



BESTMUN'22

GA 1: DISEC

STUDY GUIDE



Letters	3
Historical Background of the Issue	5
The Zionist Project in the Early 20th Century	5
Violence and Crises in the Interwar Period	6
Nazis in Europe and Developments in Palestine (1939-1948)	8
The State of Israel in the Middle East (1948-1967)	10
War and Continual Unrest (1967-1987)	12
The First Intifada and the Road to the Oslo Accords (1987-1993)	15
Oslo Accords and the Oslo Process (1992-2000)	16
Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin (4 November 1995)	17
The Second Intifada (2000-2005)	18
Arab Peace Initiative	19
Cases from the Recent Past	19
Gaza Border Protests (2018-2019)	19
News from the years 2020 and 2021	20
Actors Involved in the Issue	21
Quartet on the Middle East	21
Arab League	21
The PLO and the PA	21
Hamas (Gaza Strip)	21
Fatah (West Bank)	22
Key Issues that the Delegates Must Discuss	22
The Question of Jerusalem	22
Security Issues	23
Water Rights	24
Palestinian Refugees	24
Israeli Settlements	24
International Recognition of the State of Palestine	24
Important Documents to Read before the Conference	25
References	26

Forum: General Assembly 1: Disarmament and Security Committee

Agenda Item: Israel-Palestine Conflict

Under-Secretary-General: Alara Irmak Tümer

President Chair: Toprak Sezgin

Letter from the Under-Secretary-General

Dear esteemed delegates, my name is Alara Irmak Tümer, and as the acting Under-Secretary-General of this year's Disarmament and Security Committee; I would like to state that it is an utmost pleasure to welcome you all to BESTMUN'22. This year, we will be discussing the question of "Israel-Palestine Conflict", an issue that has been a topic of discussion for many years and still has not been solved. As it will be further emphasized throughout this study guide, the attempts made in hopes to solve the conflict between these two sides were, sadly, not very efficient. Therefore, the delegates are highly encouraged to study the solution proposals made throughout the history, scrutinize why those solution proposals failed, and come up with strong, effective and new solution ideas via learning from the failures of the past. As this tension between the two sides resulted in many more issues, such as but not limited to the violation of human rights, it should be realized that we are in need for a well-thought resolution that covers all those issues that are born out of this conflict between Israel and Palestine. I hope that you enjoy the debate sessions that we are going to have during these four days, and that you end up with great memories to remember. I cannot wait to meet you all, take care, and I will be seeing you on 3rd of March!

Letter from the Secretary General

Esteemed Delegates,

My name is Sarp Sever and I am the Secretary General of BESTMUN'22. This year we have two General Assembly committees and one of them is GA:1 DISEC. This committee will be focusing on the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

During sessions, you, as a delegate, must always be attentive of what is being discussed and finally reach a constructive resolution. You must constantly be as aware as a diplomat and act accordingly by using the proper tools to your advantage. Remember, defending your policy efficiently is at utmost importance. This guide was prepared by your Under Secretary General Alara Tümer to facilitate your research.

The whole secretariat has worked incredibly hard to provide you with an experience of a lifetime. We hope you can gain as much as you can in terms of diplomatic skills and global knowledge. Lastly, I would like to thank my Deputy Asya Arslan and our Under Secretary General Alara Irmak Tümer for their great efforts to make this committee the best version of itself.

Best Regards,

Sarp Sever

Important Notice: Please do not skip to read the footnotes; they all contain important information and explanations.

Historical Background of the Issue

- **The Zionist Project in the Early 20th Century**

Israel's emergence was possible through mainly four factors: the Eastern Question regarding the Ottoman Empire and a desire to dissolve it, a historic, "legitimizing" claim of nationhood for the Jewish people in Palestine, a strong Zionist lobby, and the subsequent international support for a Jewish state. The Zionist ideal, politically speaking, began with the writings and thoughts of **Theodor Herzl**, who, in very-late 19th century, founded the First Zionist Congress in 1897 and published several important texts to promote the formation of a Jewish state, which, he claimed, had a historical basis dating back to centuries and even thousands of years before (Herzl Museum, n.d.). Herzl even had official communications with the Ottoman Empire under Abdulhamid II, proposing that Jews could finance Ottoman debt in return for the creation of a State of Israel (Ojalvo, 2017).



Theodor Herzl, the founding father of political Zionism (Wolffsohn, 1898).

Herzl's activism was not solely limited to ideals, however. As Jewish populaces in Eastern Europe were being targeted extensively with prejudice, there happened the first instances of movements of **Aliyah**¹, which increased Jewish presence in Palestine. The Zionist project was slowly finding an audience, and the First World War

¹ Aliyah: Jewish moment to "homeland", i.e. the lands of Israel.

helped out immensely in this regard. Disregarding its status as a member of the Central Powers, the Ottoman Empire, by 1914 when the First World War broke out, had strong reason to believe that the great powers of Europe were seeking to, put lightly, “reorganize” it. Secret agreements made to carve the *Devlet-i ‘Aliyye*² in the duration of the war more than prove this.

One such agreement was the **Balfour Declaration** in 1917, carrying the name of the British foreign minister of the time, which promised United Kingdom’s support for the creation of a Jewish state. In actuality, the Anglos were not exactly adamant on establishing a Jewish state, instead, the United States of America and its interventionist president Woodrow Wilson were the champions of this idea (Chomsky, 1993). The English, hoping to draw on American support to defeat the Central Powers, came up with the declaration to gain US favors. In addition to the US, French Republic and Italian Republic also signed off on the Balfour Declaration, pledging support to the creation of Israel (Sander, 1993). Even though Noam Chomsky (1993) states that the Wilson-ordered **King-Crane Commission**’s surveys of Middle Eastern peoples, in 1919, indicated that there was extreme opposition to the establishment of Israel, the groundwork for the Jewish state was laid.

