

Committee: Security Council

Topic: Question of an Israeli Palestine peace plan

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Summary

The Middle East over the last century has seen a dramatic and ferocious increase in conflict with the rise of Zionism and the creation of the independent state of Israel. The situation between Israel and Palestine has remained unstable since the formation and recognition of Israel in May 1948. Over the years, Israel and Arab nation backed Palestine have been interlocked in dispute and armed conflict that continues to the present day. Although UN resolutions and peace talks have taken place, success with these talks has been far and few between. For example, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1860 on the subject of "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question" was raised to call a ceasefire during the Gaza war. Although the resolution was passed, very shortly afterwards Israel and Hamas ignored the resolution and proceeded to carry on fighting. Leaving any chance of a peace agreement laying in ruins.

With conflict in the region between the IDF and Hamas being as recent as May 2021 and being regarded as some of the fiercest conflict in years, tension in the region remains critically high. The call for a solid yet effective peace plan is urgently required to stabilise the region and hopefully begin to build the foundations for a peaceful and prosperous region.

Definition of Key Terms

Hamas – Hamas is a Palestinian Sunni-Islamic fundamentalist, militant, and nationalist organisation. It comprises of two factions. The first is Dawah which is the Social Service faction and the second is the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades which is the military faction with headquarters situated in Gaza. Furthermore, Hamas is funded and supported by Iran.

IDF – The Israeli Defence force, commonly referred to by the Hebrew acronym Tzahal is the combined military forces of the state of Israel. It comprises of the Israeli Ground Force, Israeli Air Force, and Israeli Navy. With the IDF adopting mandatory service of all those over the age of 18.

Gaza War – The Gaza war was a three- week armed conflict between Palestinian Paramilitary Groups and the IDF in the Gaza Strip. That lasted between the 27th of December 2008 to the 18th of January 2009 resulting in 1,417 Palestinian and 13 Israeli deaths.

Zionism – A movement originally established for the establishment, development, and protection of a Jewish nation in what is now the State of Israel. The political movement was established in 1897 under Theodor Herzi and later was led by Chaim Weizmann.

Background Information

The Israeli- Palestinian conflict, is older than the United Nations itself. Following the Second World War and the atrocities and horrors of the Holocaust, the Middle eastern region that Israel and Palestine are located saw a huge increase in Jewish migrants. Within the Jewish faith and history, the region is viewed by Judaism as the historic homeland. With the population of the region increasing, in 1947 the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 181. This called for the creation of two separate Jewish and Arab states within the Palestinian territories.

When Israel claimed its own independence in May 1948, the following day the countries of Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq invaded the region. Israel managed to repel the invasion and in doing so claimed land that was originally reserved for the Arab Palestinians. Thus, creating a surge of Palestinian refugees. Since Israel's independence, the region has seen countless armed conflicts with thousands of people being killed and millions suffering from the consequences of the Israel- Palestine conflict.

Over the years political concepts for a peace plan have been thought up. The main concepts that have been produced are A two state solution and a one state solution.

Two State solution: In 2018 the Palestinian centre for Policy and Survey Research published a document stating that 40-50% of the Israeli and Palestinian population was in favour of a two-state solution. Furthermore, less than 20% of either population wanted to transfer or expulse the other group.

One State solution: A one state solution would see either Israel or Palestine take over all territories but to adopt equal rights and say for all citizens within the state. This concept of a single democratic state is not favourable as only around 10-20% of the Israeli and Palestinian populations are in favour of this options.

Land swaps as part of a two-state solution



ONE-STATE SOLUTION

Option A

Israel annexes West Bank but does not extend citizenship and equal rights to its Arab inhabitants.

Option B

One person-one vote



Jews with Israeli citizenship

6.45 million
(Central Bureau of Statistics)

Arabs with Israeli citizenship

1.8 million
(Central Bureau of Statistics)

West Bank Arabs with other or no citizenship

2.7 million
(CIA World Factbook, 2016 est.)

Gaza Arabs

1.75 million
(CIA World Factbook, 2016 est.)

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

- Israel: With strong religious beliefs including the belief of the promised land, Zionism is a core backbone to the state of Israel. Israel and the Jewish faith view that the land that is currently occupied by Palestine is part of their promised land and that it should be governed and protected by a Jewish state. Furthermore, with the countless conflicts of the 20th century between Israel and the Arab backed Palestinian territory. Israeli tension of its neighbours remains critically high with Israel maintaining a dominant Defensive Force in the region.
- Palestine: Arab backed Palestine views that the land that is now occupied by the State of Israel belongs to the Palestinians. Palestine furthermore feels that Israel denies Palestinians basic rights such as the right to vote. Although Palestine does not have a recognised military force, Arab funded para military groups like Hamas are present across Palestine and conflict between Hamas and the Israeli IDF have occurred frequently throughout the decades.
 - Both Israel and Palestine strongly believe that they are the victim to the others aggression instead of seeing how both sides actions contribute to the ever-increasing conflict.

