

# Advisory Panel on the Question of the Israel Palestine Conflict

The Question of the Israel Palestine Conflict



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| <b>Forum:</b>           | Advisory Panel on the Question of the Israel Palestine Conflict |
| <b>Issue:</b>           | The Question of the Israel Palestine Conflict                   |
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| <b>Position:</b>        | President - Deputy President                                    |

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## Introduction

Whenever a territorial dispute has been lasting for several decades and is yet to be resolved, it seems to become increasingly harder to satisfy the needs and alleged rights of two or more parties involved in such an issue. This same issue becomes even more complex whenever one party claims to be religiously motivated and when another completely refutes the idea of “designated land” and claims it to be its own.

Such a territorial dispute has for many years been going on between the Palestinians and the Israeli government. Palestinians claim their occupied territory to be of their own, after the former Palestine country, part of the British Mandate, was replaced by the Israel state after World War II. Because of strong anti-Semitic beliefs during World War II, the desire for a Jewish state becomes ever greater, especially after the Zionist movement gained more recognition during the war.

The problem with this is that since the Israel state came into effect, the Israeli government refuses to give up the land that was designated to its government in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel of 1948 endorsed by the United Nations. That same land however, was, as previously mentioned, once part of a greater Palestinian nation and so it is a conflict that revolves around whether or not Palestinians should be granted the inalienable right to retrieve the land it once had, or whether or not the UN designation of the land to Israel is still legitimate and should not be discarded.

Although the politics of this conflict is certainly of great importance, the fact that the situation has escalated to a point where more and more Israeli's and Palestinians are being displaced and are fleeing from their homes and regions where there is what seems to be continuous battle, the conflict between Israel and Palestine takes up a much more humanitarian role. Whenever this happens, it becomes evident that a solution to this issue has to be found that will prevent both parties from facing continuous battle and will satisfy their needs and wants. However, as previously mentioned, this greatly adds to the





complexity of finding a solution to the already complex issue. And so, will there ever be a sustainable and satisfactory solution for both parties?

Such a solution is extremely hard to find, but in order to finally resolve the issue of the Israel Palestine conflict, it becomes evident that some sacrifices on both sides need to be made in order to create peace amongst these two parties.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Territorial dispute

A territorial dispute is prevalent whenever one party claims sovereignty over a part of land, a territorial claim, but is refuted by another party who claims it to be (partly) of his own or simply refuses to acknowledge the claim. Often a territorial claim resulting into a territorial dispute is caused by several factors that influence a party's decision in claiming the specific territory, including economic factors (the wealth of a specific territory), cultural factors or historical factors. In the case of the Israel Palestine conflict these factors play an essential role in why both parties are motivated into dispute.

### The British Mandate for Palestine

In 1923, the League of Nations ratified the Mandate for Palestine and Transjordan Memorandum that would create two separate British protectorates against the declining Ottoman Empire: Transjordan and Palestine. The latter had the objective of creating a national home for Jews to practice their religion and live freely under the customs of Jewish tradition. Britain maintained control over the mandate for 28 years, until the creation of the Israel state that resulted out of the UN Partition Plan.

### Zionism & Zionist movement

The Zionist movement arose in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as a political movement with the



Figure 1 Two maps displaying Palestine under the British Mandate and after the partition of the UN

*Jewish-majority areas under the Mandate of Palestine, and the UN Partition Plan. Digital image. Lost Islamic History. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Aug. 2015. <<http://lostislamichistory.com/the-nakba-the-palestinian-catastrophe-of-1948/>>.*

objective of promoting Jewish nationalism. When in World War II anti-Semitic ideas became of considerable magnitude, Zionism emerged as the movement strongly opposing any form of Jewish discrimination. After the end of WWII, many still living Jews were displaced or homeless and sought refuge in a safe environment. The Zionist movement believed that this environment could be found in The British Mandate of Palestine, due to its sacred and holy land. Therefore more and more Jews demanded to create a homeland that could sustain the amount of displaced Jews, thus being to first ones to call for the creation of the Israel nation. In 1948, the United Nations officially recognized the nation of Israel after having been under the pressure of many displaced Jews by establishing the United Nations Partition Plan, after having abolished the British Mandate.

