**Forum:** Security Council

**Issue:** Strengthening Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Efforts in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict Zone

**Student Officer:** Nadia Faris Tarlochan

**Position:** Head Chair



**Introduction**

One of the long-debated and most multi-faceted conflicts in modern history is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This conflict has historically, politically, and territorially meant so much to so many different people, and many may never achieve peace because of it. It has taken many lives, physically divided lands and there seems to be no end to the cycle of violence after over 100 years. The area is still in turmoil over numerous peace initiatives by foreign powers, as there seems no end to the conflict. The inability to ensure peace and stability not only keeps the region in a constant state of insecurity but also brings heavy humanitarian crises with millions of people affected, among them mainly Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Several of these diplomatic attempts have failed mainly because different national interests, old grievances, and the general geopolitical setting made it impossible to achieve peace. No one has ever attained a full, durable accord, even though numerous efforts came close, such as the Oslo Accords, and many times the United Nations failed incrementally toward progress. The escalation of violence worsened the humanitarian situation in the region, with Palestinians bearing the brunt of it. What has emerged in Gaza as an atrocious humanitarian crisis, with stunning levels of displacement, almost no access to basic services, and an extremely damaged infrastructure? Continuous military operations, settlement growth, and travel constraints have furthered the suffering of Palestinians in the West Bank.

Humanitarian groups have worked tirelessly to assist those caught in the crossfire by providing them with food, shelter, and medical attention. Despite these efforts, such organizations face many challenges, such as entrance barriers, political intervention, and war threats. As civilians from Israel and Palestine, both populations require ongoing humanitarian relief, but getting help to those in need is all but impossible because of the security risks when it's such a high-stakes situation.

In light of these difficulties, the need to bolster humanitarian and peacekeeping operations in the area has come to the attention of the international community more and more. The political circumstances of the conflict frequently limit the effectiveness of peacekeeping efforts, despite the fact that they are nevertheless crucial for averting escalation and safeguarding civilians. In a similar vein, humanitarian assistance, although essential, is limited in its ability to lessen suffering if the root reasons of the war are not addressed. In order to create a stable climate where real dialogue and negotiation can take place and where the fundamental needs of civilians are satisfied, these two efforts—ensuring both security and aid—must work together.

A more coordinated and all-encompassing strategy that goes beyond short-term relief efforts and strives for long-term stability and peace will be necessary for the success of future peacekeeping and humanitarian operations in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict zone. Crucial elements of this endeavour include bolstering global collaboration, improving the missions and capacities of peacekeeping troops, and guaranteeing unhindered humanitarian access. As the international community continues to look for methods to lessen the bloodshed and promote the rights and welfare of everyone impacted by the war, there has never been a more pressing need for a strong, multidimensional response to the ongoing crisis.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Peacekeeping**

Peacekeeping refers to the deployment of international personnel to help maintain peace and security in conflict zones, often under the auspices of organizations such as the United Nations. Peacekeepers monitor ceasefires, protect civilians, and assist in implementing peace agreements.

**Humanitarian Aid**

Humanitarian aid includes the provision of essential services and resources such as food, water, medical supplies, shelter, and education to populations in distress due to conflict, displacement, or natural disasters. In the Palestinian-Israeli context, it often involves aid to civilians affected by the ongoing violence and displacement.

**Ceasefire**

A temporary suspension of hostilities agreed upon by the conflicting parties, usually for a limited period. Ceasefires are often brokered by international actors or peacekeeping forces and can serve as a step toward de-escalation, though they are often fragile and prone to violation.

**Occupation**

Refers to the control of a territory by a foreign military power. In the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, this refers to Israel's military presence and control over the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and previously Gaza (until Israel's disengagement in 2005), which is considered illegal under international law by many entities, including the United Nations.

**Blockade**

The imposition of restrictions on the movement of goods and people, typically by one party in a conflict. In Gaza, Israel has imposed a blockade since 2007, limiting the flow of goods, including humanitarian supplies, into the area. The blockade has been a point of contention and a source of significant hardship for Palestinians living there.

