



# CPS PRIME MUN

CONQUER FROM WITHIN

# UNGA STUDYGUIDE



## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations was founded on the 26th of June 1945, after the signing of the United Nations Charter at the conclusion of the United Nations conference on International Organization.<sup>(1)</sup> The General Assembly (GA) has six main committees, dealing with all important global issues, ranging from topics such as fiscal responsibility over international security, development, international law to human rights. The GA is the most important forum for multilateral discussions on a range of issues outlined in the Charter. As the main organ, the GA does not report to other UN bodies, but rather requests and reviews reports and resolutions by other organs and subsidiary bodies.<sup>(2)</sup> The GA can, for example, request the Secretary-General to issue a report to be presented to one of the main committees on a specified question such as the implementation of recommendations made by the GA. Additionally, non-governmental organizations have an important relationship with the GA and can be and often are invited to speak at the GA. While policy making in such a large body can often be quite hard keeping in mind the need to attain lasting consensus, it truly is an institution of global understanding which very much respects the sovereignty of states with equal voting power.<sup>(3)</sup>

## UNGA FUNCTIONS AND CAPACITY

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is one of the organs of the United Nations which makes recommendations to maintain peace and friendly relationships with other countries.<sup>(4)</sup> The organ appoints the Secretary General on the recommendation of the Security Council. This organ also approves the UN budgets. UNGA makes recommendations to States on international issues within its competence. They also elect the non-permanent members of the Security Council. They also take actions if the case is a threat to peace.<sup>(5)</sup>



The UNGA adopted landmarks such as the Millennium Declaration, in 2000 and the World Summit Outcome Document in 2005, to reflect the commitment of the member states to reach their specific goals such as: to attain peace; security and disarmament; development and poverty eradication; to promote rule of law and safeguard human rights; to protect our common environment; to meet the special needs of Africa and strengthen the United Nations. They can only make recommendations when the Security Council is discussing a dispute or a situation. The United Nations General Assembly(UNGA) provides recommendations on how to promote international political cooperation, the development and codification of international law, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms and international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational and health fields.<sup>(5)</sup>

The United Nations General Assembly also makes recommendations on the General Principles of cooperation for maintaining international peace and security with the other countries which includes disarmament. It also discusses questions which are related to international peace and security. They consider reports from the Security Council and other United Nations organs as well.<sup>(5)</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Since the UN's foundation in 1945, it's purpose was to maintain international peace.<sup>(6)</sup>The general assembly has and continues to promote treaties regarding peace and disarmament. The UNGA addresses human rights concerns in conflicts such as the ones in Yemen and the Israel-Palestine example. It attends to immediate and long term security, humanitarian and political ramifications. Delegates should remember that as a UNGA committee member, the delegate can't infringe a country's sovereignty.



# TOPIC - PREVENTION OF CONFLICT IN THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE SITUATION

## INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

The area of Palestine (particularly the capital Jerusalem) is considered a holy site for both Jewish and Muslim people and has been viciously fought over by both religious groups since the end of World War I. However, the Arab-Israeli conflict was driven primarily in hope of territorial gains that directly contradict each other, since the region holds a strategic place geographically connecting the Mediterranean to much of the Arabian Peninsula and bridging the road from Egypt to Syria.<sup>(7)</sup> The complex nature of this issue has led many to believe that peace between the two is inconceivable and unachievable. Nevertheless, the situation as it is today, where Palestine is not a part of Israel and yet not fully independent. Frequent clashes, till this day, disrupt peace.

## HISTORY OF THE TOPIC

Since the 1500s, Palestine was under the control of the Ottoman Empire and it was made up of a mostly Muslim population, with Christians and Jews considered minorities. While the government was Muslim, these minorities had full freedom and acceptance. In fact, the Ottomans, like many Arab powers, accepted thousands of Jewish refugees who fled persecution in other parts of the world.<sup>(8)</sup> The land was cohesive, different religious groups coexisted in harmony, and little to no conflict existed.