### **Gaza Strip & West Bank**

Both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank nowadays fall under the territorial claim of Palestine. After the UN Partition Plan, the Palestinian territory greatly diminished in size and is nowadays reduced back to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The problem with these two regions is the fact that they are located several hundred miles apart, making it a difficult task for the Palestinian authorities to maintain sovereignty over the regions. It is evident that the sovereignty of both regions currently lies under great threat, making the Palestinian territory more and more vulnerable to militant behavior from both Israeli forces, and its own forces.

### **Oslo Accords & Oslo peace process**

In 1993, the Oslo Accords were established between the government of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) out of UN Security Council resolution 242 that was unanimously adopted in 1967, in striving for a Israeli-Palestinian peace process; otherwise known as the Oslo peace process. The peace process aimed to achieve the following:

- Palestinian “interim” governance; implying to create an authority that would rule over the Palestinian territory until a permanent government would be settled to rule over Palestinian soil
- Partial withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip in order to make way for Palestinian elections
- The ultimate creation of a Israel Palestine peace treaty

The accords were a turning point in the dispute between Israel and Palestine by creating the Palestinian National Authority, who would be granted the right to govern over the regions of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Before the accords, no governmental organization was

formally allowed to govern both regions and thus these regions were often claimed by smaller military organizations. It should be noted that the Oslo Accords did not have the intention of creating a Palestinian state, but rather wished for an authority to maintain the stability of these regions, before ultimately resulting in civil unrest.

## General Overview

### Palestinian dichotomy

In recent years, the Israel Palestine conflict has generated many ranging opinions, not only amongst outside nations, but certainly under the Palestinian citizens as well. This has led to a conflict between two major Palestinian factions: Fatah and Hamas.

Fatah originally was the dominant faction within the PLO that has played a key part in sustaining military Palestinian forces. What should be noted is the fact that Fatah is a Jewish faction; Hamas is not. When Fatah lost the 2006 parliamentary election of the Palestinian national unity government (created by the PNA) to Islamic faction Hamas, the two got into a conflict that ultimately resulted into the downfall of the Palestinian national unity government in 2007. Nowadays, the two parties are in a constant competition for more power and recognition.

Hamas is currently most dominant, by maintaining strict control over the Gaza Strip in the form of military efforts that according to them will contribute to the ultimate solution of the Israel Palestine conflict. This dichotomy however has greatly impacted and disrupted the stability of the Palestinian authorities. For these authorities, it is become ever more harder to maintain control over the regions they have occupied, making the Palestinian territory even more vulnerable to outside forces from Israel.

### Current key problems in the resolving of the Israel Palestine conflict

Even though great international effort has been put into resolving the issue of the Israel Palestine conflict, both parties still debate upon three main problems that are attached to resolving the issue and creating a long-term peace agreement between the two.

#### *Border security and recognition*

Since the territory of Palestine was determined as being the Gaza Strip and West Bank regions, problems with its border security have increased and maintained.



It is mainly parties from Israel that refuse to recognize the borders of Palestine and are threatening the security of these borders by trying to annex Palestinian territory. On the one hand, Israel claims to do the Palestinian territory good by annexing the territory, but on the other hand Palestinians demand the right to be an autonomous region that should not be under any influence of Israeli authorities.

### *The question of Jerusalem*

After Israel occupied Jerusalem in 1967 and annexed the territory as its capital, Palestinian forces have been trying to retrieve the city ever since. While some countries still regard Jerusalem as the *corpus separatum* that the UN established in its Partition Plan of 1948, it nowadays is predominantly under the control of Israel. The PLO has already made proposals to the Israeli government in granting Palestine sovereignty over East Jerusalem, but Israel has been refusing to grant sovereignty and wishes to still maintain power over parts of East Jerusalem. But since Palestinian authorities have been displaying a desperate need of obtaining a part of Jerusalem as to protect Palestinian citizens, Jerusalem today is a big factor influencing the peace process of Israel and Palestine. The division of Jerusalem causes for great debate between the two parties and a delay in the proposed peace agreement.

