

Forum: United Nations Peacebuilding Committee (UNPBC)

Issue : Measures to put an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to develop peace and secure the safety of all people

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Introduction

For more than 100 years, there has been ongoing tension between Israel and Palestine. Although there have been several attempts to solve this issue over the past 25 years, no resolution implemented has been accepted by both parties involved. Throughout this period of time, there have been many occasions of heavily armed conflict and overall complete disagreement.

After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire after World War 1, Britain took control of the Palestine area. During this time, this area had a population that consisted of a majority of Arabs and a minority of Jews. The conflict originated when governments around the globe began urging Britain to establish a "National Home" for Jewish people in Palestine.

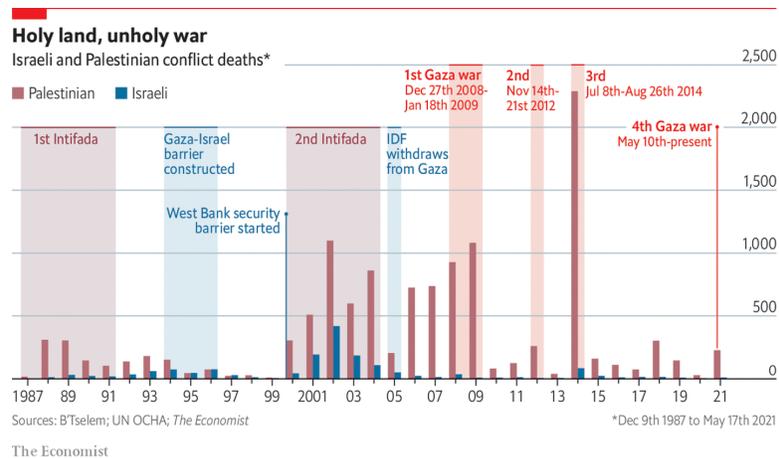
There had been one attempt for this to happen decades before by the Napoleon administration, but it was unsuccessful. Many Jews claimed the land as their ancestral home, but Palestinians opposed the move as they also claimed the land. Because of the events that happened during World War 2, as the prosecution of Jewish people rose, so did the number of people seeking shelter in Palestine. Because of their disagreement; especially about the land of Jerusalem, as the number of Jewish people in the land grew, so did the tension. Following the end of the second world war, the British left and Jewish leaders established the creation of the state of Israel, marking the beginning of the war. By 1949, Israel controlled most of the territory, with the exception of the West Bank, occupied by Jordan, Gaza, occupied by Egypt, and Jerusalem,

divided with Israeli forces in the East and Jordanian forces in the West.



Israel's boundaries today

According to *The Economist*, since 1987, this war has taken 14,000 lives; majorly Palestinian by around 87%. These lives have been lost throughout the journey that led Israel to occupy most of the territory. As Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory become more popular, lives continue to be sacrificed in this war. As of 2022, only 138 of the 193 member states of the United Nations recognize the state of Palestine and a number of them actively support the means Israel has taken to occupy the land such as bombarding and armed conflict. On account of this, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has not taken any direct action about this conflict as nations such as the United States of America prevent it, using a veto vote.



Holy land, unholy war

Definition of Key Terms

The Ottoman Empire: known as the Turkish Empire, this was an Islamic caliphate that ruled most of Western Asia, Northern Africa, and South East Europe. It was dissolved in November of 1922 after existing for nearly 600 years. Because the sultan (leader) had all religious and political authority, the minorities belonging to this group including Christians and Jews, suffered due to systematic discrimination (History).

Al Nakba: “Al Nakba” or “The Catastrophe” refers to the expulsion of over 750,000 Arabs from Palestine. This happened following the creation of Israel after Britain promised the land to the Jewish population of Palestine (Palestine Remix).

Zionism: An Ideology adopted nationally by the people of Israel that believes in Judaism as both a nationality and a religion. This belief system also supports the idea that Israel, as the ancestral homeland of Jewish people, should be their state. Arabs and Palestinians generally disagree with this ideology and see it as a form of discrimination (Vox)

Refugees: Individuals who seek shelter from war, violence, or prosecution internationally (UNHCR)

Israeli Settlements: Generally considered illegal by the international community, these are any Israeli built structures beyond the initial borders for Israel from 1948. These hold communities of Jewish people in what is considered to be Palestinian land (Palestine Remix)

Jerusalem: A city located near the West Bank in Western Asia. Being one of the oldest cities in the world, it has great significance for many religions, including Judaism and Islam. Most world leaders agree that this city is the capital of Israel, although many Arabs claim East Jerusalem as the capital of their own state (The Washington Post).