**Buffer zone**

A demilitarized area established to separate conflicting parties and reduce the risk of violence. In the Palestinian-Israeli context, buffer zones are often set up along borders or in contested areas, but they are frequently violated and have limited effectiveness in preventing violence.

**Two-State Solution**

A proposed solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that envisions two independent states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace. This concept has been the basis of many international peace efforts, though its realization remains elusive due to political and territorial disputes.

**Human Rights Violation**

Refers to actions that violate the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals, often during times of conflict. In the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, both sides have been accused of committing human rights violations, including unlawful killings, forced displacement, and restrictions on freedom of movement.

**International Humanitarian Law (IHL)**

A body of international law that governs the conduct of armed conflicts, aiming to limit its effects on civilians and combatants. IHL includes rules on the treatment of prisoners, the protection of civilians, and the prohibition of certain weapons. Key instruments include the Geneva Conventions, which provide protections during times of war.

**Background Information**

**History and creation of early Israel**

In the earlier stages of the conflict, feelings between the Arab and Jewish communities in Palestine were at war. After World War I, British troops occupied Palestine under the auspices of the League of Nations. Waves of Jewish migration swelled the numbers of the Jewish population in Palestine as a consequence of one of the major push factors: increasing anti-Semitism in Europe during the inter-war years. Thus, when the Jewish settlers arrived and their national homeland aspirations increased, a now more populous Arab was less welcoming. The United Nations proposed ending the fighting in 1947 with a partition plan that included separate states for Jews and Arabs. The leaders of the Arabs rejected it; according to them, it was an unfair division of the land. The first Arab-Israeli war began in 1948 when Israel declared independence with military intervention from the nearby Arab government. By the time the fighting of 1949 ended, Israel had crossed the borders proposed by the UN plan.

With an estimated 700,000 Palestinians fleeing or being driven from their homes, this war signalled the start of the Palestinian refugee issue and caused extensive displacement that still affects Palestinians today. Although a tenuous ceasefire was created by the 1949 armistice agreements, the fundamental problems of territorial control and sovereignty remained unresolved.

### **Gaza, Hamas, and the Humanitarian Crisis**

The victory of the Islamist organization Hamas in the 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections is one of the most important points of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Since then, there has been a violent rupture between Fatah, which rules the West Bank, and Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip. There have been several battles between Hamas and Israel, most notably in 2008–2009, 2012, and 2014. The root causes are Hamas's violence against Israeli civilians and refusal to recognize Israel.

In 2007, after Hamas took power, Israel imposed the blockade on the Gaza Strip. It is the restrictions that create a horrific humanitarian crisis because virtually everything sharply curtails the flow of people and goods. Most displacement, loss of infrastructure, widespread poverty, and limited access to clean water, healthcare, and education are all a result of the blockade and the ongoing cycles of conflict.

Gaza's humanitarian situation is deteriorating as the cycle of violence continues and political solutions are nowhere in sight. The United Nations predicts that by 2020, Gaza would be uninhabitable due to deteriorating infrastructure and restricted access to basic services.

**International Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Efforts**

As an immediate measure to respond to the continuous bloodshed and agony, the United Nations and several other international bodies deliver their peacekeepers and humanitarian organizations on the ground. The one organization that is essential in delivering humanitarian aid to the Palestinian refugees situated in Gaza, West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Among the peacekeeping missions in the area that the UN runs is the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation. It keeps an eye on ceasefires and peace accords.

Nevertheless, there are many obstacles that stand in the way of humanitarian and peacekeeping missions in the area. The political complexity of the situation, with many factions and no cohesive Palestinian leadership, not to mention Israel's security concerns all limit the ability of peacekeepers to fulfill their mandate. Access to impacted areas is also restricted for humanitarian organisations, particularly in Gaza, where the embargo and security concerns can significantly restrict aid access.

**The Oslo Accords and the Two-State Solution**

There were major diplomatic attempts to end the dispute in the 1990s. In front of US President Bill Clinton, Israeli and Palestinian leaders Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin joined hands to sign the momentous Oslo Accords in 1993. In addition to granting limited self-rule in portions of Gaza and the West Bank, the accords established the Palestinian Authority (PA). Establishing a foundation for a two-state solution—one Israeli state and one Palestinian state coexisting peacefully—was the aim of the Oslo Accords.

