

Special Political and Decolonization Committee

Study Guide

TOPIC 2: The reignited conflict in Palestine

Overview

The Israel-Palestine conflict, also called the “Question of Palestine”, has concerned the UN since the organization’s foundation in 1947. It has remained in their agenda until today and remains highly controversial. Questions posed by the conflict concern the development of modern statehood, the necessity of international recognition, and the security of state borders as Palestine remains occupied territory.

In the first few weeks of May 2021, the fighting between Israel and Palestine has drastically escalated. The crisis was triggered by the decision of the Supreme Court of Israel to evict six Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah, which has resulted in Palestinians beginning protests in East Jerusalem. After days of mass demonstrations by Palestinians, Israel began an aerial bombardment of the Gaza Strip in response to rocket fire from Hamas. This has become the most significant Israeli military operation since 2014, the bombing has killed more than 200 Palestinians, including more than 60 children.

History

Following World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust, increased Jewish populations migrated to the area in the Middle East known as Palestine at the time. Seeing the area as their historic homeland, migration continued to increase, especially to areas around Jerusalem and other historical cities. In 1947, the United Nations adopted Resolution 181, known as the Partition Plan, which sought to divide the British Mandate of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was created, which was followed by decades of fighting and terrorism, from the 1948 Arab-Israel War and the 1967 Six-Day War to the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the First and Second Intifadas. As a result of the conflict, thousands of people have died and millions more have suffered, with an entire population becoming refugees.

In 1987, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip rose up against the Israeli government in what is known as the first intifada. The 1993 Oslo I

Accords mediated the conflict, setting up a framework for the Palestinians to govern themselves in the West Bank and Gaza, and enabled mutual recognition between the newly established Palestinian Authority and Israel's government. In 1995, the Oslo II Accords expanded on the first agreement, adding provisions that mandated the complete withdrawal of Israel from 6 cities and 450 towns in the West Bank.

In 2007, after the last Palestinian legislative elections held to date, the Islamist group Hamas ousted the ruling nationalist party Fatah from the Gaza Strip, leaving Fatah, led by Mahmoud Abbas, in control of the West Bank.

Today, the peace process revolves around negotiations between Israeli leaders, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Palestinian leaders, led by President Mahmoud Abbas. Within Israel, however, Netanyahu faces conflicting pressures from his own political party, opposing political parties, and Israeli citizens. Within Palestine, President Abbas is the recognized leader, but another group, Hamas, controls a part of Palestine called the Gaza Strip.

Past actions

The most important resolutions which have been passed by the UN are the following:

Resolution 181 (Future government of Palestine)

Resolution 242 (aftermath of the Six-Day War)

Resolution 338 (the Yom Kippur War)

Resolution 3236 (Palestinian people's right to self-determination)

Further research:

<https://youtu.be/CISbbt1x2dc>

<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>

<https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/palestine>

<https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/csrrcs/wp-content/uploads/sites/478/2017/08/Israel-Palestine-Resource-Packet.pdf>

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