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The situation of human rights in the operation of human rights in



MODEL UNITED NATIONS THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE HAGUE

Alexandre Boudier

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Student Officer:	Alexandre Boudier
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Introduction

On the 29th of November 1947, shortly after the end of World War II, the United Nations voted in favor of resolution 181. This resolution, also known as the Partition Plan, planned to separate the British protectorate of Palestine into majoritarian Arab and majority Jewish areas, leaving Jerusalem as a separate location for both sides, being a holy city for both Muslims and Jews. This was one of the many efforts the international community took to aid the Jewish community after the devastating impacts of the Holocaust during WWII, which saw the reduction of the worldwide Jewish community by 40% in just a few years. This plan was seen as an effective solution to ensure their safety by giving them the possibility of creating their own Jewish nation in their country of origin, while still letting the local Muslim Palestinians, who settled in Palestine for centuries to also have the possibility to stay in their homeland.

However, the Partition Plan was not widely popular among Palestinians. The Jewish community, particularly adherents to Zionism, argued that it was their right to return to Israel (the name given to the area in Hebrew) and be able to create their own state which the partition plan gave them, as they had just suffered one of the most horrific genocides in history. The Jewish Community also argued that they had no place of refuge, unlike adherents to Islam which was the primary religion of all the neighboring states of the Middle East and North Africa. On the other hand, Palestinians thought their land was being taken from them unrightfully, and the international community had no right to give it away for the creation of this new Jewish state. This initial disagreement and their inability to discuss a peaceful consensus agreed to by all parties led to one of the most controversial conflicts of the 20th and 21st centuries. This has caused severe violations of human rights for Palestinian citizens, who are often mistreated and treated differently than the rest by the greater Jewish authorities. However, it is undeniable that all



citizens in the region are impacted by the conflict, and that civilians on both sides are suffering from these tensions.

Definition of Key Terms

Apartheid

A system of discrimination in which a group of people is kept apart and treated differently, especially when this results in the disadvantage of said group.

Human Rights

A set of basic rights that all people should have. These rights generally refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Permanent Observer (United Nations)

Members of organizations or not internationally recognized countries who are given the right to permanently observe the debate in the General Assembly of the United Nations but are not allowed to vote (e.g., Vatican, Palestine...).

Armistice

A formal agreement between two countries or groups that are at war to stop fighting and discuss peace.

Forced Displacement

The situation in which people are forced to leave and move to a different area or location.



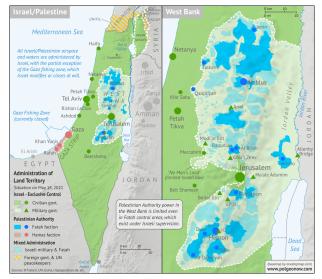
General Overview

Situated at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, Israel is a country located in the Middle East. It has a population of around 9,153,000 as of 2023 and is one of the most economically developed countries in the region. The location of the Israeli capital is a controversial subject, as Israel claims Jerusalem as its capital, but due to the Partition Plan and the split of the city between Israel and Palestine, it is widely unrecognized by the international community. Palestine also claims Jerusalem as its capital, but Ramallah is where the government bodies are located. It borders the neighboring countries of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, all majoritarian Muslim nations.

Conflict

Following the end of the First World War, the territory that is now Israel and Palestine was given to the British Empire as a mandate as a payment from the Ottomans for the losses they caused. At the time, most Palestinians were Muslims, but a small group of Jewish communities were implemented. Tensions rose between the two sides and in the end, the British decided to ease the situation. After the Second World War, resolution 181 was passed by the United Nations General Assembly (see introduction for more information). The

British authorities favored the project and helped the Jewish community settle in their new land given by the



Map of the Israeli-Palestine border division, with a close up on the West Bank, 2021 (Political geography Now)

Partition Plan. However, the Muslim Palestinian communities were unhappy with the terms and took it as a suppression from the British of their right to this land which they had been settled on for centuries.

