

Committee: SPECPOL 2

Topic: The Question of the Occupied Territories of Israel

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Summary

Tensions in Israel and Palestine have been of international concern for over 70 years. Originally, Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire before coming under British mandate after WW1. Over the following 30 years, thousands of Jewish immigrants fled to Palestine to escape religious persecution in mainland Europe. Tensions between the two groups, Palestinian Arabs and the Palestinian Jewish community, mounted into serious conflict. This led to a global decision to split the region into two separate states in the hope of stopping the conflict. However, this led to an increase in the tensions and the start of many wars between the two sides, which you can read more about below. It has also drawn in the surrounding nations.

Thousands of civilians have died in conflict, terrorist attacks and rocket launches, with towns, hospitals and heritage sites often being targeted for suicide bombings and rocket launches.

Currently, there is a humanitarian crisis in the occupied territories. Food and water are in short supply, infrastructure such as electricity plants and sewage systems are failing and people are unemployed. There is widespread discrimination toward the Palestinian population in areas occupied by Israel. Hostilities are still common, with attacks from both sides becoming a frequent reality for all those living in the region. There is a refugee crisis, with thousands of people living in refugee camps in the surrounding nations such as Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon. The UNRWA has sparked recent international anger with the United States pulling their funding from the UNRWA under the Trump Administration. Neither side will acknowledge the others legitimacy.

To solve the question at hand, a clear plan is needed. This plan needs to target all of the barriers that are currently stalling the improvements of conditions in the area. I have suggestions for possible solutions below. This is a global issue which needs to be tackled appropriately by all member nations.

Definition of Key Terms

Self-determination: The process by which people elect a government to rule themselves.

It also refers to a theory by which people believe that people of one faith, language have the right to form their own country and govern themselves. This was common during the mid 20th century and was used by Adolf Hitler to justify his invasion of Czechoslovakia. This belief was used by the Zionist movement to



call for Jewish people to move to Palestine. Under this theory, they would have the right to form their own country in the region.

UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

IDF: Israeli Defence Force

Hamas: Formed in 1986 as a militant group which opposed Israel, it won political power in 2006. It has been responsible for deaths of hundreds of Israeli citizens in terrorist attacks.

Intifada: The Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, beginning in 1987.

Semi-autonomous government: A government with partial authority over its region/nation.

Six Days War: War in 1967 which resulted in Israel taking control of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. This further alienated Israel from the Arab states

Arab Nations: Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon

PLO: Palestinian Liberation Organisation

Gush Emunim movement: An Israeli movement that encouraged settlement in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank

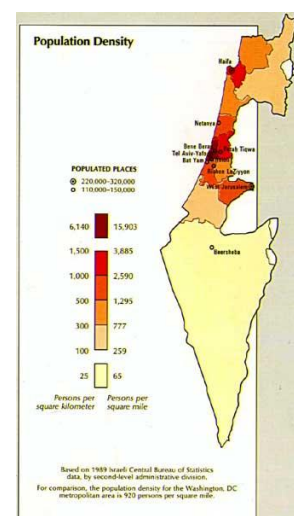
Zionist Movement: Israel's national ideology – a belief that the Judaism is a nationality as well as a religion and Jews deserve their ancestral homeland (Israel) just as any other nationality deserves their nation.

Background Information

The Gaza Strip currently provides a large issue in the peace process. It is populated in the majority by Palestinians. Gaza is currently under blockade by Israel and has been since the militant group Hamas won political power there in 2006. In recent years, the strip has been subject to many rocket attacks from both sides of the conflict. In March last year there were a series of protests against the Israeli blockade on the Gaza borders.

The West Bank is considered to be the potential heart of any Palestinian state as it is populated by around 3 million Palestinians. It has been under Israeli control since the Six Days War in 1967 and holds many Jewish Holy sites such as the Cave of the Patriarchs. As a result, both sides believe they have ownership of the area.

Israel has a powerful ally in the United States of America. This is believed to stem from Israel's resistance to Soviet involvement in the Middle East during the



Cold War. The USA has supported Israel financially and vetoed many resolutions that have been critical of Israel. While the Obama Administration was critical of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Trump Administration has led to a renewal of the 'special relationship' between the two nations. The stance many nations take on this issue will be directly related to the relationship they have with the political Israel.

The Peace Process was introduced in 1993 with the Oslo Accords. The aim was to create a peaceful two-state system, with the West Bank and the Gaza Strip being returned to Palestine and a cease of all extremist attacks. While it began with good intentions and started to make good progress, the process appeared to grind to a halt in 2001 with Yasser Arafat's rejection of Israel's peace offer and the outbreak of the second intifada. The system has not been renewed since.