- **Violence and Crises in the Interwar Period**

Even though the project of Israel had come a long way since Herzl’s death, it still had not been materially realized. This was partly because Britain, which controlled the Levant and therefore Palestine after the war, was not so much interested in upholding the Balfour Declaration rather than preserving its colonial integrity, which was built on policies of divide-and-conquer. Thus, the Palestinian objection to the creation of Israel was something that the British were not willing to overlook.

And this objection was a major one, to say the least. As Hamit Bozarslan notes (2018), the mandate period witnessed the transformation of “Palestinian nationalism” into a “Palestinian (Arab) nationalism” (p. 64). This strain of the ideology was particularly characterized by anti-Zionism. In a chain of events starting in 1920 with the first anti-Zionist revolt in Palestine, the region would be suffocated by inter-communal violence.

² An alternative way of referring to the Ottoman Empire.

Throughout the interwar period, different political actors and ideologies, like different noble families, the Muslim Brotherhood and political Islam, became involved in the Palestinian struggle against Zionism, further complicating and radicalizing the conflict. Not to mention, the proliferation of militia groups on both sides of the aisle followed. Although there were many, the most “prolific” ones were the **Black Hand** for the Arabs and the **Haganah** for the Jews.

On the onset of the Second World War, between the years of 1936-1939, a **major Arab Palestinian rebellion** took place against Zionists. As was previously explained, due to the multiplicity of actors and ideologies, the Arab nationalists could not be so readily united most of the time, and the importance of this rebellion therefore was that the Arab leadership acted together to challenge the Zionists and the British, whom they perceived to be supporting Jewish interests. However, notwithstanding this unique instance of togetherness, the British were able to employ their excessive armed force to stamp out the rebellion, thanks to the Munich Agreement of 1938 in Europe, which delayed the Second World War for at least a little while (Chomsky, 1993).

However, the British, acting with imperial concerns, gave up on promises made with the Balfour Declaration with a White Paper penned in 1939 and instead committed itself to the establishment of an Arab country in Palestine. As was proved way back with the King-Crane Commission’s findings, the Arab population was simply too significant and too populous to ignore. Jewish political interests and paramilitary groups strongly rejected this course of policy and there was resentment in the Jews against the United Kingdom, as they felt that they were being abandoned by London.



The British tried to negotiate the end of the 1936 rebellion by gathering together the Peel Commission in 1937, which proposed that a partition should take place to divide the mandate into three parts, controlled separately by the Arabs, Jews, with the rest remaining under British mandate. Although the plan was never implemented, it foresaw the 1948 UN partition plan that created Israel (Jewish Virtual Library, n.d.b).

(Jewish Virtual Library, n.d.a)

- **Nazis in Europe and Developments in Palestine (1939-1948)**

In general, it can be stated that the Second World War and the atrocities paralleling it helped the Zionist case. This statement is made with all due respect to all those who have lost their lives as a result of these crimes against humanity, and it is not the implication of this author that it was simply with the impact of the Nazis that Israel would be created. In actuality, the global conjecture played the key role in the realization of the Zionist project.

As was previously mentioned, the British had alienated Jewish interests by seemingly allying with the Palestinian Arab leadership. However, never ones to fully commit to such partnerships, the United Kingdom sought cooperation with Haganah in the early 1940s but tried to steer clear of angering the Arabs for which they restricted Aliyah when Italy joined the war in 1940 (Library of Congress, n.d.). This was, of course much to the chagrin of the Zionists.

In the meanwhile, the atrocities committed by the Nazis against the Jews started being uncovered throughout the world. While the weight of the situation and the details of these crimes against humanity had not been entirely discovered, the Zionist Congress gathered in the USA, Baltimore in 1942 and it decided that in, no uncertain terms, an Israeli state would be formed as soon as possible (Bozarslan, 2018). From early 1940s to mid-1940s, a major Zionist lobby developed in the United States, and the Baltimore congress had members like David Ben-Gurion, a major Jewish leader and later the first prime minister of Israel (Mahalli, 2020). Once again, like in the First World War, it was the United States that had been a staunch supporter of the Zionist project rather than the United Kingdom.

Even though Zionist pressure was growing, the English did not shy away from their policy that was meant to deter Axis' movement in the Middle East and North Africa by keeping the Arabs close so as not to provoke any pro-Axis rebellions, which was a real threat (refer to the Golden Square coup in Iraq). Unfortunately for the British, the Zionist movement in Palestine radicalized deeply and armed organizations such as **Irgun** targeted British diplomats and soldiers in acts of terrorism and protest. One example to this was the 1944 assassination of Lord Moyne, an English representative in Cairo who was also a confidant of Winston Churchill, prime minister and famed pro-Semite (Author unknown, 1988a). Such acts did not immediately make the UK reconsider its position, on

the contrary, London became more committed to the idea of establishing a Palestinian Arab state (Author unknown, 1988a).

This was a short-lived instance of stubbornness, however. By the end of the war in 1945, the Zionist cause had gathered strong support in the United States of America, and the war had effectively deprived the UK of both the navy and the resources necessary for the upkeep of such a fantastically-large colonial empire. Jewish bombings, like on July 22nd, 1946 targeting the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, or the Goldsmith officers club in 1947 sent shockwaves throughout the British public and forced the UK to declare martial law in the region (British Pathé, 1947). The idea of continuing Palestine's occupation, specifically during such a hectic period of violence was not an attractive prospect. Slowly but surely, British control over Palestine was fading and a power vacuum was emerging.