### *The restriction of Palestinian freedom of movement*

The restriction of movement the Israeli government has placed upon Palestinians has been greatly denounced by Palestinian authorities. In 1991 the Israeli government implemented a measure that would require all Palestinian travelers to be in the possession of a personal exit permit whenever Palestinians would travel outside of the occupied territory. Even after the Oslo Accords were agreed upon, the Israeli government has still continued to make use of this permit and therefore makes it extremely difficult for Palestinian citizens to exit the occupied territory and travel beyond it. Even though Israel claims to have reduced the amount of checkpoints around the occupied territories, the dispute between Palestine and Israel within this issue still continues and puts great restraints on Palestinian authorities, resulting into anger directed towards Israel on their side.

## **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

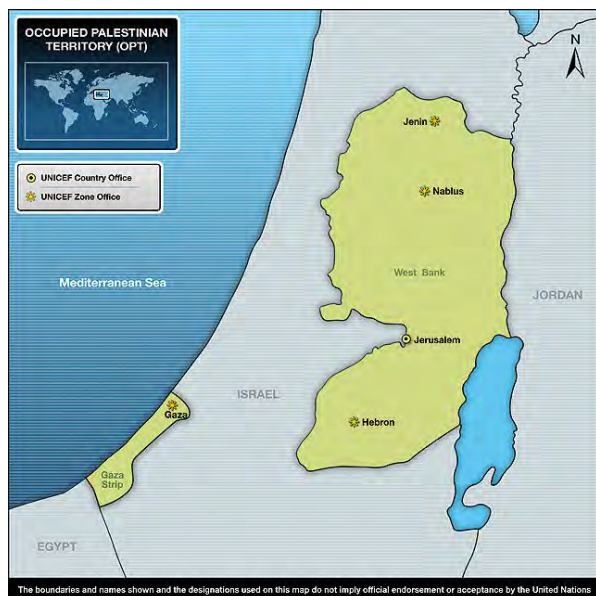
### **Israel**



Israel is determined in believing the territory that was designated to them in 1948 to be its own and therefore refuses to recognize any territorial claim that has been laid upon several regions by the Palestinians. They also greatly take into consideration the religious aspect of the Israeli territory as being sacred and holy, and should certainly be considered one of the main reasons for why the Israeli government continues to hold on its territory instead of giving it up. Israel ultimately wishes to retrieve the territory claimed upon by Palestine, but since Israeli forces have been militantly infiltrating Palestinian borders, the international community has been supporting Israel's idea of a one-state solution less and less. Whether or not Israel has a right to exert military power on Palestine is still debated, but note also the fact that Palestinian forces exert power on Israel as well. The fact that the UN had officially endorsed the Partition Plan in 1948 technically designates Israel to Israel, but since the State of Palestine has been granted to right of a UN non-member observer entity, there is no clear sense of what belongs to whom and makes it hard for entities such as the UN to judge the situation.

### Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

The Palestine Liberation Organization was founded in 1963 with the purpose of liberating Palestinian authorities from Israeli armed forces. It is the governing body of the State of Palestine. It consists of several factions, like the ones previously mentioned, that promote Palestinian nationalism amongst Palestinian citizens. By many nations, including Israel, the authority is regarded as the main representative of the Palestinian citizens and has been granted the right of non-member observer state within the UN. Before 1991, the organization was consider to be a terrorist organization by the US for having allegedly been corrupt and having made use of violent force upon Israel. Even though the issue of corruption within the PLO is still questioned, the organization strives for a democratic Palestinian nation that will not make use of any military forces in the protection of its territory.