General Overview

The Creation of Palestine and Israel

As Napoleon conquered the land of Egypt in 1798, he dreamed of expanding his empire through the land ruled by the Ottoman Empire. Attempting to strike before his enemies could prevent it, he quickly sent around 13,000 soldiers towards the area of what is now Israel and Syria. Napoleon's troops successfully captured Gaza and other areas. After continuous invasions and massacres in nearby territories in what is known as The Siege of Acre, the idea of returning Jewish people the land that they were "legal heirs" of first began. This came through *Le Moniteur Universel*, a popular newspaper during the French Revolution that claimed that Napoleon pursued the reinstatement of that land as a Homeland for Jewish people as a way of claiming their independence. Ultimately, this never happened under his own jurisdiction after he was forced to retreat from the area as the British navy took control in partnership with the Ottoman Empire. In May of 1801, the locals retook the land after the defeat of Bonaparte in 1799.

In 1917, after Britain conquered Palestine, the international community began urging them to revisit Napoleon's plans. Towards the end of the same year, the British government issued a public statement known as the Balfour Declaration that stated their support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. In 1922, the League of Nations approved this declaration and the British mandate over Palestine. Arabs rejected these ideas as they oversaw a threat not only to their land but to their community. Unable to solve the conflicts between the growing

Jewish population of Palestine and Palestinians, the British army withdrew their forces. That same day, tensions broke as fights for what both groups consider sacred land began. At midnight on May 15 of 1948, despite expecting an Arab invasion, Jewish people celebrated their nation's creation and international recognition after taking over about half of the territory previously known as Palestine.

The Land of Jerusalem

Out of all the territory, many consider that the most important one they are fighting for is the land of Jerusalem. For decades, both Arab Muslims and Jewish people have claimed that land. To this day, even when many acknowledge it as Israel territory, many Palestinians still claim it as their own, especially the East side. Jerusalem has religious significance for both parties; this is because this land is central geographically in the life of many important religious figures in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Currently, Jerusalem is controlled by Israel and is now recognized as the capital of the nation.

Israeli Settlements

Although the West Bank is ruled by Palestinian authority, it is currently under Israeli occupation since 1967. Throughout the years, Israel has been building what is known as settlements around the territory. These are communities of Israeli people that are moving into the West Bank. Although many move for what seems to be harmless reasons like cheap rent and religious practices, it is considered a major issue. These settlements violate several international humanitarian laws and are considered an impediment to peace. According to Vox, there are currently about 500,000 Israeli people living in settlements (2018). These settlements cause separation of Palestinian communities, a weakened connection to the land, and dispute the transfer of populations. Additionally, these settlements blur the territory lines and enforce

the exclusion of Palestinians on important roads. According to a majority of international lawyers, these communities violate the 4th Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in the time of war which forbids the transfer of people into occupied territories.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Palestine

Palestine is recognized by the United Nations as a non-member observer state. Although the nation applied to be a member, the UN Security Council failed to decide if this was accepted or not unanimously. Nevertheless, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has jurisdiction over the situation. Since this war started in the mid-20th century, Palestinians have refused to give up the state of Palestine and still claim the land that is now known as Israel. Additionally, out of the extensive death toll this war has had, Palestinians make up more than 50%. This is mostly due to how the violent invasion has affected every single Palestinian community. Many Palestinian refugees escaping the war can be seen around the globe.

Israel

Since before International powers brought up the idea of a homeland for Jewish people, there has been a discussion within them about Jerusalem and the surrounding land. Israeli people support Zionism and it is clear that Israel is willing to take any measures they deem as necessary to take control of the land they have been fighting for over the last decades. This country maintains good diplomatic relations with many Arab nations. Furthermore, Israel has allied with powerful countries such as the United States in an attempt to obtain aid in the process.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom does not recognize Palestine as a state. Since Brexit, as the UK strengthens its relations with middle eastern nations, many expect them to reinforce their stance on this ongoing conflict. Many professionals believe that the United Kingdom is in the position to conduct an open and honest mission that could lead to the end of this war, Nevertheless, the UK has not been very clear with their intentions regarding this conflict.

United States of America

For years, the leaders of the United States have claimed their support for the creation of the state of Israel. To this day, this nation does not recognize Palestine as an independent nation. Additionally, according to Vox “The US is Israel’s most powerful international backer and closest partner” (Guyer 2022). An expert on illegal settlements named Michael Sfard confirms that the US is the biggest enabler of the settlements due to the big stake and leverage they have with the Israeli government. Although the US has pushed a “two-state solution” not enough diplomatic efforts have been made to conduct this plan.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1799	Napoleon issues a proclamation for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This idea did not materialize at the time, but was revisited by the British colonists in the late 19th century.