Desperate, the UK appealed to the US and the United Nations (UN) to resolve the issue of Palestine. Setting up a joint Anglo-American committee in 1946, it was decided that 100,000 Jews would be allowed Aliyah (Mahalli, 2020). Later on, the British asked the UN to consider this agenda item, which eventually paved the way for the UN partition plan in November 1947, finishing the major preparation for the Israeli state. The Zionist state officially declared its independence on May 14, 1948 (Metz, 1988). Needless to say, the nascent Jewish state's Arab neighbors were not very pleased with these developments.



The 1947 UN partition plan (BBC, 2001).

- **The State of Israel in the Middle East (1948-1967)**

Right at the beginning, the Israeli state had major problems to worry about. The countries of the Arab League, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Transjordan, and Yemen, pledged support for the Palestinians and they all took up arms against the Zionist state and thus began the first **Arab-Israeli war in 1948**. Although outnumbered and surrounded, Israel would be able to upset the **Arab League** in 1949 and occupy lands that, according to the UN partition plan, belonged to the Palestinian state. The demoralizing defeat in the war would be known as “Al-Nakbah”³ by the Arabs and effectively open a new chapter in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

After having consolidated its statehood at the expense of its neighbors, Israel had to look inward somewhat, though it never lost its view of the vengeful states that surrounded it. David Ben-Gurion, the head of the executive, spearheaded the modernization of state institutions and joined together the paramilitary groups into a singular army (Author unknown, 1988b). Another domestic issue that had to be addressed was the question of Palestinian refugees. As a result of Israel’s annexation of Palestinian territories, many were displaced, becoming both **internally displaced persons (IDPs)**⁴ and **asylum seekers**⁵. In what is known as the first Palestinian exodus with the 1948 war, 840,000 Palestinians were chased outside of Israel by state authorities (Boyar, 2021). Those that remained in Israel did not enjoy full rights, as the state aimed to “facilitate the growth of the Jewish nation” at the economic and political expense of Arabs (Author unknown, 1988c, para. 3). Ben-Gurion’s government promoted homogeneity and enshrined nationalism as one of the defining characteristics of the state.

As Israel continued to embolden its security measures and recover economically from the war, the Arab states had to deal with a bleaker picture. Palestinian refugees were the number one issue. Camps were set up throughout not just local territories like the **Gaza Strip** and the **West Bank**, but many refugees ended up in **Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon**. To ameliorate the situation, the UN set up the **United Nations Relief and**

³ Al-Nakbah is “catastrophe” in Arabic.

⁴ Internally displaced persons: People who are displaced within a country.

⁵ Asylum seekers: Those who have left their original country with the belief that their security is under threat.

Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in 1949 which controlled the camps. However, the help provided was simply insufficient and living conditions in these sites were unacceptable. Moreover, Boyar (2021) notes that the aforementioned host countries both lacked the desire and the capacity to integrate Palestinians: in larger countries like Syria and Egypt, Palestinians were seen as alien elements and neither country wanted to assimilate the refugees lest the Arab world lose the claim on Palestine, while in smaller countries of Jordan and Lebanon, Palestinians were too numerous in comparison to native populations which made it exceedingly difficult to integrate them all the while not compromising on national identity and draining the already limited resources of the states.



The Naher al-Bared refugee camp in Lebanon under the administration of the UNRWA in the year of 1952 (Winter-Chaumeny, 1952).

Another important effect of the Arab-Israeli war was the extreme amount of resentment that it had created throughout the Arab world against not just Israel, but against the international society at-large. This resentment, in the case of Egypt for instance, also partly led to the emergence of a new government, one led by the Free Officers in 1952 and later **General Nasser** starting with 1954. The Officers' coup was partially motivated by the Egyptian monarchy's defeat in the Arab-Israeli war and Nasser, who would later be known as a hero to the Arab world, capitalized on this nationalistic sentiment which was, in certain senses, the zeitgeist of the period. In 1956, Nasser challenged the international status quo by nationalizing the British-held Suez Canal and inciting the interventions of both the UK and France, as well as Israel in what is known as the **Suez Crisis**. Although militarily defeated, Nasser ended up victorious on the table with the interventions of the USA and the Soviet Union, which signaled a "renaissance"

for the Arab world. Nasser, riding the popularity wave, considered the issue of Palestine as a point of special interest, and he thus was viewed quite warmly by Arabs in Palestine but was met with equal disdain by Israel.

Israel's woes would be further fueled with the radicalization and militarization of the Palestinian refugee camps. Fawaz Turki (1974), a Palestinian refugee, summarized it best when he stated that "If I was not a Palestinian when I left Haifa as a child, I am one now." (p. 8) Indeed, the Palestinian identity had come to be closely associated with refugee camps, which stood for expulsion, displacement, and alienation. Therefore, Palestinians, particularly the youth, were susceptible to more extreme views. The Arab League, to organize this newly-transformed Palestinian diaspora, set up the **Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964**, which favored guerilla tactics to overtly challenge Israel. In conclusion, Israel had created the groundwork for more confrontation by the virtue of its aggressive foreign policy.

- **War and Continual Unrest (1967-1987)**

It was not surprising then that a war broke out in 1967. Later to be dubbed as the Six-Day War, the conflict was yet another resounding failure for the Arab world, perhaps even more so than the confrontation of 1948. The Arab coalition was under the leadership of Nasser and Egypt and included Ba'ath Syria and Iraq most prominently. Although, according to Lowe (1991) the coalition's standing vis-à-vis Israel seemed strong, the Zionist state's preemptive attack on Arab positions completely disorganized Nasser's bloc and ensured a quick victory for the Israeli government. This time around, the loss was comparatively much more painful: **Egypt lost the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, Syria lost the Golan Heights, and Jordan lost West Bank**. Although the PLO was not formally involved in the war, the Palestinian people were deeply affected by this outcome, leading to the **second great exodus** where many more were displaced yet again, and refugee camps continued to receive more asylum seekers.