Notwithstanding early optimism, political upheavals, violence on both sides, and disputes over crucial topics including Jerusalem's status, Palestinian refugees, borders, and the future of Israeli settlements caused the Oslo process to stall. The Second Intifada began in 2000 as a result of the peace process' failure, and there was a subsequent dramatic rise in violence and instability.

**Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

**The United States**

The US played a significant role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, mostly serving as a peace negotiator. The United States has mediated several peace accords over the years, including the Oslo Accords (1993), which created the Palestinian Authority and set the stage for a two-state solution, and the Camp David Accords (1978), which resulted in the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. Additionally, the United States has been Israel's most powerful ally, offering substantial financial and military assistance. The United States' role has been contentious, though, especially in relation to its diplomatic position regarding Jerusalem, which it acknowledged as Israel's capital in 2017 and which sparked fierce criticism from Palestinians and a large portion of the international world. In spite of its attempts to broker peace, the United States has frequently come under fire for alleged bias against Israel,especially in more recent peace initiatives like the Trump Administration’s “Deal of the Century**”**, which was rejected by Palestinians as it favored Israeli interests.

**Israel**

Due to territorial claims and security concerns, the primary party in the conflict has continued to play a major role. Despite international condemnation, Israel has expanded settlements in the West Bank and conducted military operations against Palestinian militant groups, including Hamas in Gaza, over the years. Although Israel has taken part in peace talks like the Oslo Accords and the Camp David Summit, several of its policies—such as the growth of settlements and its position on Jerusalem—have been seen as impeding the peace process. The main issues have been Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and its blockade of Gaza, which Israel defends as essential for security but which Palestinians see as an infringement on their rights and sovereignty.

**The Palestinian Authority (PA)**

Parts of the West Bank are governed by Fatah, which has attempted to speak for the Palestinian people in diplomatic initiatives. The PA has participated in peace negotiations with Israel, including at the Annapolis Conference (2007) and the Oslo Accords, but has been more impatient with the lack of advancement, especially with regard to the status of Jerusalem and the growth of Israeli settlements. The PA has encountered many internal obstacles, particularly from Hamas, which controls Gaza and opposes talks with Israel, and has looked to foreign organisations like the UN to seek recognition of Palestinian independence. Political disagreements, corruption, and a lack of authority over Palestinian lands have also been problems for the PA.

**Hamas**

Since taking over Gaza in 2007, Hamas has opposed Israel's legitimacy and pushed for the establishment of an Islamic state in all of ancient Palestine. The group has fought Israel militarily on multiple occasions, using guerilla warfare and rocket assaults. It is a major barrier to peace negotiations because of its focus on military opposition and unwillingness to recognise Israel. The group has been involved in numerous wars, most notably in 2008–09, 2012, 2014, and beyond, as a result of its operations, especially its military buildup in Gaza. In spite of its international isolation—which includes being labelled a terrorist organisation by the US, the EU, and Israel—Hamas has gained backing from regional powers such as iran

**The United Nations**

has been a party to the war ever since the state of Israel was founded. To keep an eye on ceasefires and peace accords, the UN has sent peacekeeping troops, such as the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO). Through UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees), which works in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, the UN has also made a substantial contribution to the provision of humanitarian relief to Palestinian refugees. In addition to granting Palestine non-member observer state status, the UN has passed other resolutions demanding Israel's disengagement from occupied territory. Despite its efforts, the UN has had little impact because strong member states—especially the US—frequently ignore or veto decisions.

**The Arab League**

has continuously denounced Israeli policies and has long advocated for Palestinian sovereignty. In 2002, the League presented the Arab Peace Initiative, which called for the creation of a Palestinian state and the normalisation of ties with Israel in return for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories. Many Arab countries have supported this plan, but Israel has rejected it, citing security concerns and the refusal of some Arab countries to recognise Israel. Although the Arab League has given Palestinian organisations financial and political support, its influence has diminished recently as other Arab nations, such as Egypt and Jordan, have sought their own peace accords with Israel, further dividing the region.

