occupation in 1967. Some of the settlers move there for religious reasons, some because they want to assert the West Bank territory as Israeli land, and others because the housing there tends to be subsidized and affordable. Settlements are considered to be a major impediment to peace by Palestine.

Zionism

Zionism refers to the movement to establish a Jewish state in the Middle East, corresponding to the historical land of Israel, and thus support for the modern state of Israel.

Humanitarian Aspect

Impact on civilians

There was increasing impoverishment, food insecurity, unemployment, and outbreaks of violence before the recent outburst in Gaza. The demolition of Palestinian-owned homes and other buildings and settler violence are increasing in the West Bank.

The nine-day hostility between Hamas and the Israeli military in May 2021 has damaged over a dozen hospitals and clinics in Gaza. It damaged its only COVID-19 test laboratory and broke water pipes serving at least most of the city, triggering a humanitarian crisis that is impacting about two million people.

Hamas, which has fired thousands of rockets at Israeli cities and towns, is committing war crimes, though its weapons are far less effective and their toll far lower than that of the Israeli forces.

Many Palestinians face the risk of forcible transfer, too. Violence in part exacerbated by threats of forced removal is getting worse each day. Forced removal of Palestinians, home demolitions, and the confiscation of Palestinian properties have put men, women, and children at risk of displacement, and de facto expulsion from the city of Gaza.

Sewage systems inside Gaza have been destroyed. A desalination plant that provided fresh water to 250,000 people in the territory is not operating. Dozens of schools have been closed, forcing over half a million students to have stopped their education. Some 72,000 Gazans have been forced to flee their homes with immediate effect. Including dozens of children, at least 213 Palestinians have been killed within a few months. At least 12 Israeli fatalities have been recorded in the conflict.

Security

The security dilemma has a direct correlation with the border issue, as the Israeli justification for the construction of the wall is in part based on their belief that it protects them from Palestinian suicide bombers. Of concern to Israel within the region is the potential development of a Palestinian Military force in a potential Palestinian State. While it would be conceivable for the Palestinians to have their own military force to prevent an attack, the Israelis worry about the issue of outside interference with a Palestinian military. Jordan and Egypt have had good relations with the Israelis, but Syria and Jordan have been known to finance organizations such as Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, or Hezbollah, which pose a deep concern for the Israelis.

Within the realm of security, another issue in the region is terrorism. According to a resolution from the Commission on Human Rights regarding Israel/Palestine, the Palestinians were noted to resist a foreign occupier, and such resistance may include armed resistance, while terrorist acts as such are unjustifiable under international law. However, the problem with this resolution was that it was sponsored only by pro-Palestinian Member States, and offered no point of view from an Israeli perspective. Furthermore, because of the domination of the Palestinian parliament by Hamas, who are viewed as a terrorist group by the Middle East Quartet, it makes it increasingly

challenging for any security related issues to be solved because States involved in the negotiations (including Israel itself and the U.S.) do not seek to work with an organization they associate with violent acts. Moreover, the U.S. announced the peace process would not move forward should there be organizations involved that do not renounce acts of terrorism, such as Hamas.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Palestine peaked from September 2020. Due to the large effect of the annexations and mixed control in regions around the land, the poverty rate increased to around 30 percent since 2007, with approximately 1.4 million people living in poverty. Furthermore, the decision to stop accepting clearance revenues from the Government of Israel reduced resources available to aid with or respond to the health crisis. The combined effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, a 20 percent drop in aid to the budget, and the cessation of clearance revenues resulted in a fiscal gap after aid exceeding USD 1 billion.

As the COVID-19 pandemic worsened in both the West Bank and Gaza, it unclosed pre-existing weaknesses in the Palestinian health framework, affected and flawed by protracted conflict, constrained budgets, and fragmented governance and service delivery challenges. The Palestinian territories have one of the lowest COVID-19 testing rates in the region and the positivity rate of over 21 percent indicates an unimpeded spread of the pandemic.

Involvement of major parties

Israel

Israel is a state that has been taking issue with Palestinians for decades, recently having been involved in attacks and blows by Hamas. Israel faces conflicting pressures from his own political party, opposing political parties, and Israeli citizens. Israel iterates that Hamas, despite seeming to be combatants, do not observe the International Laws of War; they build weapons storages and rocket launch sites in Gazan hospitals and schools, set up their own civilians to be caught in the crossfire, and indiscriminately target Israeli

civilians. Israel, by contrast, claims to have the initiative and equipment to protect their own civilians, and avoids as much as it can without having Gazan civilians harmed.