Israel's victory was challenged on diplomatic grounds by the Arab states and the international society exerted pressure on the Zionists to relinquish their control of the aforementioned territories, a request which was denied. In the meanwhile, support for Nasser waned drastically and the PLO, forced to relocate from the West Bank to Jordan, became disenchanted with the Arab League's perceived weakness and lack of exhibited

struggle regarding the Palestinian cause. This was best exhibited with the rise of **Yasser Arafat**, who took control of the PLO through his **Fatah** faction after the end of the war in 1967 (Boyar, 2021b). All in all, the 1967 war did motivate Arab states to look inward and dissuaded Nasser, the quasi-leader of the pan-Arab ideology, from actively pursuing such disruptive diplomatic policies (Author unknown, 1988d). In 1970, Nasser would pass away and be replaced by **Anwar Sadat** who was a much less idealistic leader, thus rendering pan-Arabism an even harder prospect to achieve.

That is not to say, however, that peace became dominant in the region. On the contrary, the emboldened PLO would be the main actor of the **1973 Yom Kippur⁶ war**, which once again pitted Egypt and Syria against Israel. Arafat's PLO had shocked the world with the atrocities committed in the 1972 Munich Olympics and, according to Lowe (1991), "put pressure" on Cairo and Damascus to act against Israeli oppression of Palestinians (Lowe, 1991, p. 510). Although not exactly a "failure", the war nevertheless was characterized by Israel's military superiority which was more evenly matched by the Arab armies. In addition, Arab members of the **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** coordinated cut-offs of oil to the rest of the world as a form of protest, triggering the **1973 oil crisis** in the international economy, which drew considerable global attention to the Palestinian issue (Lowe, 1991).

This international conjecture, coupled with the fact that Sadat was a much more moderate leader, helped along the **Camp David peace process of the late 1970s**. Sadat's desire to obtain warmer relations with Israel and the USA, which he believed would benefit Egypt economically, created a favorable environment for American president Jimmy Carter to negotiate a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. Although the **Camp David Accords** were signed on September 17th, 1978, most of its provisions regarding lands occupied by Israel went unheeded by the Zionist state initially, though Sinai would be returned to Egypt in 1982 (Author unknown, 1988e). Sadat harshly criticized this course of action; however he had already sealed his fate by being the first Arab leader to try to negotiate peace with Israel and later making Egypt the first Arab country to recognize Israel. He was assassinated by a Muslim Brotherhood operative in 1981.

⁶ "Yom kippur" is an Israeli festivity.



From left to right: Sadat, Carter, and Menachem Begin, Israel's prime minister at the time. Photograph taken during the Camp David process (Daugherty, 1979).

In the meanwhile, the PLO was continuing its disruptive behavior throughout the Middle East. Using Jordan as a base of operations, Arafat continued business as usual, which was not entirely welcomed by Jordan which, as was previously explained, already wary of hosting Palestinian refugees. Bearing in mind how radicalized camps had become, this may not have been an entirely unfounded fear. To this end, the **Jordanian monarchy expelled the PLO in 1970** from its territory. Now, the PLO had to move to Lebanon, which was a fragile country built on the co-existence of various religious and ethnic groups and a legacy of oppression of minority groups. The introduction of yet another identity into the mix worsened Lebanon's instability and would play a major role in the outbreak of the **Lebanese Civil War** in 1975.

A major and highly convoluted conflict for the history of the region, the Lebanese Civil War was also significant for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since both the Jewish and the Arabs used the war-torn Lebanon as a chess board to advance their interests and try to eliminate each other. Supporting radical Christians in Lebanon (known as the Maronites) and the **South Lebanon Army**, which was a militia group, Israel combatted the PLO extensively. **In 1982**, the Zionist state took matters into its own hands and directly invaded Lebanon, shelling Beirut and laying waste to the south. In the end, Israel was victorious, **exiling the PLO to Tunisia** and rendering it ineffective for years to come.

Israel's victory over the PLO was temporary. Although successful on paper, Israel failed to foresee the backlash that it would receive for its actions in Lebanon. Boyar (2021a) notes here that the massacres perpetrated by the South Lebanon Army in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon in 1982 marked a point of inflection for not just the Palestinians, but also for the West. The sheer volume of violence that was supported by Israel in these refugee camps became highly publicized and found

an audience, even in the West. However, it was the effect that the massacres had on the Palestinian psyche that would send major ripples throughout flow of the conflict.

- **The First Intifada and the Road to the Oslo Accords (1987-1993)**

These ripples appeared as the phenomenon termed the **First Intifada⁷ in 1987**. With the PLO exiled and in no position to respond to Palestinian demands, the Palestinian psyche dearly transformed with their worsening treatment under Israeli rule, and long-standing economic exploitation Palestinian villagers throughout the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, both still under Israel’s occupation, rose up against the Zionist state (Boyar, 2021a). A “grassroots uprising” according to Boyar (2021a, p. 5), the Intifada also inspired Palestinians living in Israel to join the cause.

Unsurprisingly, Israel was quick to respond harshly to this uprising. On top of using brute force according to Bozarslan (2018), Israel, by 1991, additionally targeted the livelihoods of Palestinian villagers. Pappé (2006) exemplifies this as follows: “...cutting off of electricity, water and the prevention of olive-picking during the height of the season.” (p. 237) Nevertheless, the Intifada was unprecedented in scale and importance, a fact to which Bozarslan (2018) alludes to by stating that the rebellion “...helped increase the autonomy of Palestine from within.” (p. 208)

Lasting until September 1993 and greatly exhausting Israel, the Intifada helped bring about the Oslo peace process, which itself is perhaps the last historical take-off point for current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



A photograph of revolting Palestinians from a refugee camp in Gaza Strip (Getty Images, n.d.).

⁷ Intifada means “shaking off” in Arabic.