**Egypt**

has long played a significant role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Egypt, a neighbouring Arab nation, has been mediating between Israel and Palestinian factions and was a key player in the 1978 Camp David Accords, which resulted in the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Egypt has frequently participated in ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas, particularly as tensions in Gaza escalated. The Rafah border crossing, which is essential for the flow of people and humanitarian supplies into Gaza, is also under Egyptian control. However, Egypt's complicated ties with both Israel and Hamas, along with its own political considerations, have limited its impact.

**Iran**

has contributed significantly to the conflict, notably by aiding Palestinian militant organisations, especially Islamic Jihad and Hamas. As part of its larger plan to counter Israeli and Western dominance in the area, Iran has given these organisations financial support, military aid, and training. Iran is deeply involved in Palestinian affairs as a result of its ideological opposition to Israel, which it does not acknowledge as a legitimate state. Iran has established itself as a major supporter of the Palestinian cause, especially in opposition to Israel's actions, even as its backing of Palestinian terrorists has deepened regional conflicts.

**Timeline of Events**

| **Date** | **Description of Event** |
| --- | --- |
| **13 September 1993**: **Oslo Accords** | The PLO and Israel agree to the Oslo Accords, which call for the establishment of a Palestinian Authority and steps toward a two-state solution. |
| **28 September 2000**: **Second Intifada** | A second Palestinian uprising begins after the controversial visit of Israeli leader Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, marking the start of widespread violence. |
| **8 July – 26 August 2014**: **Gaza War** | A violent escalation occurs between Israel and Hamas, resulting in thousands of deaths, especially in Gaza. |
| **10-21 May 2021** | A major escalation between Israel and Hamas occurs after tensions over Jerusalem. The conflict results in over 250 Palestinian deaths and 13 Israeli deaths. |
| **2022-2023**: **Continued Violence and Stalemate** | Sporadic violence continues between Israel and Palestinian groups, including rocket attacks from Gaza and Israeli military responses. International efforts to revive peace talks face significant setbacks. |

**Relevant UN Treaties and Events**

* Resolution on the Question of Palestine and the Right to Self-Determination, 14 December 1974 (A/RES/3236)
* Resolution on the Status of the Palestinian People in the UN, 10 December 1980 (A/RES/35/169)
* Resolution on Humanitarian Assistance to the Palestinian People, 8 December 2003 (A/RES/58/95)
* Resolution on the Affirmation of Palestinian Rights, 22 October 1973 (S/RES/338)
* Resolution on the Ceasefire and Establishment of the Green Line (General Armistice Agreements), 11 August 1949 (S/RES/73)
* Resolution on the Situation in the Middle East, 22 November 1967 (S/RES/242)

**Previous Attempts to solve the Issue**

The Israeli-Palestinian dispute has been addressed in a number of ways over the years, with an emphasis on diplomatic talks, humanitarian assistance, and peacekeeping. The United Nations Partition Plan of 1947 was one of the first attempts; it called for the partition of British Mandate Palestine into two sovereign republics, one Arab and one Jewish, and the international administration of Jerusalem. The 1948 Arab-Israeli War resulted from the plan's rejection by Arab leaders but acceptance by Jewish leaders.

A major step towards peace was taken in 1993 with the Oslo Accords, which involved direct talks between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Mutual recognition and the establishment of Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and portions of the West Bank were the results of the deal. But because of ongoing bloodshed, mistrust, and political disputes, it was unable to bring about a lasting settlement. In a similar vein, the Arab League's 2002 Arab Peace Initiative called for Israel to return to its pre-1967 boundaries and provide a fair settlement for Palestinian refugees in exchange for normalised ties with Arab nations. Although the plan attracted attention from throughout the world, Israel never publicly approved it.

Since its founding in 1949, UNRWA—the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East—has played a crucial role in humanitarian efforts. It offers millions of Palestinian refugees throughout the region vital services like healthcare, education, and emergency assistance. The organisation still has issues, though, such as limited finance and restricted access to areas of violence. While humanitarian ceasefires, like those mediated in Gaza in 2012, 2014, and 2021, have offered short-term respite during violent outbursts, they have not addressed the root causes of the war.