Jerusalem has been a large hurdle for the peace process since the partition of the two states in 1948. The city was originally put under the charge of the United Nations. After the war in 1948-49, Jerusalem was split between Israel and Jordan, with Israel controlling the majority of the city. In the 1967 war, Israel took control of East Jerusalem. Israel refers to Jerusalem as its undivided capital but most nations refuse to recognise it as such. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 478 condemned the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem. Both Palestinians and Israelis lay claim to the city and the Holy sites within it.

One of the main issues blocking the peace process is the fact that neither side will agree to recognise the other. Israel and other world leaders refuse to recognise Hamas after their 2006 election as instead they view them as a dangerous terrorist group. Hamas, in turn, refuses to recognise Israel as they see the nation as illegally occupying their territory.

Palestine currently does not have an internationally recognised government. The PLO runs the Palestinian National Authority, which is a semi-autonomous government. Fatah, a large nationalist political party, controls both the PLO and the PA. Hamas, a militant group, has been in power in the Gaza Strip since the election in 2006.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Israel: Place where conflict occurs.

Hamas: an extremist group that won the Palestinian election in 2006 by a landslide majority and took control of the Gaza Strip.

PLO: Palestinian Liberation Organisation, has represented Palestine at many major summits.

Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon: The Arab Nations surrounding Israel, they have each taken in a large share of refugees and many have large refugee camps. Several of the nations, notably Jordan and Lebanon, have had conflict with Israel in the past.

United Kingdom: Created Israel as a state when they left British Palestine.

USA: Israel's ally. Has been known to veto many Resolutions on Israel's account. Currently, the US Embassy to Israel is controversially in Jerusalem.

UNRWA: UN's body charged with the relief work in Palestine.

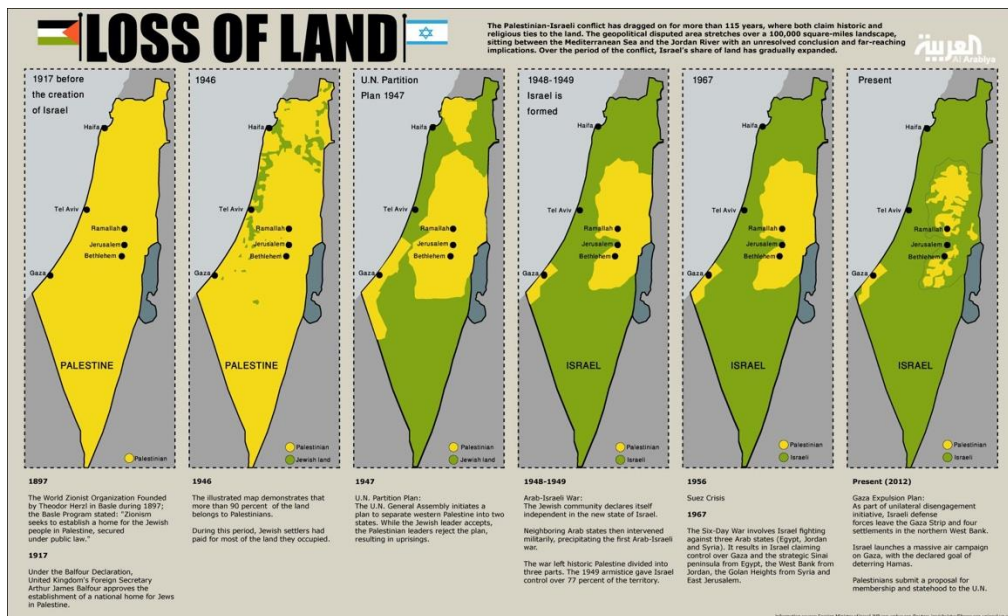
Timeline

The question of the occupied territories of Israel has been widely discussed in the international community since the foundation of the UN after WW2.

