

Committee.

Security

Council

Topic B: Armed

Conflict between

Tópico B: Armed Conflict between Israel and Hamas-led Palestinian armed groups



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Introduction

The Security Council is responsible for maintaining and ensuring international peace. It determines the existence of a threat to peace or an act of aggression; it has the task of solving the presented conflicts peacefully. In some cases, the Security Council has the authority and obligation to answer with sanctions or even authorize using force to restore peace. This committee comprises 15 members: 10 elected members, and five permanent members, known as the G5.

After the Second World War, the United Nations established the Security Council in 1945 with four purposes, which remain relevant today: maintaining international peace and security, fostering friendly and diplomatic relations among nations, cooperating to solve global problems, promoting respect for fundamental human rights, and serving as a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the search for upholding peace.

The Security Council can intervene at any moment if peace is threatened. It can call an emergency meeting to reach a quick resolution if necessary. All United Nations member states must comply with the Security Council's resolutions. If a country refuses

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to comply, the Council may impose sanctions to ensure enforcement. The Security Council can also establish diplomatic missions worldwide to support its peacekeeping efforts.

The Security Council's permanent residence is in New York City, but meetings can be held in other locations such as Panama City, Geneva (Switzerland), and Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). The first meeting of this council took place on January 17, 1946, at Church House, Westminster, London. Due to the tensions during the Cold War, some sessions could not be completed as planned on the agenda.

The Security Council comprises ten elected members and five permanent members: the People's Republic of China, the French Republic, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and The United States of America. The General Assembly elects the ten non-permanent members for two-year terms. Each year, five members are changed through elections, ensuring geographical representation: five in Africa and Asia, two in Latin America and the Caribbean, one from East Europe, and two from West European countries.

The non-permanent members have the right to vote, but the resolution will not be approved if one of the five permanent members uses their veto power. The veto power can only be used to protect the nation's interests, address a foreign threat, or resolve an

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issue of state interest. The Security Council has the authority to take direct actions in resolutions and bind members, unlike other United Nations bodies that can only make recommendations to governments. Resolutions in the Security Council follow a structured process and are issued in a single document, known as the final resolution.

The Security Council holds significant power and responsibility within the United Nations framework, as stated in articles 24, 25, and 26 of the UN Charter. These articles emphasize the Council's duty to maintain international peace and security, ensure member states comply with its resolutions, and promote conflict resolutions. Additionally, the Security Council is tasked with minimizing the use of force in conflict and pursuing diplomatic measures to restore peace whenever possible.

Context of the problem

The Security Council strives to promote global peace and resolve conflicts. Historical events like those faced by Palestine demonstrate the complexities and challenges of achieving lasting peace. When World War I began, Palestine, under Ottoman rule, was drawn into the Ottoman Empire's secret alliance with Germany. Despite strategic motivations, the Ottoman Empire suffered catastrophic losses, including two-thirds of its soldiers and up to three million civilian casualties (National

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Geographic, 2022). The empire fought against Russia on several fronts, notably in the Caucasus, while also contending with internal economic weaknesses and growing demands for independence from various ethnic and religious groups.

At its height, the Ottoman Empire was a formidable power, thanks to leaders such as Mehmed II and Suleiman the Magnificent, who expanded and strengthened the empire. Its success was built on a well-organized bureaucracy, a powerful military, and elite forces like the Janissaries. Economically, its strategic position allowed it to control key trade routes between Europe and Asia. One of its most notable achievements was its ability to allow different religious and ethnic communities to govern themselves, which promoted social stability.

However, the decline of the Ottoman Empire was driven by various factors. Revolutions erupted across several territories, and the empire lost control over vast regions, particularly in the Balkans, including Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia. These neighboring territories attacked the weakened empire, leading to the loss of 33% of Ottoman territory and almost a quarter of its population.