So, when the Jewish community declared the independence of the State of Israel, it sparked the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948, where Israel faced five neighboring countries belonging to the Arab League and Palestinian armed forces. The conflict ended soon after with the victory of Israel and the displacement of Palestinian rebel groups to nearby Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. The armistice also settled the 'Green Line', a line of separation still formally used today between Israel



and Palestinian controlled areas. Relative peace would last until 1956 when Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal and prohibited Israeli ships from crossing it, causing the Israeli invasion of a small portion of the Sinai Peninsula. This would help later spark the Six-Day War conflict, which opposed Israel to a coalition formed by Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, and led by Egypt, which resulted in the victory of Israeli forces against 3 armies, and the full capture of the Sinai Peninsula, West Bank, Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the Eastern part of Jerusalem. As a result, thousands of Palestinians had to flee. Other attempts by the Arab coalitions notably in 1973 (Kippur War) were put off by Israel which received great military aid from Western nations, particularly the USA. Tensions would go on until the 1993 peace deal between the state of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

However, the conflict would rise again when a 2006 election in Gaza led the Palestinian nationalist group Hamas to take control over the Strip. This would ensure a blockade of goods from Israel, effectively cutting off Palestinian citizens from essential resources. Tensions would rise again in 2014 when three Israeli citizens were killed by Hamas in the West Bank. This would start yet another conflict that would last a few weeks, in which 2,000 Palestinians lost their lives during regular attacks on the Gaza Strip. On the Israeli side, 67 soldiers and 6 civilians lost their lives. In summary, the continuous conflict between Israel and Palestine has deeply affected the situation of many civilians, who are often stripped of their most basic human rights during these war times, especially on the Palestinian side.

Division

The situation of Israel in the Middle East makes it one of the most unique states in the world. With the Partition Plan and the Palestinian Declaration of Independence in 1948, the state of Palestine has been divided into two areas within the old British protectorate of Palestine: one in the east called the West Bank which comprises the Dead Sea and the eastern part of Jerusalem. The other is the Gaza Strip, a small strip of land in the southwest corner of the Israeli-Palestine coastline that used to be controlled by Egypt until taken during the Six-Day War. It is home to the



Image depicting the Gaza-Israel border wall, 2021 (Middle East Monitor)



largest Palestinian city: Gaza. This division between Palestine and Israel is widely contested on both sides, each one claiming bits of territory from the other. From the end of the 1960s to the middle of the 1970s, Israel started building "settlements" in the West Bank, claiming them to be safe and protected areas for Jews wanting to live in the historic provinces of Judea and Samaria, all within the West Bank. However, these new constructions also have the political objective of increasing the Israeli population in the Palestinian-occupied territories, in order to secure sensitive areas that Israel claimed to be theirs, such as areas surrounding Jerusalem. However, this also created inequality between Jewish settlers who had access to more modern, developed infrastructure and local Palestinians who did not benefit from the economic aid of the much more developed Israel.

In the past few years, Israel has passed increasingly restrictive policies toward Palestinians. One of the culminating events of this separation was the construction of the West Bank barrier. Initially intended to be built on the northern part of the Israeli border with the West Bank in 2002, it was extended to cover the entirety of the border in 2003. The barrier not only furthered the divide between Israelis and Palestinians but also did not respect the 'Green Line' separation that was agreed upon after the Armistice of 1949. This left many Palestinians isolated from the rest of the West Bank because of the wall, and others being 'stuck' between their place of work and family home, which were unable to connect due to the wall. The wall also supported the development of Israeli settlements on Palestinian territory especially in East Jerusalem which was considered the spiritual and political capital for Palestinians and Muslims. More recently, in 2021, Israeli authorities have just finished a million-dollar project to renovate their initial wall created in 1996 near the Gaza Strip, reinforcing security with drone surveillance and creating a 65 km long 'iron wall'. The new wall almost completely forbids all land exit of Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip to Israel. This restriction of movement was one of the most devastating impacts of the division that Israel has deeply supported by their actions throughout the course of their cohabitation with Palestine, going against Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, guaranteeing the right to movement.