1917, November

The British declare support for a national homeland for Jewish people through the Balfour declaration.

1947, November

Britain hands over the responsibility of Palestine and Israel to the United Nations after they find themselves unable to solve the growing conflicts between the parties.

1948

1948, April

Israel captures Haifa, one of the biggest cities in Palestine. This leads to the displacement of numerous Palestinians.

1949

1950

British forces formally withdraw from the area and David Ben Gurion proclaims it as the state of Israel. The United States and The Soviet Union both recognized Israel almost immediately.

1967

1973

Over 700,000 Palestinians had become refugees and over 13,000 had their lives taken by Israeli forces. The UN establishes an agency for Palestinian refugees.

1974

Jordan assumes control of the West Bank.

1988

1993 - 2000

The UNSC passes a resolution urging Israel to withdraw their forces from the territories they occupied up to this date. Instead, Israel gains control of most of Palestinian territory, including the Gaza Strip.

2002

2022 - present

The UNSC passes a resolution urging Israel to withdraw their forces once again.

The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is recognized as the representative for Palestinian people by the Arab League

The PLO accepts UNSC resolutions recognizing the state of Israel.

The PLO and Israel go through several negotiations. This leads to the partial release of Israeli forces from Hebron.

Israel reoccupies all the territories they had previously released.

Israel and Palestine continue the war for the land as many world leaders unsuccessfully attempt to resolve this conflict.

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The United Nations has been involved in this conflict for decades. Although many resolutions have been proposed, only a few have been adopted.

- In November of 1947, the general assembly proposed the resolution to divide the territory between the two parties. Jews occupied $\frac{1}{3}$ of the population of historic Palestine and were allocated 55% of the land while Palestinians occupied $\frac{2}{3}$ and were allocated 45% of the land. Palestine and other member states rejected this resolution completely while the Jewish party accepted the idea but not the proposed border lines.
- In 1949 the UN pushed for an **armistice deal** between Israel, Palestine, and any other Arab nations involved in the conflict.
- On December 8 of 1949, the UN founded **The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)** for Palestine Refugees to "Provide direct relief and works programmes for Palestinian refugees" (unrwa.org).
- On November 22 of 1967, the UNSC passed **resolution 242** with a unanimous vote. This resolution implied that Israel had to return all the

territory captured during the war before Palestine and the Arab league provided recognition or agreed to any negotiations.

- On October 22 of 1973, the UNSC adopted **resolution 338** calling for a ceasefire and for Israel to withdraw from the territories.
- In 1982 the UN declares November 29 as the **International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Despite the thorough involvement the United Nations has had with the conflict, it has not been able to resolve it. There have been several attempts at resolutions, but only resolutions 242 and 338 were implemented by the UN Security Council. Notably, other resolutions were not accepted by either party involved in the conflict or got denied by major parties like the United States with a veto vote. Although many claim there are clear war crimes being committed, the United Nations has been unable to impact the issue in a relevant manner. Nevertheless, through events such as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the UN shows support for the suffering community.

Possible Solutions

Many world leaders propose the most viable way to solve this conflict is a two-state solution. This would imply there would be a state of Palestine and a state of Israel; both parties would have to divide the land. The major issue with this proposal is that it has been proven difficult for both parties to agree to set territory lines. Other options include urging major nations to not only recognize the state of Palestine, but also ending imports from settlements. Most importantly, it is crucial that Palestine has access to mechanisms like the International Criminal Court in order to implement international resolutions.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)

This issue is deeply relevant as it concerns sustainable development goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. This goal aims to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (United Nations 2015). Global peace has experienced threats due to this war for decades. It is crucial to solve this issue in order to achieve this goal.

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Appendix

- I. A comprehensive explanation of the Israel - Palestine conflict and its causes

<https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-44124396>

- II. Clear explanation of the conflict with linked resources

<https://www.vox.com/2018/11/20/18080002/israel-palestine-conflict-basics>

- III. Religious significance of the land of Jerusalem

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2017/12/06/questions-about-jerusalem-you-were-afraid-to-ask/>

[stions-about-jerusalem-you-were-afraid-to-ask/](#)

IV. Timeline of the Israel - Palestine conflict

https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/palestineremix/phone/timeline_main.html#t1

V. Recognition of Palestine

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-that-recognize-palestine>