In the early 20th century, Palestine, still under Ottoman rule, witnessed multiple waves of Jewish migration, spurred by Zionist ideology and the persecution of Jewish

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communities in Europe. The first wave, or *First Aliyah*, took place between 1882 and 1903, with approximately 35,000 Jews from Eastern Europe and Yemen fleeing pogroms and economic hardship. Over time, five major waves of Jewish migration, called *Aliyahs*, shaped the demographics of Palestine. The most significant, the Fifth Aliyah (1929-1939), saw around 250,000 Jews escaping the growing Nazi persecution in Germany and Central Europe, driven by anti-Semitism and seeking to rebuild their lives.

Religious ties to the land also played a crucial role in the decision to settle in Palestine. For Jews, Palestine is the historic homeland associated with the patriarchs and the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah. For Christians and Muslims, the region holds deep religious significance as well. This sacred status made Palestine a focal point for pilgrimage and devotion, intensifying the cultural and political stakes in the area.

Jewish settlers established agricultural communes (*kibbutzim*) and cooperative villages (*moshavim*), focusing on self-sufficiency and communal living. However, the arrival of these settlers led to conflicts with the Arab population, who feared being economically and politically marginalized. These tensions gave rise to significant violence, such as the riots of the 1920s, the 1929 Hebron massacre, and the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939. These uprisings were partly in response to the perceived threat posed by Jewish immigration. The British responded with measures such as the 1939 White Paper,

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which restricted Jewish immigration to a maximum of 75,000 over five years and required Arab consent for any future immigration.

The roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including the more recent struggles between Israel and Hamas, can be traced back to the First Zionist Congress, held in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897. This congress initiated the Zionist movement, which aimed to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. Led by figures like Theodor Herzl, Chaim Weizmann, and David Ben-Gurion, the movement emerged in response to widespread anti-Semitism in Europe and a growing sense of Jewish national identity. Zionism sought to create a Jewish state through immigration, land acquisition, and development of agricultural and urban areas in Palestine.

The movement also divided Jewish communities globally. Some Orthodox Jews opposed Zionism, believing a Jewish state should only be established with the coming of the Messiah, while other Jews feared that the creation of a Jewish state would heighten anti-Semitism or lead to accusations of dual loyalty.

In 1917, during World War I, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, expressing support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This declaration was a turning point in the history of the region, as it formally recognized the aspirations of

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the Zionist movement. However, it also fueled tensions with the local Arab population, who saw this as a violation of their claims to the land.

Following World War I, Palestine came under the British Mandate, intensifying Arab-Jewish tensions. These conflicts culminated in the Arab Revolt of 1936, where Palestinians took up arms against British authorities. The Balfour Declaration and the subsequent British Mandate shaped the geopolitical dynamics of the region, eventually leading to the massive displacement of Palestinians in what became known as the Nakba.

The *Nakba* ("catastrophe" in Arabic) refers to the mass expulsion and displacement of around 700,000 Palestinians during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Palestinians view this event as a pivotal moment in their history, symbolizing the loss of their homeland and the beginning of their long-standing struggle for the right of return and statehood. Many fled to refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the Gaza Strip. Today, Nakba Day is commemorated through education, public demonstrations, and cultural events, keeping the memory alive both in Palestine and internationally.

After World War I, the Ottoman Empire collapsed, with territories divided under the mandates of the Allied powers. Iraq and Palestine were placed under British control, while Syria and Lebanon came under French mandate. The British mandate aimed to secure strategic interests, including control of the Suez Canal and access to oil resources,

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while also attempting to honor conflicting promises to both Jews and Arabs. The influx of Jewish immigrants led to economic development, but also increased Arab resentment, culminating in more frequent clashes.

The United Nations intervened in 1947 with a Partition Plan (*A/RES/181(II)*), which proposed the division of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. Jewish leaders accepted the plan, seeing it as an opportunity to establish a sovereign Jewish state, but Arab leaders rejected it, viewing the proposal as an unjust allocation of land. The plan proposed giving 55% of the territory to the Jewish state and 45% to the Arab state, with Jerusalem placed under international control due to its religious significance. This division was seen by Arabs as favoring the Jewish minority and led to immediate violence and mass displacements.

