Committee: security council

Topic: The question of Israel-Palestine

Chair: Lucas Easton

School: Royal Russell

Summary

The question of Israel-Palestine is one huge international debate and is an extremely contentious and sensitive Issue. The Israel-Palestine question involves competing claims over land, borders, the status of Jerusalem, and the rights of refugees. Despite multiple attempts at resolution, a lasting peace agreement remains elusive, marked by ongoing tensions, violence, and differing visions for the future of the region. The rights of Palestinian refugees and their descendants constitute another significant dimension of the conflict. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced from their homes during the Arab-Israeli wars in 1948 and 1967, and they, along with their descendants, have maintained a right of return to their ancestral homes. Israel's rejection of this right and concerns over demographic changes have complicated peace negotiations, leaving the refugee issue unresolved. The international community, including the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and regional actors, has played a crucial role in mediating the conflict and advocating for a peaceful resolution. However, geopolitical shifts, changing leadership, and varying degrees of commitment to the peace process have often hindered progress.

Definition of Key Terms

Anti-Semitism: discrimination against Jewish people and culture.

Zionism: Originally a movement for the re-establishment and now the development and protection of a Jewish nation, now Israel.

Nakba: an Arabic word meaning disaster- used in referral to the displacement of Palestinians during the 1948 Palestine war.

West Bank: the Israeli occupied territory bordering Jordan, the Westbank has been under occupation since the six-day war in 1967.

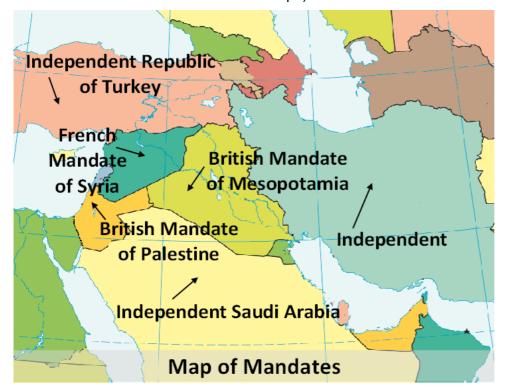**Gaza/ Gaza strip**: a Palestinian territory bordering Egypt.

Jerusalem: the capital city of Israel, Jerusalem is the holy city of three Abrahamic religions; Christianity, Islam and Judaism. It is an Israeli settlement built on Palestinian land and has also been occupied since the six-day war.

Intifadas: A Palestinian uprising in the west bank and Gaza strip

The Israeli Wall: A barrier that divides the west bank between Israel and Palestine

Background Information

The Israel-Palestine Conflict is a complex dispute. Beginning with the British Mandate period (1917-1947), during which tensions escalated as Jewish immigration to Palestine increased (due to the rising levels of antisemitism and fascism in Europe).

The conflict has seen a series of critical events and developments. One pivotal moment was the United Nations' adoption of Resolution 181 on November 29, 1947, recommending the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, along with international administration for Jerusalem. This plan was accepted by Jewish leaders but rejected by Arab leaders, setting the stage for the 1948 Arab Israeli War. On May 14, 1948, Israel declared its independence, leading to neighbouring Arab states invading the newly formed state. The war ended in 1949 with armistice agreements, resulting in significant territorial

changes and the displacement of Palestinians, commonly referred to as the Nakba.

Another crucial juncture was the 1967 Six-Day War, during which Israel launched a pre-emptive strike against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. This conflict resulted in Israel occupying the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights. The subsequent Oslo Accords (1993-1995) marked an attempt at peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), leading to the establishment of limited Palestinian self-rule in parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. during the Second Intifada (2000-2005) Israel imposed a blockade on the Gaza Strip in 2007, following the Hamas takeover of the territory. This blockade significantly restricts the movement of goods and people in and out of Gaza Recent developments include ongoing Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which continues to be a contentious issue and a significant obstacle to peace negotiations. Diplomatic efforts, including negotiations and peace proposals, have persisted over the years but have yielded varying degrees of success.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

- **Hamas**: Hamas is an Islamic Resistance Movement. it is a Palestinian Sunni-Islamic fundamentalist, militant, and nationalist organization.

- **United States**: The United States has historically been a key mediator and supporter of Israel. It has played a significant role in various peace initiatives and has provided substantial military and economic aid to Israel. However, the U.S. has also been involved in diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a two-state solution.

- **United Nations:** The United Nations has been actively engaged in the Israel-Palestine conflict since its inception. UN resolutions, agencies, and peacekeeping missions have played essential roles in addressing humanitarian concerns and promoting peace efforts.

- **European Union (EU):** The EU is a significant player in the conflict, providing financial assistance to Palestinians and promoting peace negotiations. EU member states have varying positions on the conflict, but the organization as a whole advocates for a two-state solution.

- **Arab League:** Comprising 22 Arab states, the Arab League has consistently supported the Palestinian cause and played a role in diplomatic initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict. Its member states have proposed various peace plans.

- **Russia:** Russia has emerged as a diplomatic player in the conflict, participating in negotiations and advocating for a comprehensive peace settlement. It maintains relations with both Israel and Palestinian authorities.

- **Egypt and Jordan:** These two Arab states have signed peace treaties with Israel and have played roles in peace efforts and conflict management in the region.