At the beginning of the 20th century, the concept of Zionism was surging in popularity all across Europe. Developed by an Austrian Jew, Theodor Herzl, Zionism rested on the idea that Judaism is more but a religion, but a nationality—something that deserves to be protected and preserved through the creation of a separate Jewish state.<sup>(9)</sup> With the rise of Zionism, the once harmless immigration of the Jews became a desire to establish a homeland, a separate Jewish state. In response to this, the British government decided to show support for the Zionist movement by agreeing, in what was known as the Balfour Declaration to help create a Jewish state in Palestine after World War 1 ended.



The declaration said, *“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”*<sup>(10)</sup>

However, the British also promised Palestine to Arabs who had helped them win a decisive victory over the Ottomans at the time. So when the allied powers met in Versailles in 1919, the British opted instead to establish a mandate system in Palestine, which although accepting to Jewish immigrants, left both the Arabs and the Jewish unsatisfied. The Arab countries felt like they had been snatched of what they were owed and the Jews felt like they had been taken away the right to self-govern that had been promised to them. It was only in the aftermath of World War II and the Holocaust that the British handed over the question of Palestine to the United Nations. Partly in the interest of making up for the atrocities committed against them during the Holocaust, the United Nations developed a Partition Plan<sup>(11)</sup>, which divided Palestine into two separate territories, one Jewish and one Arab, with Jerusalem being administrated by the United Nations. While the plan offered precise geographical boundaries and created two states that had approximately the same size, the Palestinians, who were forced out of their lands and lost much of their autonomy, were dissatisfied with the decision. The Arab states surrounding Israel rejected the Partition Plan and launched the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

Forces from Egypt, Transjordan (present-day Jordan), Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon all launched attacks against Israel in an attempt to impede the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. However, this backfired. Israel managed to gain even more land than had been appointed to them by the United Nations, a notable acquisition was the Yehuda mountains which formed a path to Jerusalem.<sup>(12)</sup> In the aftermath, the 1949 Armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab states (except Iraq since it did not



share land with Israel) established new borders which allowed Israel to gain more land, an Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip, and a Jordanian-controlled West Bank. Jordan and Israel also divided Jerusalem in two parts, maintaining the religious sites in East Jerusalem, which was controlled by Jordan.<sup>(13)</sup>

The most important battle between the Arabs and the Israelis was known as the Six Day War and it resulted in an overwhelming victory and massive territorial gains for Israel. Several border skirmishes eventually built up to a full blown war that lasted from the 5th to the 10th of June, 1967. At the end of this war, Israel had taken over Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, expelled Syrian forces from Golan Heights, pushed Jordan out of the West Bank, and established full control over Jerusalem.<sup>(14)</sup> However, according to international law at the time, it was restricted to obtain territory by war and, therefore, legally did not belong to Israel. In response to the war, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 242 which required that Israel return the land which it had conquered and recognize the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every State in the region.<sup>(15)</sup> Israel was slow to respond to these demands, but this established a time of relative peace in Arab-Israeli relations.

However, the conflict heightened again in 1973 with the Yom Kippur War, in which Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated attack on Israel in order to recover the territory they had lost through previous conflicts with Israel, in the name of securing Palestinian land . This was launched on Yom Kippur, which is a Jewish religious holiday and therefore took the Israeli military by surprise. Israel took many days to recover from the shock and mount an adequate response, which led to heavy losses in terms of manpower and equipment. A ceasefire was ultimately negotiated with the support of the United Nations, who later passed Resolution 339, reiterating the boundaries set by Resolution 242 and urging the nations involved to seek a “just and durable peace in the Middle East.” By 1982, Israel had returned the entirety of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt and had fully adhered to the terms of the 1979 peace treaty.<sup>(16)</sup>



Until this time, the conflict had primarily been considered an Arab-Israeli one, rather than an Israel-Palestine one. However, the recognition of the People's Liberation Organization (PLO) from Palestine as an observer state in 1974 offered the Palestinian state a measure of recognition in the international landscape. The PLO had been considered a violent group targeting Israeli citizens since its initial formation ten years earlier. Despite multiple controversies surrounding this decision, for the first time, the Palestinian people had official representatives and therefore a global voice which could address their position in the conflict against Israel. As a response to the control exerted by the Israelis in the Gaza strip and the West bank, the Palestinians launched the First Intifada in 1987, ten years after the end of the Six Days War.<sup>(17)</sup> Intifada means "shaking off" in Arabic and during the uprising, the Palestinians were attempting to "shake off" Israeli control. This revolt led to the Oslo Accords, which established the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements. This agreement required all Israeli forces to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and allow the Palestinians to govern themselves. One unexpected result of the First Intifada was the creation of a group called Hamas. They were created by the Muslim Brotherhood and some more extremist factions of the PLO and they believe that the entirety of Palestine should belong to the Palestinians and that they ought to wage a holy war against Israel in order to reestablish their homeland. Although the western part of the world labels Hamas as a terrorist group in present times, many Palestinians prefer their actions to the milder actions of the PLO. Today, the PLO has control over the West Bank but the Hamas have control over the Gaza strip.<sup>(18)</sup>