- **Oslo Accords and the Oslo Process (1992-2000)**

In an attempt to bring an end to this long lasting issue, Norway offered to serve as an intermediary between the two sides: Israel and the PLO in the year 1992 (History, 2018). After many secret meetings and negotiation that lasted for months, the two sides (along with the witnesses Russia and the US) finally agreed to sign the first of the Oslo Accords, which would later be known as Oslo 1, in September 1993 (History, 2018).



Israeli Prime Minister **Yitzhak Rabin**, President **Bill Clinton** and the PLO Chairman **Yasser Arafat** in Washington D.C. (Wermenbol, 2018).

The aim of the negotiations, as stated in Oslo 1, was to “establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, the elected Council (the "Council"), for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.” (Peace Agreements & Related, p.1). Oslo 1 considered the problems of borders, governance and constituted a path to peace. Doing so, it paved the way for the state of Israel to recognize the PLO and vice versa (TRT World, 2018). Other than the establishment of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Oslo 1 also mandated that the Israeli forces would withdraw from the parts of Gaza and the West Bank that were under illegal occupation since the year 1967 (TRT World, 2018). Once the aforementioned establishment of the Palestinian Interim Self Government Authority, or simply Palestinian Authority (PA), is successfully implemented, more meetings would have been held to solve the issues of borders, refugees and the question of Jerusalem (History, 2018).

Two years later, in 1995, Oslo 2 was signed between the two sides. While containing many articles, probably the most important two mandates of the Oslo 2 are Israeli forces agreeing to withdraw from the six largest Palestinian cities in addition to 450 towns, and the West Bank being divided into three areas: one under Palestinian control, one in joint control (where Palestinians will have civil control and Israelis will have security control) and one in complete Israeli control (History, 2018).

However, the Oslo Accords failed to bring peace within the two sides. A considerable amount of people did not support the terms of the accords, which led to extreme violence (History, 2018).

- **Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin (4 November 1995)**

As mentioned before, many people objected the terms of the Oslo Accords. One of those people was the then 27 year old Yigal Amir; a Jewish law student (History.com Editors, 2010). On the night of November 4th, 1995, at 21.30, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by Amir at a peace rally (History.com Editors, 2010). After being arrested, Amir later confessed the shooting, stating that the reason why he shot Rabin was because he believed that the Prime Minister wanted to “give our country to the Arabs” (History.com Editors, 2010). Although Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (along with the Chairman of the PLO Yasser Arafat, of course) won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994 for promoting peace with the PLO by signing the Oslo Accords, the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the never ending chaos shows that the efforts were neither effective, nor long lasting (Author unknown, 2021).



Yasser Arafat, **Shimon Peres** and Yitzhak Rabin accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, 1994. (BBC, 2016)

- **The Second Intifada (2000-2005)**

Along with many Israeli riot police standing by, Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon and his delegation enter the Al-Aqsa Compound, which was seen as a major provocation for all Palestinians (TRT World, 2021). This act of Sharon was the start of the “Second Intifada”, which would last for 5 years and result in nearly a thousand dead from Israel, and approximately three thousand dead from Palestine (TRT World, 2021). The Separation Wall built by Israel within the West Bank was also a result of this event (TRT World, 2021).



The Separation Wall (Aljazeera, 2020).

Although the Second Intifada ended in the year 2005, the results of it made life for Palestinians even harder (TRT World, 2021). Within the 15 years since, a huge amount of Jewish settlers followed Sharon’s act and entered the Al-Aqsa Compound under police escort (TRT World, 2021). Talks of **further annexation** (which will be evaluated under the title of “The Question of Jerusalem”) became an important issue as Israel started to build new settlements along the occupied West Bank (TRT World, 2021).

Israeli journalist Gideon Levy argues that “...the West has lost interest, the Arab World is betraying them (the Palestinians) as usual...” while commenting on the Second Intifada (TRT World, 2020). The tension between Jerusalem and the West Bank still continues, and an uprising is seen as something quite possible in case of a provocation (TRT World, 2020).

- **Arab Peace Initiative**

Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud proposed the Arab Peace Initiative, which was accepted by the 22 members of the **Arab League** (this will be later discussed under the topic of “Actors Involved in the Issue – Arab League”) , in the year 2002, in hopes to bring an end to the ever-lasting Israeli-Arab conflict (Aftandilian, 2017).

Having a total of seven main clauses, the Arab Peace Initiative mainly demanded Israel to reconsider their policies (such as but not limited to the withdrawal from all territories occupied within the year 1967, accepting the establishment of an Independent Palestinian State on the Palestinian territories: the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem being their capital,..., etc.) in hopes for a just peace (Guardian News and Media, 2002). It also demanded that the Arab countries would consider the Arab-Israeli conflict as history and enter into a peace agreement with them accordingly (Guardian News and Media, 2002).

Although Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu stated that he was in favor of an achievement of peace with both the Palestinians and other neighbors and therefore was also in favor of the initiative; he later on claimed that “If the Arab nations grasp the fact that they need to revise the Arab League proposal according to the changes Israel demands, then we can talk, but if they bring the proposal from 2002 and define it as 'take it or leave it' – we'll choose to leave it.” (Ravid, 2018).

Cases from the Recent Past

- **Gaza Border Protests (2018-2019)**

The words “Allah is sufficient for us, and what a good protector he is!” is heard within the borders between Gaza and Israel after Hamas called their supporters to amass along the border to denounce the US embassies moved to Jerusalem (which will later be evaluated throughout the study guide under the title of “The Question of Jerusalem”) and demand an end to the blockage on Gaza (VICE News, 2018). In response, Israeli forces use an overwhelming force against the protestors; using tear gases, ammunition and artillery (VICE News, 2018). Albeit many civil protestors are hurt, no one is backing off. This act of the Palestinians is summarized by a protestor as “Jerusalem is our land, we are not respecting this border,” (VICE News, 2018).