**Figure 2** Map displaying the current territory occupied by Palestinian authorities

*Occupied Palestinian Territory. Digital image. UNICEF. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Aug. 2015. <[http://www.unicef.org/har2010/images/HAR10\\_Map\\_oPt.jpg](http://www.unicef.org/har2010/images/HAR10_Map_oPt.jpg)>.*

The organization makes use of a Ten Point Program, in which several goals of the organization are listed, such as: "The Palestine Liberation Organization will employ all means, and first and foremost armed struggle, to liberate Palestinian territory and to establish the independent combatant national authority for the people over every part of Palestinian territory that is liberated. This will require further changes being effected in the balance of power in favor of our people and their struggle." Even though it is evident that the PLO is prepared to make use of armed forces in gaining autonomy over the Palestinian region, it is determined to live peacefully once autonomy is gained.

What should however be considered when regarding the PLO and the State of Palestine, is its recognition within the international political community. Whilst the State of Palestine is largely recognized amongst Asian, African and South-American nations, it is not recognized by a considerable amount of European nations, the United States of America, Canada and several other nations. Although the majority of these nations do recognize the PLO as the official representative of Palestinian citizens, they do not recognize the State of Palestine in itself, and therefore refuse to support the creation of a Palestinian state. Ultimately, this results into a form of political polarization, in which the majority of the nations do support the State of Palestine, but are silenced by the few other, but powerful, nations that oppose the State of Palestine and side with the Israeli government and its beliefs on the matter.



*Figure 3 Map of the world displaying the nations, highlighted in green, supporting the State of Palestine, and the nations highlighted in grey, condemning the State of Palestine and largely supporting Israel*

*Countries That Have Recognized the State of Palestine. Digital image. Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 19 Aug. 2015. <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_recognition\\_of\\_the\\_State\\_of\\_Palestine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_recognition_of_the_State_of_Palestine)>.*

## Timeline of Events

| Date                          | Description of event  |
|-------------------------------|---|
| May 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2015   | World Bank finds that Palestinian economy is set to collapse due to the 2014 war with Israel and its dysfunctional government |
| May 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2015    | Relations between Palestine and Israel weaken as Israel requires a \$430 million debt for electricity use                     |
| April 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2015 | Israel transfers nearly \$470 million in tax revenues back to Palestine that were   |



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| April 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2015                   | withheld in a response to Palestine's appeal to join the International Criminal Court   |
| January 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2015                | Palestine joins the International Criminal Court in an effort to draw more attention to the war crimes committed by Israel  |
| January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2015                 | US President Obama confirms that the US opposes the Palestinian attempt to join the International Criminal Court  |
| December 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2014               | Palestinian Authority requests admission into the International Criminal Court, sparking retaliation from Israel  |
| October 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2014                | Prominent Palestinian Authority figure, Ziad Abu Ein, is killed by Israeli security forces in a demonstration in the West Bank  |
| September 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2014              | Palestinian Prime Minister, Rami Hamdallah, convenes first cabinet meeting to show unity amongst the Palestinian people   |
| August 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2014                 | Deal is reached with United Nations and Israel to allow construction materials to be brought into Palestine in order to rebuild the nearly \$7 billion in damage due to the invasion by Israel in July                                    |
| July 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2014 to August 26, 2014 | President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, presents plan to bypass the American moderated peace talks, and to join the International Criminal Court and to create a Security Council Resolution to end the Israeli occupation |
| June 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2014                   | Israel launches operation "Protective Edge" in Gaza in retaliation against the Hamas rocket attacks, nearly 2,500 people are killed, and the majority of the people were civilians in Gaza ( nearly 2,000)                                |
| June 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2014                   | The bodies of the kidnapped teenagers are found, nearly 400 Palestinians had been arrested and 6 killed as Israel conducted their search for the teenagers. Hamas also has fired 40 rockets into Israel at this point                     |
| June 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2014                   | Three Israeli teenagers are kidnapped in the West Bank, the Netanyahu government blames the Palestinian Authority government for the attacks, this events sets precedent to further conflict in the area.                                 |

## UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

UN involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict has been limited due to the fact that the methods of creating peace in the area differ greatly between countries. The UN strives to ensure that major conflicts are settled, however most major peace settlements for this conflict have been moderated by independent nations. The following resolutions come from the General Assembly, and they are some of the most recent resolutions that deal with this



conflict. However, it should be noted the Security Council and the General Assembly have issued resolutions dealing with this conflict since 1948.

- Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, 19 December 2014 (**A/RES/69/241**)
- Assistance to the Palestinian people, 19 December 2014 (**A/RES/69/242**)
- Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, 5 December 2014 (**A/RES/69/93**)
- Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues, 5 December 2014 (**A/RES/69/89**)
- Jerusalem, 25 November 2014 (**A/RES/69/24**)
- Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, 25 November 2014 (**A/RES/69/23**)

## Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The Israel-Palestine Conflict has been an issue since 1948, and there have been many attempts at creating peace in the region. The UN has been consistently issuing resolutions since the creation of Israel in an attempt to reach terms of peace, and most of them have been directed at solving immediate humanitarian crises or conflicts that threaten the people of Palestine or Israel. However, few have actually made attempts at creating lasting peace in the region. This lack of finding lasting peace is due mostly to different nations' opinions on how to resolve this conflict. Especially in the Security Council, France, China, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States regularly disagree on how peace should be found. This disagreement prevents the UN from actually enforcing any sort of permanent peace talks, and thus hindering hopes of establishing peace in the region.

Despite the UN not being able to arrive at a definitive form of peace, independent nations have worked to attempt at finding a permanent solution. There have been several significant peace conferences, and these include the Camp David Accords (1978), the Oslo Agreement (1993), Camp David (2000), Annapolis (2007), and Washington (2010). These conferences have almost always been led/moderated by the United States, and they have aimed at creating a Two State Solution between Israel and Palestine. Even though many of



these conferences actually brought hopes of real peace, they all inevitably failed due to several reasons. Firstly, both Israel and Palestine could rarely come to agreements about the status of different territories such as the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Next, any form of positive communication was generally inhibited by extremist reactions from the Palestinians or Hamas. Even the most recent attempts at direct peace talks between the Netanyahu government and the Palestinians have been thwarted by opposing viewpoints and ideologies over how peace should be established.

## Possible Solutions

### The One State Solution

The One State Solution of joining the Israeli and Palestinian territories into one state can be seen in many ways. Under this solution, the two territories would be joined under a democratic government where both Israeli and Palestinian populations are represented. This solution would be tremendous for the Palestinian population due to several reasons. The Palestinian population would outnumber the Israelites, which means that the Palestinians would be able to properly attain all their rights. However, the Israeli population generally despises this option. The status of Israel being a Jewish State would be lost, and many Israelites are not willing for Israel to lose its status of being the nation state of the Jewish people.

### The Two State Solution

The Two State Solution is one of the most sought after solutions to this crisis. In theory, it would divide the disputed territories in this region between Israel and Palestine, and both states would be recognized as sovereign independent states. This solution would allow Israel to maintain its identity as a Jewish State, and it would allow Palestine to gain its full rights as an independent country. Despite the fact that this solution is accepted as being one of the best options, it has several problems that limit its implementation. Firstly, the issue of dividing the disputed areas is a great issue since neither side can decide on who owns them. Also, neither side can agree on the terms to which peace is established. Both parties strongly disagree on what is conceded or gained, so any agreements are rare.

### Overall

There are many possible solutions to the Israel-Palestine Conflict, but no official way has been pursued by the United Nations. The Two State Solution is most commonly referred to whenever attempting peace in this region, but many are considering this solution to not be

effective. Besides the One and Two State Solutions, many others have been brought up when discussing the future of Israel and Palestine. Ideas of Jerusalem becoming an internationally moderated city have been brought up, and many other ideas have been circulated. The solutions that have been presented so far are some of the most common resolves, but the solutions that are discussed in this committee are encouraged to be creative, original, and practical.

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## Appendices

### Appendix I

United Nations webpage on the question of

Palestine: <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/home.htm>

### Appendix II

The Israel Palestine conflict explained: <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/history/>,

### Appendix III

Recent developments in the Israel Palestine conflict:

<http://america.aljazeera.com/topics/topic/issue/israeli-palestinian-conflict.html>