The Second Intifada lasted from 2000 to 2005. It originally began as a Palestinian response to a visit the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon made to a Muslim Sanctuary in Jerusalem. Some people believe that the Second Intifada was in response to the breakdown of dialogue at Camp David in 2000, although the PLO continuously denies that claim. The Sharm el-Sheikh Summit in 2005 marked the end of the Second Intifada, which established a ceasefire. The Palestinians agreed to halt all violence against Israelis and Israel agreed to cease their military efforts against Palestine. However, despite this ceasefire, the violent initiatives of Hamas hindered the peace





process, never really bringing a halt to the mounting tension. In recent years, they have targeted Israeli civilians and launched many rockets at Israel. In 2014, the conflict escalated significantly as Israel launched Operation Protective Edge in the Gaza strip in response to Hamas kidnapping and murdering three Israeli teenagers. This led to the death of thousands of Palestinian civilians and the destruction of thousands of residential and infrastructure buildings, leading Israel to face a lot of criticism internationally for what many considered to be a disproportionately violent response.<sup>(19)</sup> After weeks of fighting, Egypt intervened and helped negotiate a ceasefire between both sides and while the tension is still as high as ever, the ceasefire remains in effect to this day.

As of present times, there still exist two main issues. The first is the idea that maintaining an ethnically preferential state, especially one that is non-native and with other ethnicities challenging order, was settled in, is unquestionably unstable. The second lies with the oppressive control in the West Bank and Gaza, where military occupation and seizure of privately owned land dictate much of people's lives in the regions.

## CURRENT SITUATION

On the 10th of May 2021, Israeli warplanes started bombarding the city of Gaza and at the same time, Hamas started barraging their rockets. Gaza, which is a city packed with 2 million people, was hit with a barrage of airstrikes and artillery by Israel.<sup>(20)</sup> 200 Palestinians lost their lives and officials say that half of them are women and children. It has been reported that 12 people have died in Israel.<sup>(21)</sup> Israel continue to keep their stance on Palestine not invading their 'one and only Jewish state.'

Violent arguments between the Palestinians and the ISF (Israeli Security Forces) have erupted over Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem. Israel's population consists of 20% of Arab



Muslims. When the Al-Aqsa was attacked, the Arab Muslim population of Israel could not sit still, the Al-Aqsa one of the holiest muslim shrines. This led to internal revolts as well. The moderate Palestinian leader, Muhammad Abbas started having dissatisfaction when the actions of Hamas started affecting them as well. Also, in the past 15 years, Muhammed Abbas has failed to conduct elections as they should be conducted.<sup>(22)</sup>

In 1993, both of the sides signed a deal where the Israelis would recognize the Palestine Liberation Organisation or the PLO as a representative of the Palestinians and Palestine would recognize Israel. It was an agreement of peace, which although was signed, didn't actually happen. In 2000 there was a failed peace summit hosted by the USA. Following this, about 1000 Israeli and 3000 Palestinian casualties amassed over the next 5 years due to rising tension. The suicide bombings that took place killed countless civilians.<sup>(23)</sup>

In October 2020, an Israeli court ruled that several Palestinian families living in Sheikh Jarrah, a neighborhood in East Jerusalem, were to be evicted by May 2021 with their land handed over to Jewish families. In February 2021, several Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah filed an appeal to the court ruling and prompted protests around the appeal hearings. The legal battle around property ownership and demanding an end to the forcible displacement of Palestinians from their homes in Jerusalem is still ongoing.