- **News from the years 2020 and 2021**

- In 2020 with the order of an Israeli court, Palestinian families living in Sheikh Jarrah, a neighboring city of East Jerusalem, were forced to flee their houses by May 2021, and the vacated lands would be given to the Jews (Author unknown, 2022). As a protest to this order of the Israeli court, many Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah started to protest process against the hearing of the court, the legal battle of the right for ownership, and demand for an end for the Palestinian displacement from their homes in Jerusalem (Author unknown, 2022).
- In May 2021, as a court ruled in favor of the Palestinian evictions from their homes in Jerusalem, the protests naturally expanded; leading the Israeli forces to use police force against the protestors (Author unknown, 2022). This conflict between the Palestinian protestors, Israeli settlers and Israeli police grew within a very short time, leading to violence at the Al-Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan (Author unknown, 2022). Stun grenades, rubber bullets and water cannons were some of the weapons that were used within this conflict (Author unknown, 2022).
- In 10th of May 2021, following the crises that began with the orders of the Israeli court, **Hamas** (which will later be explained under the topic of “Key Actors” throughout the study guide) and other Palestinian militant groups launched many rockets into Israel territory (Author unknown, 2022). As a response of this act of Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups, Israel used air strikes and artillery bombardments against targets in Gaza (Author unknown, 2022). Although Israel claims that their aim was to target Hamas and the other Palestinian militant groups; they extended their targets to residential buildings, media headquarters, and refugee/healthcare facilities (Author unknown, 2022).
- After these incidents, within the same month, Israel and Hamas agreed to cease-fire (Author unknown, 2022). Although both sides claimed victory, they both had many injured and dead after the incident (Author unknown, 2022).

Actors Involved in the Issue

- **Quartet on the Middle East**

Quartet on the Middle East (also known as Middle East Quartet), in short “the Quartet”, which was formed by the UN, the EU, the US and Russian Federation in the year 2002; is an organization that meets annually to guide negotiations considering the Middle East and help Palestine’s economic development (UNSCO).

- **Arab League**

The Arab League, also known as the League of Arab States (LAS), was formed in the year 1945 in the city of Cairo. With Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, Tunisia and Morocco, Kuwait, Algeria, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE, Mauritania, Somalia, PLO Djibouti and Comoros as its members; the aim of this regional organization is to develop the economy of the Arab states, resolve disputes and coordinate political aims (arab.com). As the LAS offered the **Arab Peace Initiative**, they are considered as an actor involved in the issue of the Israel-Palestine Conflict.

- **The PLO and the PA**

The national representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO, is responsible for the conducting of peace talks on behalf of the Palestinians, runs the Palestinian National Authority (PA) and is the government formed within West Bank (Beauchamp, 2018).

- **Hamas (Gaza Strip)**

Hamas, also known as “Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya” in Arabic, translates as “Islamic Resistance Movement” (Taraki, 2016) and is discussed whether it is a terrorist organization or not. While some countries like State of Israel, the United States of America, Commonwealth of Australia, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates argue that Hamas actually is a terrorist group; countries such as but not limited to Russian Federation, People’s Republic of China, Federative Republic of Brazil, Republic of India, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Türkiye and Swiss Confederation believe that they are not (TRT World 2017). The European Union (EU) also

has announced that they kept Hamas off from their terrorism list (TRT World, 2017). Calling themselves “a national movement that does not seek war with Jewish people”, Hamas won the election in 2007 within West Bank and in Gaza, but was only allowed to form a government in Gaza (TRT World, 2017).

- **Fatah (West Bank)**

Fatah⁸ is the secular nationalist political party that controls the PLO and the PA, and therefore also governs the West Bank (Beauchamp, 2018). The most important difference between Fatah and Hamas is their strategy against Israel: while Hamas uses armed resistance, Fatah chooses to consult negotiations (Tahhan, 2017)

Key Issues that the Delegates Must Discuss

Important Notice: This part of the study guide will only consider the most important issues, meaning that during the conference the delegates cannot skip these issues while debating and writing a resolution. However, this does not mean that the delegates are not supposed to address to the other issues considering the agenda item, those should also be addressed.

- **The Question of Jerusalem**

It is common knowledge that the “holy city” of Jerusalem is important for both Muslims and Jews, and this fame of the city makes it harder to come up with a solution idea. As stated before, Jerusalem was claimed as an International City after the decision of the UN. However, both Palestinians and Israelis claim that their capital is Jerusalem (Vox, 2018). Israel even passed a law declaring that a **united Jerusalem**⁹ would be their capital, which was condemned by the UN Security Council (UNSC) (Vox, 2018). Although many members of the UN had embassies within the city of Jerusalem, after the condemnation of the UNSC against the **annexation of the East Jerusalem**, they all moved their embassies into another city (Vox, 2018). However, President Trump was the first one to make a move since the year 1980. “It is time, to officially recognize Jerusalem

⁸ Fatah means to conquer (Tahhan, 2017).

⁹ Jerusalem was divided into two; West Jerusalem (which was under control of Israel since 1949) and East Jerusalem (which was considered as “occupied territory” by the international community (Vox, 2018).

as the capital of Israel,” stated Trump, on the 6th of December, 2017 (Vox, 2018). Stating so, the US started the process of moving their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; Guatemala and Paraguay also declared that they would move their embassies to Jerusalem after this incident, and many more countries are likely to follow US’s lead (Vox, 2018).

In May 2018, US officially moved their embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, resulting in the celebration of the Israelis and the denouncing of the Palestinians (Vox, 2018). Although Trump stated that it was time to declare Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, because this act of the US was made during the Gaza Border Protests, he was careful not to refer to Jerusalem as an “undivided” capital (Vox, 2018). However, unlike Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was confident in saying that Jerusalem was an undivided city, using the words “God bless Jerusalem, the eternal undivided capital of Israel,” (Vox, 2018).

