

Committee: Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee

Issue: Humanitarian Consequences of the Israeli-Palestine conflict

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Position: Co-Chair

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## PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Spyros Koutsaliaris and I attend the German School of Thessaloniki. Despite the fact that I never thought that someday I would become a student officer when I participated in a MUN conference for the first time, I am really excited to be serving as a co-chair of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee in the first DSTMUN. Even though it sounds cliché, what fascinates me about these conferences is that teenagers are given the opportunity to talk about global issues and try to find solutions for these problems. Apart from that, likeminded people get to know each other during the conferences. I am also very excited about this particular topic of our committee and I hope you are too. The conflict between Israel and Palestine has a long and controversial history and cannot be analyzed in depth in a single study guide. Purpose of this study guide is to provide you with the most important events and key terms and help you understand, where your research should focus on, mainly the humanitarian aspect of this long-lasting conflict. Don't only rely on this study guide and do your own research too. I really hope to see an active committee in both topics.

If you have any questions concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict don't hesitate to contact me via email ([spyroskoutsaliaris@hotmail.com](mailto:spyroskoutsaliaris@hotmail.com))!

See you in November!

## TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has its roots in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and is older than the United Nations itself. Generally, this conflict was caused by the birth of major nationalist movements among the Jews (Zionist movements) and among the Arabs, both aiming to create a sovereign state for their people in similar regions in the Middle East. As more Israeli and Palestinian groups gathered in this region, the collision between the two forces eventually escalated into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in 1947.

Something that has, over time, greatly characterized the conflict is foreign involvement, as many countries have the ambition of assisting either of the sides in reaching common ground, so as to have better diplomatic relations with the respective nation. In this war, many militarily strong countries, such as the United States, have intervened.

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

### Humanitarian crisis<sup>1</sup>

A humanitarian crisis is defined as a singular event or a series of events that are threatening a community or a large group of people, in terms of health, safety or well-being of them. It may be an internal or external conflict and usually occurs throughout a large land area. The consequences of a humanitarian crisis are called humanitarian consequences.

### Zionism<sup>2</sup>

Zionism is Israel's ideology. Zionists believe Judaism is a nationality as well as a religion, and that Jews deserve their own state in their ancestral homeland, Israel. It is the reason which brought Jews back to Israel in the first place, with the first mass immigration of European Jews that started in 1882.

### Intifadas

The intifadas were two Palestinian uprisings against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the first took place in the late 1980s and the second in the early 2000s. The first one was mainly a series of nonviolent actions and demonstrations. The second intifada started again with demonstrations, but quickly escalated to broader violence by the terrorist group Hamas. Both had a dramatic effect on Israeli-Palestinian relations

### Nakba

It's the name which Palestinians use, to refer to the mass eviction of their people, after the 1948 war. Approximately 700,000 Palestinians were uprooted from their homes.

### West Bank<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Humanitarian Crisis", Wikivisually, [https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Humanitarian\\_crisis](https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Humanitarian_crisis)

<sup>2</sup> Zack Beauchamp, "What is Zionism?", Vox, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018, <https://www.vox.com/cards/israel-palestine/zionism>

The West Bank is a piece of land east of Israel and home to 2.6 million Palestinians. Even though Israel took control of this area in 1967, Palestinians consider it illegally occupied Palestinian land. Israel has allowed about 500,000 Jewish settlers to move in, most of whom live near the Israeli borders. Even though this area is nominally controlled by the Palestinian Authority, it is under Israeli occupation. Israeli troops, who enforce Israeli security restrictions on Palestinian activities in combination with the Israeli settlers, have led to this outcome.

#### **PLO<sup>4</sup>**

The establishment of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) took place in 1964. It is recognized as the “sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people” by over 100 states, which it holds diplomatic relations with. Until the UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, when Israel officially recognized the PLO as the representative of Palestinian people, it was considered by the United States and Israel as a terrorist organization. In this resolution the PLO recognized Israel’s right to exist and rejected violence and terrorism, which lead to the aforementioned actions by the Israeli government.