By 1948, the Arab-Israeli conflict reached new heights with the declaration of Israel's independence. The subsequent war displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, creating a refugee crisis that persists to this day. Israel's territorial expansion during this period exacerbated tensions, setting the stage for future conflicts. International powers like the United States and the Soviet Union played crucial roles in shaping the outcome of the conflict by providing political support and military aid. Britain, having

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ended its mandate, left behind a legacy of unresolved conflict and socio-economic disparity in the region.

The Suez Crisis of 1956, triggered by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal, further complicated regional politics. A secret military alliance between Israel, Britain, and France led to a brief war with Egypt. Although Egypt retained control of the canal, the crisis marked the decline of British and French influence in the region and solidified the United States and Soviet Union as the dominant powers in Middle Eastern affairs.

The Six-Day War of 1967 was a turning point in the Israeli-Arab conflict. Following escalating tensions, Israel launched a preemptive strike against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, resulting in a swift and decisive victory. Israel captured significant territories, including the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, and Golan Heights, further complicating the Palestinian refugee crisis and solidifying Israel's military dominance in the region. The *UN Resolution 242* called for Israel's withdrawal from occupied territories in exchange for peace, but this has yet to fully materialize.

The Yom Kippur War of 1973 saw a coordinated surprise attack on Israel by Egypt and Syria. Although Israel eventually repelled the attack, the war had profound global repercussions, including an Arab oil embargo, which caused a worldwide energy

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crisis. The war's aftermath set the stage for peace talks, culminating in the Camp David Accords of 1978, which resulted in Egypt becoming the first Arab state to officially recognize Israel.

The First Intifada was a significant Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, ignited by a traffic accident in December 1987 in which four Palestinians were killed by an Israeli military vehicle. This incident triggered widespread protests, leading to increased violence throughout the occupied territories. Palestinian civilians organized boycotts, demonstrations, and attacks on Israeli soldiers, while Israel responded with military force and mass arrests.

The uprising brought international attention to the economic hardships faced by Palestinians under occupation and became a symbol of resistance against Israeli control. The sustained unrest and civil disobedience applied pressure on Israel, eventually contributing to the initiation of peace talks, culminating in the Oslo Accords of 1993. Despite the high human and material losses, the First Intifada played a crucial role in advancing the Palestinian cause and moving toward negotiations for peace.

In 1988, during the height of the Intifada, the Palestinian Declaration of Independence was announced, formally presenting Palestine as a nation. This declaration was a milestone in the struggle for Palestinian statehood. However, recognition of

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Palestine as a sovereign state remains limited, with only 145 out of 195 countries officially recognizing it as of today. This declaration solidified the Palestinian national identity and remains a foundational moment in their ongoing quest for international recognition and self-determination.

Current Relevance

In recent years, several key events have shaped the course of the Israel-Palestine conflict, significantly influencing the political, social, and humanitarian situation in the region. These events have influenced the conflict and contributed to its escalation on both sides. The events are the following:

Gaza Flotilla Incident (2010):

In 2010, a major international incident occurred when Israeli commandos intercepted a flotilla organized by the *Free Gaza Movement* and the Turkish Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH). The flotilla aimed to breach the Israeli blockade on Gaza, in place since 2007, and deliver humanitarian aid. The raid resulted in violent clashes between Israeli soldiers and activists on board, leading to significant loss of life. This incident drew widespread international condemnation, with many criticizing Israel's use of force. The U.S. expressed regret

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over the deaths but maintained its support for Israel's right to self-defense, citing the security concerns posed by Hamas' control of Gaza (AJC, n.d.; Britannica, n.d.).

Operation Protective Edge (2014):

The Gaza conflict escalated again in 2014 with "Operation Protective Edge," a military operation initiated by Israel following the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers by Hamas militants. This incident triggered hostilities between Hamas and Israel, with Hamas launching rocket attacks and Israel responding with airstrikes. The conflict caused extensive damage to Gaza's infrastructure, including homes, schools, hospitals, and other civilian facilities. Approximately 2,100 Palestinians, many of them civilians, were killed, while Israel reported the deaths of 67 soldiers and six civilians. The humanitarian situation in Gaza worsened significantly as a result, of widespread international calls for a ceasefire and peace negotiations (Britannica, n.d.).