Most resolutions and initiatives from the United Nations have amounted to having Israel expose itself to the engagement of violence with Hamas. Several years ago, Israel completely withdrew from Gaza and withdrew all the Jewish settlements there; this did not bring the prospect of peace any closer.

Israel also disbelieves in the attainability of a successful negotiation with Hamas, considering the fundamentalist group's charter itself calls for the dissolution of the State of Israel.

Israel's advances towards Palestine have been executed in several ways. Israeli authorities have conducted forcible transfers, evictions, demolition, unlawful killings and uses of force against Palestinians this past year. The deaths of the Palestinian population, in contrast with the Israeli fatality rates, were greater by thousands. Israel's goal is to obtain the West Bank as an official territory of their own, for reasons revolving around its historical importance to the Jews. The United States and the United Arab Emirates have both previously shown their diplomatic endorsement with Israel, but numerous other nations do not recognize Israel - the Arab League being one of the key organizations.

Palestine

Palestine is both one of the two states in question as well as the land being seized by opposing communities for decades. Within Palestine, President Abbas is the recognized leader, but another group, Hamas, controls a part of Palestine called the Gaza Strip. Though there are two sides to the conflict, within each side there are different actors and internal pressures.

Each time a civilian or military dispute arose, the Palestinian casualties outweighed those of Israel. Palestinian refugees are displaced in regions currently entitled to Israel, unable to find aid from neighboring countries nor their own. Key issues that have stalled further progress are security, borders, water rights, control of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, Palestinian freedom of movement, and Palestinian right of return.

The opinions of the people themselves are not static - several are still willing to persevere in hopes to regain their land, and others condone a two-state solution. However, at a time of Israel putting Palestinian civilians at risk everyday had caused a violent response. The forcefully displaced persons' right of return is another issue that is not able to reach a resolution due to the drastic upper hand of Israel's military.

PLO

Palestine Liberation Organization is an umbrella political organization representing the Arabs that are in conflict with Israel. It was formed in 1964 to centralize the leadership of various Palestinian groups that previously had operated as different movements. It came into prominence only after the Six-Day War of June 1967, however, and engaged in a protracted guerrilla war against Israel for about 20 years from the 1960s onward before entering into peace negotiations with them in the 1990s. Although the PLO obtained its funding from taxes levied on the salaries of Palestinian workers, for decades the organization also depended heavily on the contributions of other countries.

Palestinian Authority

The Palestinian Authority (PA) was formed through the Oslo Accords of 1993. The PA was created as an interim governing body while Israelis and Palestinians were negotiating a final resolution of their conflict - which should have occurred by 1999 under the accords. The PA was to take partial administrative and security responsibility over areas within the West Bank and Gaza Strip as Israeli troops withdrew from those areas.

Hamas

A fundamentalist organization based in Palestine which controls the Gaza strip, considered to be terrorists by the United States and Israel.

The military branch of Hamas has carried out attacks on Israeli civilians and soldiers. Suicide bombings, and more recently, rocket strikes have been used as tactics. The Human Rights Watch has denounced both Hamas and Israel's attacks on civilians during the conflict, asserting that reprisals are never justified when civilians are targeted. As a result of this attempt at retaliation, the world learned that Palestine did play a role in provoking the subsequent military assault between the two parties.

United Nations

The United Nations plays a crucial role in the Quartet, which also includes the United States, Russia and the EU. The Quartet presented its last discussed verdict in July 2016 and reiterated the importance of dialogue between the parties for a two-State solution. The issue of the Middle East is frequently raised in the Security Council under agenda item “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” during quarterly public debates or private consultations of the Security Council.

Several resolutions on the situation in the Middle East were voted for and adopted in the Security Council. Among the most important included resolution 242, adopted after the 1967’s Israeli-Arab conflict or resolution 338, adopted after the 1973’s conflict. In December 2016, the Security Council adopted resolution 2334, calling for the end of the settlement policy of Palestinian territories, which regardless continued the following year. In addition to being illegal with respect to international law, it constitutes a major obstacle to the two-State solution.

The United Nations also calls for an inter-Palestinian reconciliation, in accordance with the principles agreed upon by the international community (non-violence, recognition of Israel and of a signed agreement) aiming at a united Palestinian state and a viable two-state solution.