#### **Hezbollah**

A radical Shiite Muslim organization in Lebanon engaged in guerrilla warfare against Israel.

#### **Hamas<sup>5</sup>**

Hamas is a Palestinian Islamist political organization and militant group that has declared war on Israel since the group's 1987 establishment, most notably through suicide bombings and rocket attacks. Its main purpose is to replace Israel with a Palestinian state. It also governs Gaza independently of the Palestinian Authority.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire the vast majority of Jews fled Europe and decided to resettle in Palestine, a territory that at the time was under British control. Notwithstanding the efforts made to facilitate the Jews’ immigration, there were many factors that overall, obstructed the prospects of a peaceful adjustment

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<sup>3</sup> Zack Beauchamp, “What is the West Bank?”, Vox, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018, <https://www.vox.com/cards/israel-palestine/west-bank>

<sup>4</sup> “Palestine Liberation Organization”, Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine\\_Liberation\\_Organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_Liberation_Organization)

<sup>5</sup> Zack Beauchamp, “What is Hamas?”, Vox, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018, <https://www.vox.com/cards/israel-palestine/hamas>

between the many ethnic groups that resided in the area, the main of which are the different constitutions established for each ethnic group and the general belief that the Jews' influx was influenced by the European colonial movement.

In 1947, when the British realized that they were unable to control the upcoming violence, they decided to hand Palestine, which they possessed as honorary state, to the then newly created United Nations. It was the UN who decided that the country was to be split in two parts (resolution 181), namely a Jewish and an Arabic one, as they deemed that in this way, the Jews would be provided with a state and the establishment of Palestinians independence would be ensured. The Palestinians however, didn't accept this plan, something that ultimately led to the first Arab-Israeli War between 1948 and 1949.

The first Arab-Israeli War started the day after Israel's Declaration of Independence (14<sup>th</sup> May 1948), admitted to the United Nations. Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq made a failed attempt to invade, which Israel was able to repel. Armistice agreements leave Israel with more territory than envisaged. Some of this land was originally reserved for Arab Palestinians, leading to a large Palestinian refugee crisis (also known as Nakba).

Some years later followed the Suez Crisis. It was an invasion to Egypt by Israel, followed by France and United Kingdom. Purpose of this attack was to re-open the canal to Israeli shipping and to terminate invasions by Palestinians from Sinai. The results of this conflict were the placement of a UN buffer force between Sinai and Gaza. Also, Israeli shipping was allowed through the Suez Canal.

A great landmark event in the history of this conflict is the 1967 Six Day War. Both relations between Israel and its neighbors and the repeated threats to Israel by the Syrian and Egyptian governments, led to this conflict, also known as Third Arab-Israeli War. Israel launches a pre-emptive attack on Egypt. Jordan and Syria join the war. In six days of fighting, Israel occupied 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. By the time the UN cease-fire took effect on June 11<sup>th</sup> 1967, Israel had more than doubled its size. The West Bank and Gaza strip are homes to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. In a try to reclaim their lost land, a coordinated attack by Egypt and Syria in Sinai and Golden Heights takes place on October 1973. Israel once again repels the attack, but only after suffering significant losses.

What the 1973 attack failed to achieve was later achieved through the Camp David accords, a document signed by the US, Syria, Egypt and Israel in 1978. The outcome of that was the return of the region of Sinai back to Egypt under the condition that Egypt would agree to maintain peace with Israel. Four years later, in

1982, after Hezbollah attacks from Lebanon, Israel invaded the country in order to expel the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) leadership after an assassination attempt by a small Palestinian militant group on Israel's ambassador to London. In September of the same year Israel's Christian Phalangist camps attack the Sabra and Shalita camps, killing thousands of Palestinians. In 1985 Israel withdraws from most of Lebanon but continues to occupy a narrow security zone along the borders.

On December 1987 the first Intifada begins in the occupied Palestinian territories in order to win back some parts of the area. It was a series of Palestinian demonstrations like mass boycotts and attacks with occasional use of firearms on Israelis. To the actions, Israeli military responded with heavy forces leading to almost 250,000 injured Palestinians, until the Madrid conference in 1991 which brought Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestinian representatives together for the first time since 1949.