U.S. Recognition of Jerusalem (2017):

In 2017, the U.S. administration made the controversial decision to formally recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This move sparked widespread protests in Palestine and condemnation from many countries globally. Palestinian leaders, along with many in the Arab world, viewed the decision as a severe blow to peace efforts, as the status of Jerusalem is one of the most sensitive issues in the Israeli-Palestinian

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conflict. Violent clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli security forces followed the U.S. announcement (Purohit, 2023).

Gaza Protests (2018):

The 2018 Gaza protests, initiated by Palestinian civil society groups, aimed to highlight the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their ancestral homes and to protest the blockade on Gaza. Israel responded with tear gas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition to disperse protesters. The clashes resulted in a high number of casualties, with international organizations condemning Israel's response to the largely civilian protest (Britannica, n.d.; Pew Research Center, 2024).

Annexation Plans (2019):

In 2019, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced plans to annex parts of the West Bank, a move that would have significant implications for regional stability. The international community, including the European Union, the United Nations, and several Arab countries, strongly opposed the plan. These annexation plans threatened to undermine any remaining prospects for a two-state solution and escalated tensions further between Israel and Palestine (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.).

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Abraham Accords (2020):

In 2020, Israel signed a historic normalization agreement with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), known as the Abraham Accords. This agreement marked the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Israel and the UAE, with economic, trade, and tourism ties following soon after. The accords were viewed as a significant diplomatic breakthrough in Middle Eastern politics, although Palestinians saw the agreement as a betrayal of their cause (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2023).

Ceasefire and Renewed Violence (2021-2022):

A temporary ceasefire in 2021 alleviated the immediate humanitarian crisis in Gaza by allowing the delivery of essential supplies and reducing civilian casualties. However, the underlying political disputes remained unresolved, leading to renewed violence and unrest in 2022. Tensions rose due to military operations and exchanges of rocket fire between Hamas and Israeli forces. The United Nations and various countries urged both sides to engage in dialogue, though peace prospects remained distant (European Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.).

Escalation in October 2023:

In October 2023, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict witnessed one of its most

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violent escalations in recent history. Hamas launched a coordinated air and sea assault on Israel, resulting in over 1,200 deaths, most of them civilians. This marked the deadliest assault on Israel since its founding in 1948. In response, Israel launched a large-scale military retaliation, primarily targeting Gaza. The civilian toll, particularly in Gaza, has been devastating, with thousands of casualties and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure (BBC, 2023; WHO, 2024).

Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza (2023-2024):

The conflict has exacerbated Gaza's humanitarian crisis. The region, already suffering from the long-standing Israeli blockade, faced further infrastructure damage, severe shortages of medical supplies, power outages, and lack of access to clean water and food. Hospitals in Gaza, overwhelmed with casualties, struggled to provide adequate care. International aid organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), called for the establishment of humanitarian corridors to deliver critical aid to Gaza. However, the ongoing military conflict made such efforts difficult to implement, leaving the population in dire conditions (WHO, 2024; ReliefWeb, 2024).

Economic and Security Impact (2023-Present):

Economically, the conflict has devastated Gaza, with key industries, including agriculture and commerce, disrupted by the ongoing violence and blockade.

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Unemployment and poverty levels in Gaza have soared, with food insecurity becoming widespread. In contrast, while Israel has a more robust economy, the costs of military operations and security measures have strained resources. Politically, the conflict has influenced domestic and international relations, affecting peace negotiations and the diplomatic ties of both Israel and Palestine. Efforts to resolve the conflict remain fraught with challenges, as short-term ceasefires provide only temporary relief from violence, and long-term solutions remain elusive (Al Jazeera, 2024).

Countries and Organizations Involved

Several international organizations and countries are engaged in the ongoing Israel-Gaza conflict, each playing crucial roles in diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and military support.