Britain

Imperial Britain knew of both the ambitions of Zionists and Palestinians and used the situation to bolster their own interests. In 1914, amid the first World War, Britain went into war with the Ottoman Empire; the following year, they approached the Arab leaders with the proposal that Britain would agree to Arab independence if they helped fight against the ottomans. Britain had promised a home to both Palestine and the Jews. This made them need to have a dual mandate during their reign of colonization there. There were two parties that couldn't be reconciled.

The United States of America

The United States became involved shortly after World War II, joining the United Kingdom in recommending one hundred thousand Holocaust survivors relocate to

Palestine, which would be neither an Arab nor a Jewish state. In 1948, the United States became the first nation to recognize Israel as a sovereign nation. The United States attempted to mediate the Arab-Israeli conflict along with Britain, France, Russia, and the United Nations after the six-day war. However, it was the war of 1973 in which Israel struggled early on to defend itself against invading Egyptian and Syrian forces, that compelled the United States to take the lead in future diplomacy. So far, the Biden administration has stood by the decision that it will promote equal rights for Israelis and Palestinians rather than focus on resolving the overarching dispute.

The United States' support towards Israel, though said to incentivize regional calm, has had several backlashes. After the Israel authorities arriving at Al Aqsa during Ramadan in 2020 and triggering protest and injuries, the States diplomatically inferred that both Israeli and Palestinian parties should practise "decisiveness to bring a halt to the violence". Another instance was the Gaza airstrikes; though both sides made advances towards violence, the strikes led to an 11-day military assault after which rebuilding Palestine was essentially looking futile. Ever since the events in the Israel-Palestine region have been escalating since 2020, the Biden administration has resisted to condemn Israel's violations of international law and human rights, before Hamas' rockets were launched towards Israel.

Russian Federation

Russia and Israel/Palestine have had diplomatic relations for a longer time than most other European countries. From Israel's side, the 2018 strike on ammunition depots in western Syria, attacking a surveillance aircraft belonging to Russia was a turning point. Israel was blamed for the mishap being used as a cover for further civilian attacks. Nonetheless, Netanyahu and Putin had reconciled after the incident and resulted in the Russian president agreeing to pull military control from the occupied share of Syria. Amicable relations with Israel are benevolent for Russia as they help possess more influence in the Middle East even as the United States scales its presence down in the region.

Germany

Germany had an enormous role in this conflict so as to the building of the state of Israel on all levels and aspects and built a unique special relationship with Israel. And while

maintaining that special relationship with Israel, Germany was able to build and develop a cooperative diplomatic relationship with the Palestinian Authority, the governing body which emerged after signing the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO in an attempt to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Arab League

The states in the Arab League went separate ways when it came to choosing a side of the argument. 6 out of 22 nations recognize Israel as its own state. Events like the Arab League Boycott of Israel had severe economic effects on the society of Jews, notwithstanding the fact that they weren't able to weaken the Jewish industry as intended because of the embedment of Jewish doctors, officials, and other essential workers in the national community. Relations are being normalized and eased with Israel as the state exercises its power in the region.

Development of the issue/Timeline

The Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman empire had colonized the region of Palestine for centuries. The Ottoman Empire conquered Palestine in 1517 and held it until the empire's decline at the end of World War I. By the end of the 19th century, after an increase in anti-Semitic incidents in Eastern Europe, Jews started moving to Palestine in hopes of eventually creating a Jewish homeland there. This was the beginning of the modern Zionist movement. By the end of World War I, the British had taken control of Palestine.

World War I

During World War I, the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers opposed to Great Britain and France as a result of a mutual defense treaty that the Ottoman Empire made with Germany. The potentiality of releasing Palestine from the control of the Ottoman Empire led the new Jewish population and the Arab population in Palestine to support the alignment of the United Kingdom, France, and Russia during World War I.

The British Mandate of Palestine

The British Mandate for Palestine was an outcome of the First World War, reflecting the collapse of pre-war empires and the emergence of nations demanding self-determination. Britain had a dual obligation towards both the Jews and Palestinians. While the mandate consisted of aspects like the proclamation of support for a Jewish land, under the mandate's terms Britain had an obligation to conduct its policy in Palestine in accordance with the requirements of the opposing parties. The General Assembly adopted the resolution to partition Palestine in November 1947. Then, Britain announced the termination of its Mandate for Palestine.