Although Netanyahu confidently claimed Jerusalem as the “undivided capital of Israel”, neither Palestinians, nor the UN do not accept this claim of Netanyahu’s. As the question of Jerusalem is one of the most important issues of the conflict, delegates are encouraged to find a solution that would satisfy both of the sides and will be accepted by the international community.

- **Security Issues**

The topic of security issues for both sides’ citizens is a very important topic to be discussed within the committee. Although Israel building the Separation Wall was for security concerns, the wall was actually built illegally since it went deep into the West Bank and not along the **Green Line**¹⁰, disturbing Palestinian agricultural fields, communities and farmland (Aljazeera, 2020). Both sides do suffer from security problems, however, the precautions must be taken in a legal way by both of the sides. Delegates are therefore encouraged to find appropriate solution ideas that would both help the two sides protect their citizens’ rights and lives, with respect to the law.

¹⁰ Green Line (1967) is the generally recognized boundary between the State of Israel and the Palestinian territory (Aljazeera, 2020).

- **Water Rights**

Although the issue of Israel-Palestine Conflict is better known for its armed assaults, suicidal bombings,..., etc. by many civilians, Israel's blockage on water resources against Palestinians is also a crucial issue that the delegates should touch upon. Although Oslo 2 had regulations considering the water issue (Sağlam, p. 7), Palestinians never really got the chance to benefit from this because of Israel's actions (Sağlam, p. 10). Since the water resources within the Palestinian territories that are under military occupation are in Israel's control since the year 1967, Palestinians have a major problem trying to reach water resources as Israel chooses to use this advantage of theirs as an exploitation over Palestinians (Sağlam, p. 6). As this act could be considered as a violation of basic human rights, delegates are once again urged to discuss this topic as well as the other topics.

- **Palestinian Refugees**

Although Palestinian refugees are defined as “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict,” by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), especially with Israel's acts within Sheikh Jarrah, the number of Palestinian refugees still continues to increase. (Hint: focus on the “right of return” while coming up with solution ideas)

- **Israeli Settlements**

The continuous expansion of Israeli Settlements are not only illegal but also affect Palestinian civilians as they are also forced to evict their houses, as seen within the example of Sheikh Jarrah. According to Josep Borrell, chief of the office of European Union Foreign Policy, “Settlements are illegal under international law and constitute a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-state solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between the parties,” (Duz, 2021).

- **International Recognition of the State of Palestine**

According to a data obtained in 2015, the year that Vatican recognized the State of Palestine along with 135 members of the UN, the number of Palestinian inhabitants was approximately 4 million (NowThis World, 2015). Still, countries such as but not limited to the Russian Federation, Canada, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern

Ireland, French Republic, Italian Republic, Commonwealth of Australia, Federal Republic of Germany, Kingdom of Spain, along with the United States of America, State of Israel and many more countries; do not recognize the State of Palestine (NowThis World, 2015). Although Palestine was granted as a non-member observer status by the UN in the year 2012 (NowThis World 2015), them being a non-member observer does not mean that they can finally demand justice in international platforms. During the conference, you will see that the committee will not have a delegate of the State of Palestine that has the right to vote, even though the agenda item and the resolution written will directly have an impact of them. Since they are not an official member of the UN, and are just an observer country, they will not have a say in passing the resolution that we are going to debate upon during the conference. Therefore, the delegates are urged to consider if this situation is unfair or not for the Palestinians, and try to come up with a solution proposal in accordance with their beliefs after debating about this issue.

Important Documents to Read before the Conference

It is strongly advised that the delegates read Oslo 1 and Oslo 2 to have a better understanding of the agreements and form their resolutions in accordance with them. Scrutinizing the articles and generating an understanding of why these articles failed is important for the delegates to write a highly effective resolution. The links are given below:

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/3de5e96e4.html> (Oslo 1)

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/3de5ebbc0.html> (Oslo 2)

References

Aftandilian, G. (2017, July 24). *The Arab Peace Initiative is back on the table; Netanyahu is not budging*. Arab Center Washington DC.

<https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-arab-peace-initiative-is-back-on-the-table-netanyahu-is-not-budging/>

Aljazeera. (2020, July 8). *In Pictures: Israel's illegal separation wall still divides*. [Photography].

<https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2020/7/8/in-pictures-israels-illegal-separation-wall-still-divides>

arab.org. *League of Arab States*. arab.org. (n.d.).

<https://arab.org/directory/league-of-arab-states/>

Author unknown. (1988a). World War II. In H. C. Metz (Ed.), *Israel: A country study*. Library of Congress

Author unknown. (1988b). Problems of the new state, 1948-1967. In H. C. Metz (Ed.), *Israel: A country study*. Library of Congress

Author unknown. (1988c). Israeli Arabs, Arab land, and Arab refugees. In H. C. Metz (Ed.), *Israel: A country study*. Library of Congress

Author unknown. (1988d). 1967 and afterward. In H. C. Metz (Ed.), *Israel: A country study*. Library of Congress

Author unknown. (1988e). The peace process. In H. C. Metz (Ed.), *Israel: A country study*. Library of Congress

Author unknown. (2021, October 14). *Rabin and Peres receive Nobel peace prize*. Center for Israel Education (CIE).

<https://israeled.org/rabin-and-peres-nobel-peace-prize/>

Author unknown. (2022, February 18) *Israeli-palestinian conflict | global conflict tracker*. Council on Foreign Relations.

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

BBC. (2001). *UN partition plan*. [Map].

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/middle_east/israel_and_the_palestinians/key_documents/1681322.stm

BBC. (2016, September 28). *Shimon Peres, former Israeli president, dies aged 93*. [Photograph].