- Jordan: Jordan has a strong and historical link with Palestine. Between 1988 and 1994 Jordan supported the Palestine Liberation organisation. In 1994 however, Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel and thus the peace plan did create some division between Jordan and Palestine.
- Syria: Palestine – Syria relations are very strong due to historical bonds as both were under the Phoenicians. Furthermore, during the Arab- Israeli war, Syria sent troops to support the fight against the IDF. To this day Palestine has an embassy in Damascus.
- Iraq: Iraq strongly refuses to recognise Israel as a Independent country and has had no formal diplomatic relations with Israel. The Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq was part of the Arab coalition that declared war on Iraq. Furthermore, Iraq has launched direct missile attacks against Israel many of which occurred during the Gulf war where Iraq targeted Israeli cities and nuclear complexes. Anti- Israeli views remain high within Iraq.
- Lebanon: Lebanese – Israeli relations have been up and down throughout the decades. Lebanon participated in the first Arab- Israeli war but was also one of the first to want to broker an armistice. Although Israeli Law enforcement views Lebanon as an “enemy state” and Lebanon restricts Israeli citizens access to the state, the two states showed solidarity during the 2020 Beirut explosion where Israel highlighted some of its building with the Lebanese flag in the city of Tel Aviv.

Timeline of Events:

1880- Jewish immigration begins to occur as Jews begin to move into what is believed to be the promised land (Palestine). Furthermore, Zionist ideology also begins to emerge.

1917 – The Balfour Declaration: During the First World War, the British government announced a public statement for the establishment of a ‘Jewish national home’ for the Jewish people within Palestine.

1945-1947 - The Second World War and the atrocities of the Holocaust saw increased migration of thousands of Jews to the Middle east.

1947 – The UN partition plan proposes the creation of both Arab and Jewish states in Palestine. This planned proposal is then rejected by the Arabs.

1948 – The State of Israel claims its Independence.

1948 – A Day after Israel claims independence, the nations of Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq carry out an invasion of Israel (The Arab-Israel War). Invasion is repelled and Israel claims more land that was intended for the Arab Palestinians and thus causing a Palestinian refugee crisis.

1956 – Israel invaded Egypt and thus triggering the Suez Canal crisis. Eventually Israel withdrew from Egypt.

1967 – The Six-day War saw conflict between Israel and an Arab coalition comprising of Jordan, Syria and the UAR Egypt.

1973 – The Yom Kippur War. A conflict that was between Israel and an Arab coalition primarily led by Egypt and Syria.

1978/79 – The Camp David accords that was negotiated by the United States lead to the 1979 Israel – Egypt Peace Treaty.

1982 – Israel launches a retaliation attack on Lebanon in response to Palestinian terrorist attacks. Israeli forces eventually retreated from Lebanese territories in 1985.

1987- 1993 – The First Intifada saw an uprising of Palestinians riot against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

1990/91 – Gulf War. The war sees Iraqi missiles target Israeli cities and Israeli nuclear complexes.

1993- 2000 – The Oslo Accords. These negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) set for the establishment of a self-governing Palestinian Authority.

2000-2005 – The Second intifada saw Palestinians rise up against Israel. It is though the Uprising was triggered by the failure to agree a peace agreement in 2000 at the Camp David summit.

2008-2009 – The Gaza War. A conflict in which Israeli forces entered the Gaza strip. Sometimes referred to as the Gaza Massacre. Although negotiations for a ceasefire did occur, the ceasefire was soon ignored when Hamas and Israeli forces reignited the fighting.

Throughout the conflicted existence of Israel and Palestine, conflicts, attacks, and assassinations of Palestinians and Israelis across the globe has ever been present. Conflict in the region continues with as recent as 2014 and 2021 where tension has risen to a dangerous amount.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Resolution 181 (Adopted by the General Assembly in 1947): Resolution 181 called for the partition of Palestine into an Arab and Jewish state. With Jerusalem to be governed by an international regime. The plan presented was viewed by the Jewish community as a legal basis to set up the state of Israel. The plan was also rejected by the Arabs and was subsequently preceded by violence.
- Resolution 1860: Resolution 1860 called for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza war after 13 days of fierce fighting between Hamas and the IDF. The resolution however was unsuccessful as both Israel and Hamas ignored the ceasefire and continued fighting.
- The United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA). Is primarily responsible for delivering aid to Palestinian refugees. The UNRWA also provides support in various other ways such as improving and enhancing the infrastructure of Palestinian refugee camps, providing health care and educational services, and also crucially providing emergency support especially during armed conflict.
- Non- Governmental organisations such as 'Breaking the Silence' is made up of veteran Israeli soldiers who expose to the Israeli public what life is like in the occupied territories and the toll it takes on the population as well as young soldiers.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

- Resolution 181 was devised to have Palestine split into an Arab and Jewish state. The plan of a separate two state solution crumbled when Israeli State independence immediately sparked the invasion from neighbouring Arab nations.
- In 2000, the Camp David summit saw leaders from both Israel and Palestine meet to hold a conference for a peace agreement. However, this peace agreement failed and is thought to have started the second intifada.

- In 2009, Resolution 1860 was adopted to call for a ceasefire during the Gaza war. Although it looked promising for a ceasefire, later both sides ignored the ceasefire.
- The Trump peace plan is one of the most recent attempts to reduce tension in the Israel-Palestine conflict. The aim of the plan was to bring peace and prosperity to the region. Immediate reaction was sparked and the Palestine Liberation organisation viewed the plan as a “mirage of economic prosperity” when in reality they believe it would “only perpetuate the Palestinians captivity”.

Possible Solutions

- In 2018 the Palestinian centre for Policy and Survey Research published a document stating that 40-50% of the Israeli and Palestinian population was in favour of a two-state solution. This favourable and most realistic solution could be optimised to produce the perfect Peace Plan. With both states clearly showing willingness to create a two-state solution a plan can be devised. However, crucial lessons must be learnt from previous attempts to produce a peace plan.
- Peace Plan summits should not have chief negotiators from the P5. With American intervention and very open support of Israel, a more neutral state must be chosen to carry out successful negotiations between the two states.

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