This uprising led to the 1993 Oslo Declaration. Prime Minister Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat signed the Oslo Declaration to plot Palestinian self-government and officially end the first Intifada. However, Hamas strongly disagreed with Arafat's plan. On the other hand, instead of denouncing them, Arafat decided to cooperate with the terrorist group which led to Israel resuming their war on terrorism. The Palestinians and Israelis signed in Washington Oslo II, which was this time much more in favor of Palestinians, causing Rabin to lose the support of Israeli citizens. In his attempt to regain his popularity, Rabin decided to rally around Israel but was assassinated in Tel-Aviv.

The collapse of the peace process in 2000 led to the second Intifada, in September of the same year. Negotiations between Israel's Prime Minister Shudder Batak and Yasser broke down and the intifada began. What sparked the conflict was again a series of Palestinian demonstrations that Israeli forces fired on. Unlike the first uprising, Palestinian attacks had mainly the form of suicide bombings, rocket attacks and sniper fire. Israel responded with even deadlier force. The conflict faded out in 2005 with approximately 1000 Israelis and 3,200 Palestinians dead and hundreds of thousands injured.

The second Intifada and the wave of rocket fire from Gaza that followed the Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections complicated the peace talks and there hasn't been much done since then in order to end the conflict.

### **Consequences of this conflict**

It goes without saying that this conflict has affected millions of lives from both sides and not only. The actions of the past have caused thousands of deaths and have stigmatized millions of families, leading people to live in fear and anger.

The continuous state of war mainly between the Hamas and Israel has caused many groups of Palestinians to flee for refuge to foreign countries seeking for a better life. Not only does this affect the lives of the refugees themselves, but also the countries where Palestinians go. Nearly one-third of the registered refugees, more than 1.5 million individuals live in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Just to demonstrate the magnitude of this crisis, in 2006 the EU, through the European Commission gave 350 million euros in humanitarian assistance for Palestinians, making the Palestinian Territories one of the Commission's largest operations in the world.

Despite the major international assistance that is provided to Palestinians, the conflict has caused a deep socio-economic crisis, where people struggle to survive under an economy with almost no prospect of growth and development. What has led to this outcome is the suspension of transfers to the Palestinian Authority, of income from taxes and custom duties, that are given by Israel, on behalf of the Authority and make a great part of its budgetary revenue.

One more problem is that an ideology of hatred and prejudice towards each other is passed on to children at a young age. As a result, a whole generation of Israelis grow hating Palestinians and vice versa. That way the mentality of fighting with each other passes on to the next generations and undermines the value of peace.

### MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

#### Israel

Israel is one of the two most involved countries in this conflict. Even before it was officially established, Zionists claimed the Palestinian land, so as to reestablish a Jewish Homeland. The country's establishment led to the eruption of this conflict and Israel has been in war with Palestinian groups since then, mostly with Hamas. Israel is not willing to give up on its territory and it is dedicated to do whatever possible to maintain it. All the previous attempts to give an end to this conflict did not have a result and thus the situation has not changed.

#### Palestinian National Authority (PNA)

The Palestinian national Authority is the interim self-government body established in 1994 following the Gaza-Jericho Agreement to govern the Gaza Strip and Areas A and B of the West Bank. The organization is linked to 2 big terrorist groups, the Hamas and Hezbollah. Even though, the PNA has made great efforts, so

that the State of Palestine gains independence and becomes a member state of the UN, it has not managed to achieve it. The people of Palestine continue to try for the best and aim at regaining their territory and becoming an independent country.

### **Jordan**

Jordan had diplomatic relations with Israel since 1994, signing the Israel-Jordan peace treaty. Recently, relations have been strained due to the conflict over the Al-Aqsa mosque. Jordan has strong relations with Palestine and are both members of the Arab League. Jordan has an office in Ramallah, while Palestine an embassy in Amman.