Notable Human Rights Violations

The situation of division and conflict in the Israel-Palestine area has also had serious impacts on the human rights situation for local Palestinians, trapped in a conflict that sees no sign of resolution soon. Firstly, the state of isolation of the Palestinian territories from the rest of the world was caused by the settlements, walls, and blockades of trade as a response to the



ongoing tensions that has left the civilian population unable to obtain their most basic rights. Not only does it restrict free movement, but many essential resources such as medical care, quality food, and accessible water have also become scarce. It also left local Palestinians with little humanitarian help, as the help given by NGOs was not given free passage into the most affected lands. During major standoffs, such as the 2014 confrontation, passage permits given by Israel to local Palestinians who work on the other side of the wall were revoked, also unlawfully forbidding access to some of the most basic human rights.

Some military actions led by Israel have also led to unlawful killings and apparent war crimes. According to Amnesty International, on August 5, 2022, Israel attacked the Gaza Strip targeting the Palestinian Islamic Jihad which resulted in the bombing and the damaging of some 1,700 homes, affecting civilians and children. Both parties allegedly committed several war crimes, but none led to serious actions taken by the international community. Finally, another severe infringement on human rights is the massive eviction of local Palestinians in Israeli-controlled areas of Palestine. Amnesty International found out that Israel had demolished 952 Palestinian structures across the West Bank in 2022, displacing 1,031 civilians, and affecting the lives of many others. As of today, the NGO reports that still, around 5,000 Palestinians could still be at risk of eviction in the West Bank. These severe violations of human rights have largely failed to be addressed partially since Palestinian voices have had little impact on the international community, tarnished by actions of extremist Islamic groups like Hamas and their status as an observer state in the United Nations. Meanwhile, Israel has received little to no serious warning on their actions, partly due to the extensive support of the United States and their allies.

To conclude, the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories has become increasingly alarming, and it is time for the United Nations to take serious action to ensure the safety and security of those living there.

Major Parties Involved

Israel

Being one of the central players in this issue, it will come as no surprise that Israel is closely involved in the current humanitarian issues Palestinians face. In more recent years, the



Israeli government has turned away from the compromise approach that was interpreted by some notably with the 1993 Oslo Accords and the gradual easing of tensions at the beginning of the 21st century. However, the new far-right government, led by Benyamin Netanyahu, does not want to follow the same path. The new government elected in 2022 planned to increase the number of Jewish settlements in the West Bank as well as increase border control and religious restrictive laws for Palestinians living in Israel. All these actions have been seen as a violation of human rights by the United Nations which is concerned that the recent measures taken by Israel could mean an increase in violence in the occupied territory. In January 2023, the new far-right minister of national security Ben Gvir, was found touring the Al Aqsa Mosque site, one of the 3 holy sites in Islam. This was seen as a provocation and insult to many Islamic nations as well as Palestine, reminding the international community that there is still a long way before peace can be achieved. As conflict rises again, especially in the Gaza Strip, Israel is receiving mixed reactions from the international community, with Western Nations divided between supporting a longtime ally and condemning the human rights violations Palestinian civilians are now facing.

Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)

The Palestinian Liberation Organization, known as PLO, was initially widely recognized to be the main governing body of the West Bank, providing a voice for Palestinians on an international scale. Initially a terrorist organization with an aim to liberate Palestine, the PLO was given more authority after the Oslo Accords, in which Israel recognized them as a legitimate entity. Since then, the PLO has been involved in the politics of Palestine, notably representing Palestinians in prominent international organizations like the United Nations. Today, it forms the main opposition to Hamas in the Palestinian Legislative Assembly and takes more the shape of a political party even though acts of violence throughout the West Bank are still claimed by PLO members. It has also opted for a more peaceful solution to the conflict with Israel, separating them from Hamas which wishes to take control of the territory by force. The group is also named 'Fatah'

Hamas

Born from the Intifada uprisings in 1987, Hamas quickly rose to power as the most prominent



political organization leading Palestine. Initially controlling the Gaza Strip after elections were held in 2006, this Sunni-affiliated organism is largely considered by many states to be a terrorist organization. This includes nations such as the USA and EU member nations. In the view of Hamas, Israel is overstepping their land, and they must fight at all costs to regain control of Palestine and their rights as Muslim citizens. This has led to severe clashes between the Israeli army and Hamas soldiers, funded notably by Sunni neighboring countries. Today, they are the majority party in the Palestinian Parliament and currently hold the most prominent political positions in the self appointed government of Palestine. They are also the main target of Israeli forces during attacks in Palestine, which has led to regular conflicts near their political epicenter: Gaza.