**Possible Solutions**

A preferable approach would be to establish permanent humanitarian corridors in Gaza and the West Bank to guarantee continuous access to basic resources like food, medical supplies, and clean water, even though temporary help is given during escalations. Furthermore, concentrating on long-term relief infrastructure, like houses, schools, and clinics, might lessen the humanitarian situation and greatly enhance Palestinians' quality of life.

Digital peacekeeping initiatives can be facilitated by the utilisation of technology. Using satellite images, AI-based analysis, and independent reporting, a transparent, real-time monitoring system might be developed, maybe under the direction of the UN or impartial third parties, to help track ceasefire breaches, human rights abuses, and civilian casualties. Accountability would be guaranteed, and trustworthy data would be available to guide dispute resolution tactics.

A strong, independent, and impartial UN peacekeeping force might be sent to conflict-prone regions like Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem, even if the UN has surveillance systems like UNTSO. In addition to preventing hostilities and closely monitoring ceasefires, this force would safeguard people on both sides. Strong international backing, adequate funding, and a clear mandate to function autonomously would all be necessary. Conflicting parties' confidence could be increased and escalations avoided with a well-organised peacekeeping deployment

**Guiding Questions**

1. In the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza, what part should the UN Peacekeeping Forces play?
2. In light of the bloodshed between Israel and Palestinian organisations like Hamas, how can foreign peacekeeping forces guarantee the safety of civilians?
3. Should current forces like UNTSO be reinforced, or should a new international force be sent in to oversee ceasefires and guarantee adherence to peace agreements?
4. How can peacekeeping forces strike a compromise between Israel's security requirements and the Palestinian people's rights and sovereignty?
5. How can neighboring Arab countries, like Egypt and Jordan, be involved in facilitating peace and supporting humanitarian efforts?
6. Should international actors like the United States, Russia, or China be involved in new peace initiatives, and what can they offer to break the current impasse?
7. How can regional powers, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, influence peace efforts in a constructive way rather than exacerbating tensions?
8. What role can civil society organisations and grassroots initiatives play in peacebuilding and reconciliation in Israel and Palestine, and how can these movements be supported by foreign actors?
9. How can the world's media be used to spread the word about the situation on the ground and the significance of humanitarian relief and peacekeeping?
10. What part do educational programs and youth organisations play in fostering a culture of peace and altering attitudes in the Israeli and Palestinian communities?

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3. **"What Is the History of the Israel-Palestinian Conflict?"** *Reuters*, 17 Dec. 2024,<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/what-is-history-israel-palestinian-conflict-2024-12-17/>. Accessed 8 Jan. 2025.
4. **"History of the Question of Palestine."** *United Nations*,<https://www.un.org/unispal/history/>. Accessed 8 Jan. 2025.
5. **"A Pathway Towards Sustainable Peace in Palestine and Israel."** *The Elders*,<https://theelders.org/news/pathway-towards-sustainable-peace-palestine-and-israel>. Accessed 8 Jan. 2025.
6. **"The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict."** *UK Parliament*,<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/key-issues-parliament-2015/foreign-affairs/israeli-palestinian-conflict/>. Accessed 8 Jan. 2025.

**Appendix or Appendices**

1. <https://www.unrwa.org/> *This website is useful as it provides comprehensive information on humanitarian assistance programs for Palestinian refugees, including education, healthcare, and emergency relief. It offers insights into ongoing needs and challenges in Gaza, the West Bank, and beyond.*
2. <https://www.ochaopt.org/> *This website is useful as it includes detailed reports, data, and maps on humanitarian conditions, conflict-related incidents, and the impact of Israeli policies on Palestinians. It is an essential resource for understanding the humanitarian dimensions of the conflict.*
3. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en> *This website is useful as it provides information on the history and current status of peacekeeping missions worldwide, including those relevant to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It offers resources on peacekeeping strategies and best practices.*
4. <https://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding-support-office/middle-east-quartet> *This website is useful as it offers insights into the diplomatic efforts of the Middle East Quartet (UN, EU, US, and Russia) to mediate the conflict. It includes updates on their initiatives and strategies to promote peace.*