### **Egypt**

Egypt was a strong supporter of the Palestinians and favored self-determination for them. Egypt has signed, in 1978, a peace treaty with Israel. For that reason, Egypt favors peace between Israel and Palestine and a two-state settlement.

### **Syria**

Israel and Syria have been in three major wars, the Six-Day War, the Yom Kippur War and the First Arab-Israeli War, Syria being involved also in the Lebanon War. Efforts have been made to achieve peace, but with no success. Syria has not recognized the State of Israel and does not accept Israeli passports.

### **Lebanon**

Having been involved in the Six Day War and fought against Israel during the Lebanon Invasion, Lebanon has a history of long dispute with Israel. Lebanon also houses a big number of refugee camps for Palestinians that have lost their homes.

### **UK**

The UK used to have a mandate over Palestine and was the one who coordinated the immigration of large groups of Jews in 1948. UK is in favor of negotiations between Palestine and Israel, maintaining also a pro-Israeli policy.

### **USA**

The US has a close and supportive relationship with Israel. The two countries have strong economic and diplomatic relations. The main expression of support has been through foreign aid. Since 1985, it has provided Israel with nearly 3 billion US\$ in grants, annually.

## BLOCS EXPECTED

The Israel-Palestine conflict mainly concerns these two countries, even if the intervention of other nations has been common. So, one could easily divide two blocs. However, even if specific countries are in favor either of Israel or of Palestine, eventually, they want to find a solution to end this conflict and restore the relations of the two countries.

### Bloc A

The allies of Israel, that support it as a nation and have been on its side either since the beginning of the conflict or after specific developments. Such nations are the USA and China.

### Bloc B

The allies of Palestine, that have supported the PLO and are in favor of Palestine gaining independence and managing to find a fair solution between it and Israel. Such nations are Iran and Russia.

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1917	Britain seizes Palestine from Ottomans Balfour Declaration – Britain states its support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine
1920-1922	The League of Nations divides former Ottoman Territories into Mandates
1933-1936	Mass Jewish Immigration to Palestine after Nazis gain power in Germany
1933-1945	Jewish Persecution and the Holocaust



1947	United Nations recommends the division of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with international control over Jerusalem
1948	Israel declares its Independence and British mandate ends First Arab-Israeli War Begins
1949	Israel signs Armistice Agreements with Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria Israel is left with more territory than it was firstly planed under the Partition Plan
1956	Suez Crisis Second Arab-Israeli War erupts
1964	Palestine Liberation Organization is formed
1967	Six-Day War takes place
1973	Yom Kippur War between a coalition of Arab states, led by Egypt and Syria against Israel
1978	Israel and Egypt signed the US-brokered Camp David Accords
1981	Egyptian President Anwar Sadat is murdered
1982	Israel invades Lebanon, eventually driving the PLO out of Beirut
1983	Israel and Lebanon sign Peace Agreement
1987	First Palestinian Intifada begins Founding of Hamas
1993	Oslo Peace Accord is signed by Israel and the PLO
1994	Cairo Agreement is signed between

	Israel and the PLO Israel and Jordan sign Peace Treaty
1995	Prime Minister of Israel Yitzhak Rabin is murdered
2000	Camp David II Summit fails to resolve the conflict Beginning of the Second Intifada
2004	Prime Minister of Israel announces Gaza Withdrawal
2006	Hamas wins Palestinian Parliamentary Election Israel-Lebanon War
2007	Hamas takes over Gaza
2011	Palestinian Authority President seeks full UN membership for a Palestinian state
2012	UN votes to accept Palestine as a Non-Member Observer State
2017	President Trump recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's Capital He orders the US Embassy to move

## RELEVANT TREATIES AND RESOLUTIONS

### Resolution 181, 29<sup>th</sup> November 1947

This resolution passed by the UN in 1947 and called for the partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state, with the city of Jerusalem as a separate entity to be governed by a special regime. This resolution was considered, by the Jewish community in Palestine, to be a legal basis for the establishment of Israel and was rejected by the Arab community and after it passed, it was almost immediately followed by violence.