United States of America (USA)

Having close relations with Islamic nations of the Middle East like Jordan and Saudi Arabia while still being one of the first nations to fully support the Israeli cause, the USA has cemented an image of a mediator between Palestine and Israel over the years. This image was consolidated by the Oslo Accords signed at the White House in 1993, which showed the USA as a bringer of peace and resolution to the conflict. Nevertheless, this reputation as a mediator has been diminished in the past few years, taking a much stronger stance on the situation. Former President Donald Trump had increased pro-Israeli relations, by moving the American embassy to Jerusalem, the contested capital of Israel. This went against the basic treaty rules of the Partition Act and was seen as a sign that they now finally recognized Israel to have full authority over the territory, putting aside the humanitarian concerns raised by other members of the international community. Today, President Biden has a more neutral position, condemning certain violations of human rights that Israel has conducted while still retaining its predecessor's position that Jerusalem is the nation's capital.

Lebanon

Historically a pacifist neighboring country, Lebanon became a center for Palestinian resistance due to its closeness to Israel. Lebanon was also the country of the foundation of Hezbollah, the Shia Muslim terrorist organization that also wishes to restore Palestine as a Muslimonly state, with Shia Islam as its religion. Partly funded by Iran, the Lebanese government also used to support Hezbollah to take down the Israeli government. In 1978, the growing pressure on Hezbollah caused the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon, after the death of 30 Israelis in an attack. The invaded territory was given back to Lebanon in the early 2000s. Successive



Lebanese governments have since then continued to retain hostile relations with Israel although no conflict has risen since then (partly due to the implementation of the UN Peacekeeping missions in the border region). Today, relations between Israel and Lebanon are tense, with Israel reluctantly giving humanitarian aid as a sign of support after the explosion of the Beirut harbor in 2020.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

This UN-affiliated agency works towards helping and assisting Palestinian refugees who wish to leave their country of origin for a safer place. The UNRWA also provides humanitarian aid via neighboring countries to help communities most affected by relocation and Israeli occupation. As a UN agency, it also publishes reports on the number of refugees as well as monitoring the humanitarian situation in occupied Palestine. Their agency is based along with other UN organizations in Beirut, Lebanon.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of event
November 29 th 1947	Resolution 181 is passed, Partition Plan is put into operation
May 14 th 1948	Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel
July 20th 1949	End of the first Arab-Israeli war
October 29 th 1956	Start of the Suez Crisis
June 5 [®] 1967	Start of the Six-Day War
October 6 th 1973	Start of the Kippur War
December 8th 1987	Start of the Intifada uprising/ Creation of Hamas
September 13 th 1993 Oslo Accords signed/ End of Intifada uprising	
June 28 th 2006	Start of the 2006 Israel-Gaza conflict (Operation Summer Rains)
July 8th 2014	Start of the 2014 Gaza War (Operation Protective Edge)



UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Over the years the United Nations has been deeply involved on all levels in both the humanitarian situation of Palestinians and the ongoing conflict in the region. These resolutions were some of the most important ones however it is important to acknowledge that there are many more. For more information, consult the resolution finder on the UN digital library website:

- The question of the future government of Palestine, 29 November 1947 (A/RES/181(II))
- Cease-Fire in the Middle East, 22 October 1973 (S/RES/338)
- The question of Palestinian Insurgency in South Lebanon, 19 March 1978 (S/RES/426)
- The Status of Jerusalem, 10 December 2017 (A/RES/ES 10-19)
- Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, 27 March 2018 (A/RES/37)

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

One of the first attempts at solving this complicated issue was the Partition Plan, which, putting aside all the other factors discussed previously, also aimed at preventing discrimination of one group from another. It also wanted to protect the human rights of civilians by preventing conflict and ensuring their right to freedom of belief and religion. This resolution was quite unsuccessful, as it not only encouraged the separation of the population but also sparked division and conflict for years to come. This was mostly due to poor consideration of the land, as there was no regional divide between Muslims and Jews at the time, many of whom were displaced or refused to accept the divide. The Palestinian community was also angry at the way the land was split, giving almost one third of the land to "newcomers" and taking away some of their most fertile lands.