UN proposal 1947

On the 29th of November, the General Assembly voted to adopt a resolution recommending the adoption and implementation of the Plan of Partition. The division was to take effect on the date of British withdrawal. The partition plan required that the proposed states grant full civil rights to all people within their borders regardless of race, religion, or gender. Both the United States and Soviet Union supported the resolution. The five members of the Arab League, who were voting members at the time, voted against the Plan.

Arab-israeli war

In 1948, Arab nationalists - also opposing the ideologies of western imperialists which were in support of Israel - and the Jews supporting the Zionist movement met at war. It was triggered by the independence of Israel and was a hostile dispute between the two, specifically having broken out due to a coalition of 5 Arab States disobeying international law and choosing to invade the Israeli mandated land. After the Holocaust in Europe, the enforcement of a Jewish state exacerbated within the region of Palestine, and with the diplomatic support of a majority of the international community, resulted in countless Palestinians becoming refugees, losses of life, and territory changes.

State of Israel expansion

Several communities of Israeli Jews that were built after 1967 in the disputed territories captured by Israel in the Six-Day War—the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan

Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula. Most, but not all, were authorized and supported by the Israeli government.

Six-day war (1967)

In six days of constant war and fighting, Israel occupied the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt, the Golan Heights of Syria and the West Bank and Arab sector of East Jerusalem, both previously under Jordanian rule. 250,000 Palestinians were forced into exile, and a million more were now under Israeli military occupation.

First intifada (1987-1993)

The first intifada started on when an Israeli military truck crashed into a civilian car transporting Palestinian workers who were waiting to return to the Gaza Strip. Four Palestinians were killed in the collision. With a perception of this incident having occurred intentionally to create commotion between civilians, the preceding months were characterized by simmering violence on both sides. The deaths of the Palestinian workers prompted violent riots against Israeli soldiers, who repeatedly used live rounds against the crowds. The violence intensified in the following days, with protesters raising barricades and pelting Israeli vehicles with stones. Israel launched a crackdown in occupied regions to quell the revolt. Israeli forces imposed curfews and notably used beatings, torture and mass arrests — exacerbating the conflict.

Oslo accords (1993)

The Oslo Accords created a Palestinian Authority tasked with limited self-governance of parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip; it acknowledged the PLO as Israel's partner in permanent-status negotiations about remaining questions. The most important questions relate to the borders of Israel and Palestine, the status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, Israel's military presence in and control over remaining territories after Israel's recognition of Palestinian autonomy, and the Palestinian right of return. The Oslo Accords, however, did not manage to create a Palestinian state.

Second intifada (2000-2005)

The second mass uprising saw Hamas and other jihadist groups fight gunbattles with Israeli soldiers and shell Israeli towns and cities. Both sides also engaged in high-profile assassinations. The causes of the second intifada were complex in the sense that they involved anger over a stagnating peace process, leadership and generational rivalries within the Palestinian movement, a hope by some Palestinian leaders that limited bloodshed would lead to political concessions from Israel, and a harsh initial response by the Israelis all led violence to surge.

Date	Event	Outcome
1948	A regional conflict grew amid the end of the British mandate for Palestine and Israel's declaration of independence in May 1948.	A coalition of Arab states, allied with Palestinian factions, battle Israeli forces. In the end, Israel controls a large portion of territory. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians flee or are driven from their land.
June 1967	The "Six-Day War" begins with Israeli warplanes striking Egyptian airfields and Israeli ground forces entering the Sinai Peninsula.	Israel takes control of the Gaza Strip, Sinai, the West Bank, the Golan Heights and predominantly Arab East Jerusalem. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians flee or are displaced.
October 1973	A coalition of Arab nations, led by Egypt and Syria, launches a surprise attack on Israel. It is known as the Yom Kippur War.	The Arab forces initially gain ground, but are driven back by an Israeli counteroffensive aided by supplies from allies, including the United States. The United States would help to broker a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt at the Camp David