### Resolution 242, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1967

This resolution passed in an effort to secure a lasting peace, following the Six Day War in 1967. Israel supported this resolution because it called upon the Arab states to recognize Israel's right "to live in peace within secure and recognized

boundaries free from threats or acts of force". Each of the Arab states eventually accepted this resolution because of its clause calling for Israel to withdraw from the territories conquered during the Six Day War. The PLO rejected it until 1988 because there were no specific references for Palestinians.

#### **Resolution 338, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1973**

This resolution called for the end of the Yom Kippur War of 1973. This resolution was accepted unanimously (with one abstention) and called upon all parties to cease hostilities within 12 hours and to implement UN Resolution 242 in all its parts. It also called for the immediate start of negotiations aiming to reach lasting peace.

#### **Resolution 425, 19<sup>th</sup> March 1978**

This resolution passed five days after the Lebanon Invasion and called upon Israel to withdraw immediately its forced from Lebanon and established United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

#### **Resolution 1322, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2000**

This resolution was adopted by the Security Council and reaffirmed that the settlement of the conflict should be based on resolution 242 and 338 which called for peace and negotiations between the Israeli and Arab sides. In this regard, it supported the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and reaffirmed the need of full respect of the Holy Places of Jerusalem above all.

#### **Israel-Jordan peace treaty (1994)**

This treaty settled relations between the two countries, adjusted land and water disputes and provided for broad cooperation in tourism and trade.

### **PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE**

#### **1949 Armistice Agreements**

The 1949 Armistice Agreements are a set of armistice agreements between Israel and Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria to formally end the hostilities of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and establish armistice lines between Jordanian-Iraqi forces and Israeli forces (the Green Line).

#### **Allon plan**

The Allon Plan was drafted by the Israeli Minister Yigal Allon after the Six Day War. It was a plan to divide the West Bank between Israel and Jordan, return most of the Sinai Peninsula to Arab control and establish a Druze state in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

#### **Geneva Conference (1973)**

The Geneva Conference was an attempt to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the Security Council Resolution 338, following the end of the Yom Kippur War.

### **Camp David Accords (1978)**

The Camp David Accords were agreements between Israel and Egypt that led in the following year to a peace treaty between those two countries. This was the first peace treaty between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

### **Oslo Accords (1993)**

The Oslo Accords are a set of agreements between Israel and the PLO. The Oslo Accords started the Oslo process, a peace process and aimed at achieving a peace treaty based on Resolutions 242 and 338.

### **Camp David 2000 Summit**

The Camp David 2000 Summit was a summit meeting at Camp David between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, Palestinian Authority chairman Yasser Arafat and the United States president Bill Clinton. This summit was an attempt to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which ended without an agreement.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

Even though the best way to solve the issue is by trying to end the conflict entirely, it is also extremely important to find effective ways to deal with the humanitarian crisis caused by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some possible suggestions could be the following points.

First of all, by signing non-aggression agreements, Israel and neighboring countries such as Jordan or Syria could ensure peace between each other. This would mean that military actions would be avoided and as a result the number of victims would be eliminated. Even though this is not a permanent and complete solution to the problem, it would be, however, a very important step towards dealing with the humanitarian crisis.

Apart from that, what is also extremely important is the transmission of the conflict to the younger generations. Children should not be encouraged to continue fighting, but give an end to the conflict instead. In order to achieve that, both the parents and the schools should make sure, that the new generation is fully aware of the situation as well as the importance of dealing with the problem. Palestinians and Israelis should realize that there are plenty of things they have in common and try to find a way to coexist peacefully.

The Israel-Palestine conflict could eventually come to an end, if the two parts agree to divide the land and implement the two-state solution. The agreement will be made under the supervision of the UN and the land will be divided in a fair way, taking into consideration the population already living in the area. Both Israel and Palestine should respect this decision and stop fighting with each other.

These are some suggestions, concerning possible solutions to the issue. It is extremely important to realize how crucial it is to give an end to such a conflict that besets human beings and has disastrous consequences both for the area and for the people living there.

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