- **Iran:** Iran often supports Palestinian factions opposed to Israel and has been a vocal critic of Israel's policies. Various Middle Eastern countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey, have also been involved in diplomatic efforts and have offered financial support to Palestinians.

Timeline of Events

- **Late 19th Century:** Zionist movement emerges, advocating for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, then part of the Ottoman Empire.
- **1917:** Balfour Declaration: The British government declares its support for a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.
- **1917-1947:** British Mandate for Palestine: The British govern Palestine, leading to tensions between Jewish immigrants and Arab residents.
- **1947:** United Nations Resolution 181: The UN recommends the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem as an international city.
- **1948:** Israeli Declaration of Independence: Israel is established, leading to the First Arab-Israeli War. Palestinians call it the Nakba as hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs flee or are displaced.
- **1949:** Armistice Agreements: Ceasefire agreements are reached between Israel and neighbouring Arab states, establishing armistice lines.
- **1964:** Formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): Created to represent Palestinian interests and to seek the liberation of Palestinian territories.
- **1967:** Six-Day War: Israel defeats Arab states and occupies the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights.
- **1969-1970:** Palestinian factions launch guerrilla attacks against Israel, leading to the Jordanian Civil War (Black September).
- **1973:** Yom Kippur War: Egypt and Syria launch a surprise attack on Israel, leading to a ceasefire brokered by the United States.
- **1978:** Camp David Accords: Israel and Egypt sign a peace treaty, leading to Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula.
- **1982:** Lebanon War: Israel invades Lebanon to target PLO strongholds.
- **1993:** Oslo Accords: Israel and the PLO agree to a peace process with the goal of establishing Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza.
- **1994:** Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty: Israel and Jordan sign a peace treaty.
- **2000:** Second Intifada (Palestinian uprising) begins after failed peace talks.
- **2005:** Israel unilaterally withdraws from Gaza.
- **2006:** Hamas wins Palestinian legislative elections in Gaza.
- **2014:** Gaza War (Operation Protective Edge): Israel and Hamas engage in a 50-day conflict in Gaza.
- **2017:** The United States recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's capital, leading to widespread protests.
- **2020:** Abraham Accords: Israel normalizes relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- **United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 (1947):** Also known as the "Partition Plan," it recommended the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states and a special international regime for Jerusalem.

- United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948): This resolution, passed after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, affirmed the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and receive compensation.

- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 (1967):** This resolution called for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied during the Six-Day War and the recognition of the right of all states in the region to live in peace.

- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 338 (1973):** This resolution called for an immediate ceasefire in the Yom Kippur War and urged negotiations between the parties concerned to achieve a peaceful settlement.

- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 446 (1979):** This resolution condemned Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, as a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 478 (1980):** This resolution censured Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem and called upon member states to withdraw their diplomatic missions from Jerusalem.

- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1397 (2002):** This resolution called for an immediate ceasefire and a return to negotiations toward a final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1515 (2003):** This resolution endorsed the Roadmap for Peace, which outlined a plan for achieving a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- **United Nations General Assembly Resolution ES-10/15 (2004):** The resolution demanded that Israel comply with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the construction of the Israeli West Bank barrier.

- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009):** This resolution called for an immediate ceasefire during the Gaza War and emphasized the need for unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza.

- **United Nations General Assembly Resolution 67/19 (2012):** This resolution granted non-member observer state status to Palestine at the United Nations.

- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016):** The resolution declared that Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, had no legal validity and constituted a flagrant violation of international law.

- **United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 31/36 (2016):** This resolution established an independent, international commission of inquiry to investigate alleged violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

- **United Nations General Assembly Resolution ES-10/15 (2019):** This resolution reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and called for a just, lasting, and peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- **United Nations Security Council Resolution 2535 (2020):** This resolution renewed the mandate of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) and stressed the need for a two-state solution.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Partition plan

The United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine was a proposal aimed at partitioning Mandatory Palestine and ending the British mandate. On November 29, 1947, the United Nations' General Assembly passed Resolution 181, endorsing this plan. The resolution recommended the creation of independent Arab and Jewish states, along with a Special International Regime for the city of Jerusalem. The Partition Plan had several key objectives. the end of the British Mandate, the withdrawal of British military forces, and the delineation of borders between the two proposed states as well as for Jerusalem. Additionally, it sought to address the claims of both Arab nationalism in Palestine and Zionism.

The plan emphasized the establishment of an Economic Union between the proposed states and the safeguarding of religious and minority rights. While the Jewish community largely embraced the plan, Arab leaders and the government rejected it, expressing reservations about any territorial division. They argued that it went against the principle of self-determination outlined in the United Nations Charter.

The Partition Plan's implementation was stopped by the outbreak of civil conflict shortly after the resolution was adopted. the plan was never put into effect.

Right of return

The central focus of the Palestinian stance in peace negotiations revolves around achieving justice for the refugees, primarily through the concept of the "right of return" to their ancestral homes abandoned in 1948. However, Israel faces a dilemma, as accepting the "right of return" would challenge Israel's core

values as a Jewish or democratic state. The prospect of adding 7 million Arabs to Israel's population would lead to a shift in demographics, making Jews a minority. this factor plays a large role in the exclusion of the "right of return" from compromise negotiations.

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