In April 2021, Palestinians began demonstrating in the streets of Jerusalem to protest the pending evictions and residents of Sheikh Jarrah along with other activists and began to host nightly sit-ins. In early May, after a court ruled in favor of the evictions, the protests expanded with Israeli police deploying force against demonstrators. On May 7, following weeks of daily demonstrations and rising tensions between protesters, Israeli settlers and police during the month of Ramadan, violence broke out at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem. Israeli police used stun grenades, rubber bullets, and water cannons in a clash with protestors that left hundreds of Palestinians wounded. After the clashes in Jerusalem's Old City, tensions increased throughout East Jerusalem, compounded by the celebration of Jerusalem



Day. On May 10, after several consecutive days of violence throughout Jerusalem and the use of lethal and nonlethal force by Israeli police, Hamas, the militant group which governs Gaza, and other Palestinian militant groups launched hundreds of rockets into Israeli territory. Israel responded with air strikes and later artillery bombardments against targets in Gaza, including launching several air strikes that killed more than twenty Palestinians. While claiming to target Hamas, other militants, and their infrastructure, including tunnels and rocket launchers, Israel expanded its aerial campaign and struck targets including residential buildings, media headquarters and refugee and healthcare facilities.

On May 21, Israel and Hamas agreed on a cease-fire, brokered by Egypt, with both sides claiming victory and no reported violations. More than 250 Palestinians were killed and nearly 2000 others wounded, and at least 13 Israelis were killed over the eleven days of fighting. Authorities in Gaza estimate that tens of millions of dollars of damage was done, and the United Nations estimates that more than 72,000 Palestinians were displaced by the violent event.<sup>(24)</sup>

The United Nations has warned that there is a possibility that the current situation will lead to a 'full scale war'. It has been reported that Israel is attacking the Gaza Strip with intensifying air operations and in the Israeli territories, it has been reported that Hamas has launched about 3000 rockets having the death tolls increase by approximately 230. Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel has failed to coalesce a coalition of government and the leader of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas is in fear of losing the election. He has been continually postponing the parliamentary and presidential election.<sup>(25)</sup>

With no working plans in action toward peace between Israel and Palestine, we see that tension between the sides is still high.



## PREVIOUS UN ACTIONS

### Resolution 181

In 1947, a resolution was passed by the UNGA that provided two options, the majority suggesting dividing Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states, joined economically. The minority suggested the formation of a single binational state made up of autonomous Jewish and Palestinian areas. The former suggestion was taken into consideration and put into action by the Jewish community for the legal establishment of Israel but both options were rejected by the Arabs.<sup>(26)</sup>

### Resolution 194

The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 194 (III), declaring that *“Refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.”*<sup>(27)</sup>

### Resolution 242

Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Syria participated in the ‘Six Day war.’ Israel conducted a preemptive air assault in Egypt and Syria on the 5th of June 1967 leading to the start of the war. It ended on 10th June 1967 with Israel’s victory. Israel captured the Sinai peninsula, the Gaza strip from Egypt, the golden highs from Syria and the West Bank from Jordan. In response to this the UN came up with resolution 242. The resolution called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from occupied territories, acknowledged the claim of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the region and called on the UN Secretary-General to appoint an envoy to facilitate an acceptable solution to the conflict.<sup>(28)</sup>



## TIMELINE

1800s: The rise of Zionism was seen causing a rise in interest for Jews to return to Israel or Palestine as the area was called then.

1914-1919: Due to Nazi mass persecution of Jews the pace of Jewish settlement increased.

1939-1945: Israel was established, while being opposed by Arabs

1948: First large Israel-Arab engagement in war, Israel emerged victorious with US support.

1956: Second Israel-Arab war due to Suez canal.

1964: PLO(Palestinian Liberation Organisation) was organised.

1967: Six day war.

1987: First Palestinian Intifada.

1993: Oslo Peace Accord signed by Israel and PLO backed by the UN.

2000: Second Palestinian Intifada.

2006: Hamas wins election in Gaza emerging as a competitor to the Fatah party of the West Bank.

2008-2021: Continued violent tension with rocket launches and exchanged fire between sides.



## KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1) What is your government's position in the Israel-Palestine conflict?
- 2) What is your government's stance on Palestine's request for UN membership?
- 3) What is your government's stance on the Israeli occupation of Palestine claimed land?
- 4) Does your government provide asylum for Palestinian refugees, and if so, what is their status?

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