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37492153>

Beauchamp, Z. (2018, November 20). *What is the Palestinian Liberation Organization? how about Fatah and the Palestinian Authority?* Vox.

<https://www.vox.com/2018/11/20/18080054/palestinian-liberation-organization-israel-conflict>

British Pathé. (1946, March 6). *Palestine – Martial law declared*. [Video]. YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UsYpVJM_co&ab_channel=BritishPath%C3%A9

Boyar, E. (2021a). *Displacement*. [Video]. Retrieved from Middle East Technical University, IR 247, ODTUClass.

Boyar, E. (2021b). *State and nation building*. [Video]. Retrieved from Middle East Technical University, IR 247, ODTUClass.

Bozarslan, H. (2018). *Ortadoğu: Bir şiddet tarihi*. İletişim Yayıncılık.

Chomsky, N. (1993). *Kader üçgeni*. İletişim Yayıncılık.

Daugherty, B. (1979). *Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, US president Jimmy Carter, center, and Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin clasp hands on the north lawn of the White House as they sign the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, March 26, 1979*. [Photograph]. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/how-jimmy-carter-vetoed-the-first-israeli-envoy-requested-by-sadat/>

Duz, Z. N. *EU says it will not recognize New Israel's settlements in Jerusalem*. Anadolu Ajansı. (n.d.).

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/eu-says-it-will-not-recognize-new-israels-settlements-in-jerusalem/2406528>

Getty Images. (n.d.). *Arabs emerge from the Nusseirat refugee camp during the*

uprising. [Photograph].

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7381369.stm

Guardian News and Media. (2002, March 28). *Arab peace initiative: Full text*. The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/mar/28/israel7>

Herzl Museum. (n.d.). *Time line*.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20120118225438/http://www.herzl.org/english/timeline.aspx?s=7>

History.com Editors. (2010, February 9). *Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin assassinated*. History.com.

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/yitzhak-rabin-assassinated>

History. (2018, May 14). *How the Oslo Accords Almost Ended the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. [Video]. Youtube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nERZr_d343w

Jewish Virtual Library. (n.d.a). *Partition scheme of Peel Commission, 1937*. [Map].

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-peel-commission>

Jewish Virtual Library. (n.d.b). *Pre-state Israel: The Arab revolt*.

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-1936-arab-riots>

Lowe, N. (1991). *Mastering modern world history*. Macmillan

Mahalli, H. (2020). *Filistin benimdir*. Kırmızı Kedi Yayınevi

NowThis World. (2015, May 21). *Why Isn't Palestine a State Yet?* [Video]. Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dyqx7CDGrTA>

Wermenbol, G. (2018, October 3). *The Oslo Accords 25 Years On*. [Photograph]. Middle East Institute (MEI).

<https://mei.edu/publications/oslo-accords-25-years>

Pappe, I. (2006). *A history of modern Palestine*. Cambridge University Press.

Peace Agreements & Related, *Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements ("Oslo Agreement")*, 13 September 1993, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3de5e96e4.html> [accessed 20 February 2022]

Ravid, B. (2018, April 10). *Netanyahu: Israel will never accept Arab peace initiative as basis for talks with Palestinians*. Haaretz.com.

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/pm-netanyahu-israel-cannot-agree-to-2002-arab-league-peace-plan-1.5395145>

Sağlam, H. (2018, June 1). *Uluslararası Hukuk Çerçevesinde İsrail Filistin Su Sorunu*. Ortadoğu Araştırmaları Merkezi (ORSAM).

https://www.orsam.org.tr//d_hbanaliz/HacerSaglam10-1_2.pdf

Sander, O. (2013). *Siyasi tarih: 1918-1994*. İmge Kitabevi.

Ojalvo, D. (2017, May 3). Sultan II. Abdülhamit ve Theodor Herzl. *Şalom*.

https://www.salom.com.tr/arsiv/haber-102963-sultan_ii_abdulhamit_ve_theodor_herzl.html

Tahhan, Z. A. (2017, October 12). *Hamas vs Fatah: Same goal, different approaches*. Hamas | Al Jazeera.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/10/12/hamas-and-fatah-how-are-the-two-groups-different>

Taraki, L. *The Islamic resistance movement in the Palestinian uprising*. Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP). (2016, October 4).

<https://merip.org/1989/01/the-islamic-resistance-movement-in-the-palestinian-uprising/>

TRT World. (2017, June 14). *Hamas – terrorists or freedom fighters?* [Video]. Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9tQXxKTEzs>

TRT World. (2018, September 13). *How and why Oslo Accords Failed*. [Video]. Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ncg713gHwos>

TRT World. (2020, September 18). *Second Intifada: Palestinians still face bleak future 20 years after uprising*. [Video]. Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uz3WVOx-LYg>

TRT World. (2021, September 18). *Palestine marks 21 years since Second Intifada*. [Video]. Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InK4xk30onU>

Turki, F. (1974). *The disinherited, journal of a Palestinian exile*. Modern Reader

UNRWA. *Palestine Refugees*. UNRWA. (n.d.).

<https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>

UNSCO. *Middle east quartet*. UNSCO. (n.d.).

<https://unsco.unmissions.org/mideast-quartet>

Vox. (2018, May 16). *Why Israelis and Palestinians both claim Jerusalem*. [Video]. Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXe9iZQpJ1M>

Winter-Chaumeny, M. (1952). *Naher al-Bared refugee camp, near Tripoli (Lebanon), 1952*. [Photograph]. The Palestinian Museum.

<https://palmuseum.wordpress.com/2014/01/05/unrwa-photographs-1950-1978-a-view-on-history-or-shaped-by-history/>

Wolffsohn, D. (1898). *Theodor Herzl in Palestine in November 1898*. [Photograph].

Mosaic. <https://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/israel-zionism/2021/01/the-mystery-of-theodor-herzl/>