		Accords after a few years.
1978	A peace deal between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, known as the Camp David accords, is brokered on Sept. 17, 1978, by President Jimmy Carter.	Potential Palestinian peace proposals are discussed, but never carried out.
December 1987	A Palestinian uprising, or intifada, brings clashes and protests in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel.	Unrest continues for years, with many killed or injured on both sides.
1993	The Oslo accords are signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, setting out a peace process based on previous U.N. resolutions.	Both sides agree that a Palestinian Authority (PA) would be established and assume governing responsibilities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over a five-year period.
2000	The second intifada, or Palestinian uprising, begins after riots broke out following a visit by right-wing Israeli political figure Ariel Sharon (and later prime minister) to a compound in Jerusalem venerated in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.	Clashes and other violence continued until 2005, leaving hundreds dead on both sides.
2006	The Palestinian militant group Hamas wins elections in Gaza, leading to political strains with the more moderate Fatah party controlling the West Bank.	A new government was formed, and sanctions are enforced upon the Palestinian National Authority by Israel and the Middle East Quartet.

December 2008	Israel begins three weeks of attacks on Gaza after rocket barrages into Israel by Palestinian militants, who are supplied by tunnels from Egypt.	More than 1,110 Palestinians and at least 13 Israelis are killed.
November 2012	Israel kills Hamas military chief Ahmed Jabari, touching off more than a week of rocket fire from Gaza and Israeli airstrikes.	At least 150 Palestinians and six Israelis are killed.
September 2014	Hamas militants kill three Israeli teenagers kidnapped near a Jewish settlement in the West Bank, prompting an Israeli military response. Hamas answers with rocket attacks from Gaza.	A seven-week conflict leaves more than 2,200 Palestinians dead in Gaza. In Israel, 67 soldiers and six civilians are killed.
December 2017	The Trump administration recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and announces that it plans to shift the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv.	Protests erupted throughout the Middle East and the Muslim world. The Palestinian Authority has called for a general strike and Hamas has declared a new intifada.
May 2021	Palestinians began protests in East Jerusalem over an anticipated decision of the Supreme Court of Israel on the eviction of six Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah. ^[34] Under international law, the area, effectively annexed by Israel, is a part of the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel applies its	protests and police riot control, rocket attacks on Israel by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Israeli airstrikes targeting the Gaza Strip.

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Previous attempts to solve the issue

The international community has taken various actions to assist Israel and Palestine find peace, not all of them evidently successful. In the UN Security Council, the most recent resolution adopted on the situation was in 2009, Resolution 1860, which “called for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.” More recently, in September 2012, the President of the Security Council had issued a statement describing the latest efforts to restart peace talks.

With the larger UN family, the UN Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) is in charge of delivering humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees. UNRWA provides health, education, relief, and social services to over 5 million Palestinian refugees living in countries across the Middle East, including areas of Palestine (including Gaza and the West Bank), Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.

In addition to the UN, many NGOs address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For example, Breaking the Silence is an NGO that comprises veteran combatants who have served in the Israeli military since the start of the Second Intifada, and have taken it upon themselves to expose the Israeli public to the reality of daily life in the Occupied Territories.

Possible solutions

The two-state solution

The “two-state solution” would create an independent Israel and Palestine, and is the mainstream approach to resolving the conflict. The idea is that Israelis and Palestinians want to run their countries differently; Israelis want a Jewish state, and Palestinians want a Palestinian state. Because neither side can get what it wants in a joint state, the only possible solution that can meet everyone’s ambitions involves separating Palestinians and Israelis.

The one-state solution

The “one-state solution” would merge Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip into one big nation. It comes in two versions. One, looked favorably towards by some leftists and Palestinians, would create a single democratic country. Arab Muslims would outnumber Jews, thus ending Israel as a Jewish state. The other version, favored by some rightists and Israelis, would involve Israel annexing the West Bank and either forcing out Palestinians or denying them the right to vote. Virtually the entire world, including most Zionists, rejects this option as an unacceptable human rights violation.

Disincentivizing violence

More broadly, Israel should denounce violence and incendiary hate speech, no matter the source, and mete out impartial justice to all. Israeli officials have a particular responsibility to combat ethnic hatred emanating from the Jewish far right and to make sure Palestinian citizens are protected from both police and civilian violence in the same way that Jewish citizens are. Palestinians leaders in Israel have a parallel obligation within their own communities. Many around the globe, and especially in the U.S. and Europe, have been surprised by the images of Jewish mob violence, but the sentiments they embody did not spring up overnight. They have long been cultivated and endorsed at the highest levels of the state. Tamping down ethnic incitement is a matter of self-preservation for the Jewish majority, because the alternative, a steady escalation of civil strife, is already on the horizon.

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