The **United Nations (UN)** plays a central role, with various bodies such as the *Security Council*, *United Nations Human Rights Council*, and *United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees*; who actively have been involved in addressing the humanitarian needs of Palestinians. The United Nations also facilitates peace talks, mediates ceasefires, and ensures humanitarian aid reaches affected populations.

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The **European Union** similarly works in close coordination with the UN, advocating for a two-state solution while funding initiatives through agencies like UNRWA and OCHA to deliver humanitarian assistance.

The **United States** maintains a strategic alliance with Israel, providing it with military, economic, and political support. At the same time, the United States supports humanitarian relief in Gaza and engages diplomatically with Palestinian authorities.

Regional organizations such as the **Arab League** and the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** are also heavily involved. The Arab League frequently pushes for ceasefire agreements and promotes diplomatic solutions to uphold Palestinian rights, while the OIC mobilizes international support and resources for Palestinians, providing humanitarian aid in cooperation with the UN.

Neighboring countries such as **Egypt** and **Jordan** have been crucial in facilitating ceasefire agreements and playing host to Palestinian refugees, while countries like **Turkey** and **Qatar** offer diplomatic and financial support to Palestinian factions, including Hamas.

Solutions and Ongoing Efforts

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International organizations and countries have been actively working toward possible solutions to the conflict. One of the most widely supported solutions is the two-state solution, championed by the United Nations, the European Union, and several other international bodies. This solution envisions the establishment of independent Israeli and Palestinian states, coexist peacefully. However, the political complexity and lack of mutual trust between both sides have prevented meaningful progress. In addition to political solutions, humanitarian aid remains a critical aspect of ongoing efforts to alleviate the suffering of civilians in Gaza. Organizations such as the Red Cross, Oxfam, and the United Nations are heavily involved in providing food, medical supplies, and shelter to the affected populations.

Diplomatic efforts by countries such as Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey continue to play an important role in brokering ceasefires and facilitating dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian leaders. These efforts have, at times, led to temporary ceasefires, though long-term peace remains elusive. However, international sanctions have been employed as a tool to curb the activities of militant groups like Hamas, with the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigating potential war crimes committed by both sides in the conflict.

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The Israel-Gaza conflict remains one of the most complex and deeply rooted geopolitical issues in modern history. Despite numerous international efforts aimed at resolving the conflict, the political, social, and humanitarian challenges continue to hinder the path toward lasting peace.

Points to Discuss

1. Context

- a. What were the key events leading to the establishment of the State of Israel and the displacement of Palestinian Arabs?
- b. How did the Arab-Israeli military conflicts, such as the 1948 Arab-Israeli military conflict and the 1967 Six-Day military conflict, shape territorial disputes and tensions in the region?
- c. What is the significance of Israeli settlements in occupied territories, and how do they impact land disputes and Palestinian grievances?
- d. What led to the imposition of a blockade on the Gaza Strip by Israel and Egypt, and what are its humanitarian consequences?
- e. How do restrictions on the movement of people and goods affect the daily lives of Palestinians in Gaza?

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- f. How does the lack of Palestinian unity affect governance, negotiation strategies, and resistance against Israeli policies?
- g. What are the implications of geopolitical interests, alliances, and rivalries for regional security dynamics and peace initiatives?

2. Development

- a. What are the main triggers for periodic outbreaks of hostilities between Israel and Gaza, including rocket attacks and airstrikes?
 - i. How do these escalations of violence impact civilian populations and infrastructure in the region?
- b. What have been the major attempts at peace negotiations?
 - i. Why have they had limited success in achieving a comprehensive agreement?
- c. What are the unresolved core issues, such as borders, refugees, Jerusalem, and security arrangements, hindering progress in peace talks?
- d. How has the humanitarian situation in Gaza deteriorated over time, and what are the main challenges facing the population?

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- e. What international efforts are being made to address humanitarian needs and provide essential services to Gaza's population?
- f. What are the consequences of the continued expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank for Palestinian communities and the prospects for a two-state solution?
- g. How have shifts in regional alliances and normalization agreements between Israel and some Arab states reshaped the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East?

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