Another solution that was found to resolve the humanitarian situation was the implementation of UN bodies and agencies, notably the UNRWA and others, to ensure the humanitarian security of Palestinians trying to flee to obtain basic needs. Other UN agencies acting internationally such as UNICEF have also provided support and aid to Palestinian civilians in need. This has been one of the most effective solutions implemented yet, as it has been able to provide direct support and relief to those impacted by the conflict and occupation between Palestine and Israel. It also helped establish reports and factual documents that were used to shed light on some of the mistreatments Palestinians were subjected to. However, the necessary aid was not always delivered, due to very restrictive borders (especially in the Gaza Strip) making it sometimes impossible for aid to arrive at its destination.

These are just some of the solutions that were aimed at resolving the humanitarian crisis in Palestine over the years. Many more attempts have been tested, notably to resolve the conflict with UN peacekeeping missions, but none have significantly impacted the outcome of the issue.

Possible Solutions

As discussed previously, there have been many attempts to resolve this issue however here are some examples of solutions to the issue that consider recent events and developments in the region.

A first solution that could help resolve the issue of division between Israelis and Palestinians would be to break down the barriers between Israelis and Palestinians. This could be done by reopening checkpoints at the border of Palestinian territories guaranteeing the right to movement. This is especially needed in the Gaza Strip, where few jobs are available and the need to find food and access employment elsewhere is greatly needed. This could also be applied to the West Bank, where many civilians must cross the Israeli wall border to work, needing a permit pass to continue. However, Israeli authorities have the right to revoke these passes, and ensuring full freedom of movement for Palestinian civilians across the border would provide their families with proper access to food and basic resources and guarantee one of their human rights, the freedom of movement. Finally, the Gaza fishing zone, controlled by Israel, could be given back to the citizens of Gaza, as fishing is one of the most important economic sectors that are still active within the Strip.



Another solution to this issue would be the implementation of peace talks between Hamas (the body leading the Palestinian government) and Israel's government specifically about the human rights of Palestinians. This could be achieved by organizing a summit involving neighboring nations and important parties involved to opt for a more peaceful agreement and diplomatic solution. Also, this may seem unrealistic, but it is always a solution that must be attempted and, with the supervision of the UN, could be solely focused on the rights of Palestinian civilians and on their wellbeing instead of fully resolving the conflict at hand. Let us not forget that one of the most beneficial decisions made by these governing bodies was to sign the Oslo Accords, ensuring a small period of stability in this controversial conflict.

A third solution to this issue could be the development of economic activity and humanitarian support for Palestinians living in occupied territories. This could come through the help of UN bodies and partner organizations such as the OCHA, World Bank, UNICEF, and IMF. By helping the Palestinian communities develop economic activity within their territories, the international community could improve the lives of thousands who are now unemployed and without a job. This could give them access to more resources and some of their basic rights, in a place where employment is for now almost nonexistent due to permanent seclusion from Israel and a blockade of trade on all sides of their land. This is particularly the case in the Gaza Strip, which has seen poverty rates raise up to 53% as of 2023 (ReliefWeb), with an estimated one-third of the population living in extreme poverty.

Finally, a more extreme and controversial solution would pursue actions to condemn the State of Israel for violation of human rights and the Geneva Convention on the practices of war internationally, for their role in failing to provide Palestinian civilians their most basic rights and targeting civilian infrastructure during conflicts, especially in the Gaza Strip, committing a war crime. However, it is also important to note that Hamas has also violated the Geneva Convention and that the condemnation could also be extended for the disregard of their actions when considering Palestinian Civilians that could be present during the counter-offensive attacks.



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Appendix or Appendices

For more information on the topic, please consult the useful hyperlinks in the bibliography that give more detail and insight into the events of the issue.