Date	Description
1919	90,000 Jewish immigrants had arrived in Palestine. This number more than doubled after the rise to power of the Nazi party. They settled in land purchased by Zionist groups and refused to hire or rent to Arab natives.
1945	At this time there was a Zionist movement calling for the global Jewish community to emigrate to Palestine and call for self-determination.
1947	UN Special Committee on Palestine is formed to create two separate states. Israel, with a majority Jewish population and Palestine, with a majority Arab population. The cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem were put under the control of the UN. The approval of the plan caused violence from the Arab irregulars against the Jewish community in Palestine. Thousands of people were killed in the first few months of the conflict.
1948	British mandate ends and full-scale war erupted. Days into this war, the armies of Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Iraq entered the region. Lebanon sent in forces not soon after.
1949	Conflict resulted in an Israeli victory and the construction of borders beyond their partition lines. The remaining areas, such as the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, were sectioned off into the involved nations. This created a refugee crisis where over 700,000 displaced Palestinian Arabs were denied access to Israel or citizenship to the nations that had absolved the Palestinian region. Over 800,000 Jews were also expelled from the Arab nations.
1967	Six days war. Left the Arab leaders determined not to accept Israel.
1969	Yasser Arafat was elected as the leader of the PLO. The PLO started using violent methods against military targets and civilians and attempted to overtake the West Bank but was defeated and expelled into Jordan. 70% of the population of Jordan consisted of Palestinian refugees. The PLO continued to stage attacks against Israel from Jordan. The Cairo Agreement, brokered by Arafat, gave Palestine autonomy of the south of Lebanon.
1970	Conflict began between Jordan administration and the Palestinian movement in Jordan leaving a large death toll. The organization was moved to Lebanon. The area they occupied became known as 'Fatah land'. They launched an international terror campaign which revolved around abducting airplanes. The PLO also played a large role in the Lebanese civil war.
1972	The Palestinian terror movement against Israel reached a head with the Lod Airport massacre and the Munich massacre.

1973	Yom Kipper War - a joint attack launched against Israel by Syria and Egypt.
1987	First Palestinian Intifada. Palestinian riots and strikes across the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Israeli forces used tear gas, plastic bullets and live ammunition against them. Sheikh Ahmed Yassin creates Hamas.
1988	298 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces. 21 Israeli citizens and 4 members of their army were also killed. PLO declared the State of Palestine from Algeria. Extremist attacks were carried out on all sides of the conflict and thousands of people lost their lives. Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were introduced by the Gush Emunim movement.
Between 1991 and 1994:	A series of continued skirmishes and attacks led to a death count of 300 Palestinians and 80 Israeli.
1993	Hamas carried out their first suicide bombing in Israel, the Mehola Junction Bombing. The PLO and the Israeli government began secret peace talks. Yasser Arafat sent the Israeli Prime Minister a letter officially renouncing terrorism and accepting Israel. Israel recognised the PLO and the PA as the legitimate Palestinian Authority. The Oslo Peace Process began with both leaders signing the Declaration of Principles.
1994	Israeli forces withdrew from Jericho and Gaza City. Yasser Arafat returned to Palestine to lead the Palestinian National Authority. The Israel-Jordan Treaty of Peace was signed.
1995	Four deadly attacks carried out against Israeli civilians.
1996	A further 18 attacks against Israel were carried out. Oslo II was signed, an interim agreement on Gaza and the West Bank. The violence continued into 1998.
2000	Israeli army withdrew from Lebanon The Peace Process began to stall. Newly elected Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat failed to reach an agreement at a Camp David Summit aimed to find a "final status" on the settlements. A second Palestinian Intifada broke out and continued for five years. This involved deadly terrorist attacks which left the death toll at 1068 with over 7000 injured. 69% of these were civilians. 3000 Palestinians were also killed in the conflict. UN Resolution 1397 passed in an attempt to stop the violence
2003	ICJ ruled that the West Bank barrier was illegal under international law.
2005	The Intifada ended. Hamas continued to strengthen in the Gaza Strip and began to launch rockets at the surrounding towns in northern Israel. Israel completed its Unilateral Disengagement Plan and removed all Jewish settlements from the Gaza Strip.

- 2006 Hamas won a majority of seats in the Palestinian election. Israel, USA, several European countries and the EU to cut off all aid to Palestine as they viewed Hamas as a terrorist group.
Violence between Fatah and Hamas in the Gaza Strip
Rocket launches from both inside and outside the Gaza Strip continued.
- 2008 Operation Cast Lead launched by Israel against Hamas in December. After 22 days of fighting they declared a ceasefire. The death toll reached around 1400 of Palestinians citizens, including 300 children.
- 2011 Palestine won membership of UNESCO.
- 2015 Intifada of the Individuals or Stabbing Intifada.
Violent attacks continued to occur between Israeli and Palestinian groups.
- 2017 Hamas signed a reconciliation deal that planned to return the administrative control of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority
US President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by moving the US embassy to Israel to the city.
- 2018 UN and Egypt attempt to broker a long-term ceasefire between Israel and Hamas amid an increase of violence along the Gaza border.



Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- **GA Resolution 181** – Summary: Partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states
 - Accessible at:

<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C330061D253>

- **General** – Summary: Explaining and justifying the entry of troops into Palestine, 1948
- **Security Council Resolution 1397 / 1515** – Summary: Sets out a plan for a two-state region
 - Accessible at:
https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/Security_Council/Security_Council_Resolution_PDFs/SCresolution1397.pdf
https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/Security_Council/SCresolution1515.pdf
- **A Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli –** Summary: Palestinian conflict “roadmap” to peace in a two-state region as laid out by the European Union, Russia, the UN, and the US
 - Accessible at:
<https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/roadmap122002.pdf>
- **Security Council Resolution 446** – Summary: Denies the validity of Israeli settlements in Palestine following the 1967 occupation.
 - Accessible at:
https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/Security_Council/Security_Council_Resolution_PDFs/SCresolution446.pdf
- **Security Council Resolution 242** – Summary: Called on Israel to evacuate Palestinian Territories after their 1967 occupation.
 - Accessible at:
<https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/un%20security%20council%20resolution%20242.aspx>
- **Israeli Government Resolution Regarding the Disengagement Plan** – Summary: Outlines Israel's withdrawal from Palestine
 - Accessible at:
<http://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/1430>

- **Situation Report from the Humanitarian Coordinator** – Summary: OCHA report outlining the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip
 - Accessible at:
<https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/0105ochareport.pdf>
- **Security Council Resolution 1332** – Summary: condemns the violence in Jerusalem and called for Israel to abide by the 1949 Geneva Convention to protect citizens in war (importantly this was not vetoed by the USA)
 - Accessible at:
<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1332>
- **ICJ Advisory Opinion** – Summary: Suggests that Israel West Bank barrier violates international law
 - Accessible at:
<https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/icj070904.pdf>
- **Cablegram** – Summary: Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to the UN Secretary
 - Accessible at:
<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/A717E30BD2F6E5EC8525761E0072E9B3>

(Access to resolutions listed and others related to Israel/Palestine: <https://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/index-of-countries-on-the-security-council-agenda/israel-palestine-and-the-occupied-territories/38296.html>)

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

- GA Resolution 181 – Partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states
- Security Council Resolution 1397 / 1515 – Sets out a plan for a two-state region
- King Hussein of Jordan's 'United Arab Kingdom' – Outlined a plan for Jordan and an area of land in the West Bank that used to be under Jordan's mandate to form a federation

where each state would have its own government but would be united under one monarch.

- 1993 Oslo Accord - agreement signed between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on September 13, 1993, meant to effectively bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to its end by means of territorial concessions and facilitating the creation of the Palestinian Authority.

Possible Solutions

It is important to solve the issue of tensions in the region. If the violence continues, it will be near-on impossible to improve the lives of those in the region. It is also important to solve the humanitarian crisis in the region and improve living conditions for all civilians in the area.

- **End to Violence:** the first priority. The extremist attacks and other violent actions taken by both sides cause huge loss of life and directly hinder the peace process. Negotiations are one way to help resolve these but the main issue to be faced before any such can take place is finding grounds on which the opposing sides will consent to recognise each other and as such will agree to meet.
- **Peace Process:** before the humanitarian crisis can be properly solved, there are five main issues to be resolved, namely the West Bank Settlements, Gaza Strip blockade, Israeli Security, Palestinian refugees, and Jerusalem. A renewed peace process involving negotiations focused on finding solutions to these issues would take a large step toward solving the question. Before any negotiations can begin, a Palestinian authority that Israel and the international community will respect needs to be decided on so that they can attend any such talks.
- **Humanitarian aid:** this is extremely important. Aid such as food, water and supplies would help. Unemployment is a huge issue so work schemes could be introduced. These could double up to help improve infrastructure in the area. Training could be introduced to allow people to learn skills which they could take into the job sector. Education systems could be improved. Aid needs to be closely monitored to avoid it being used to incite further violence in the area.
- **Discrimination:** this is a huge issue and needs to be addressed to help stem the increase of violence in response to this. Joint job schemes, induction groups and education schemes could help to resolve this.
- **Refugee crisis:** this is a very large issue. Refugee camps are overflowing and in need of more supplies and greater regulations. Families have been separated and many people are displaced. The peace process will directly affect the solution of this problem as one of the main barriers to the end to the crisis is the lack of citizenship for Palestinian refugees. There is also a barrier to the safe travel of these refugees. Once the peace process is introduced, a reintroduction plan could be written and implemented.
- **International UNRWA Rebuff-** many concerns have been raised in the international community about the current standard of the actions of the UNRWA. This could be solved by an investigation, a conference or a report.

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