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Introduction

On October 27th, 2023, Hamas launched a devastating attack on Israel from its base in the Gaza Strip, attacking via land, air and sea in a coordinated assault.¹ This attack marks the fifth major resurgence in the Gaza-Israel conflict since the end of the Second Intifada in 2005.² The consequences of this attack, and Israel's response have affected the entire Middle East, exacerbating existing conflicts, even those that have been dormant.

The dispute between Israel and Palestine can be traced back to the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948 through UN Resolution 181, also known as the Partition Plan.³ The aim of Resolution 181 was to divide the British Mandate of Palestine (Mandatory Palestine) into several Arab and Jewish states with Jerusalem holding the status of *corpus separatum*.⁴ ⁵ However, simply days later, the Arab states of Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq invaded Israel as a display of the Arab community's rejection of Israel's statehood.⁶ By the time the war came to an end in early 1949, Israel took control of all of the area proposed for the Jewish state as well as approximately 60% of the area proposed for the Arab state.⁷ Israel took control of West Jerusalem while Jordan took control of East Jerusalem, thus violating the city's *corpus separatum* status and signalling the failure of the Partition Plan.⁸ In the aftermath of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, around 770,000-780,000 Palestinians were displaced and approximately 6,000 Israelis and 13,000 Arabs were killed⁹; thus setting the stage for decades of conflict in the region.

¹ Britannica, "Israel-Hamas War | Explanation, Summary, Casualties, & Map | Britannica," Britannica (Britannica, March 14, 2024), <https://www.britannica.com/event/Israel-Hamas-War>.

² Sarah El Deeb, "What Is Hamas? The Group That Rules the Gaza Strip Has Fought Several Rounds of War with Israel," AP News, October 9, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/hamas-gaza-palestinian-authority-israel-war-ed7018dbaae09b81513daf3bda38109a>.

³ Center for Preventive Action, "Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," Global Conflict Tracker (Council on Foreign Relations, October 6, 2024), <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>.

⁴ Latin for separate entity.

⁵ Britannica, "United Nations Resolution 181 | Map & Summary," in Encyclopædia Britannica, November 2, 2014, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Resolution-181>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Kenneth Cragg, Palestine (Burns & Oates, 1997).

⁸ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, "West Bank | Definition, History, Population, Map, & Facts," in Encyclopædia Britannica, January 30, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/West-Bank>.

⁹ Amanda Ufheil-Somers, "Israel and the Palestinians, 1948-1988 - MERIP," MERIP, May 9, 1988, <http://merip.org/1988/05/israel-and-the-palestinians-1948-1988/>.

In 1964, at an Arab summit meeting, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was founded to centralise the leadership of various Palestinian groups, including Fatah, that had previously operated as covert resistance movements against Israeli occupation.¹⁰ The PLO, however, only came into prominence after the Six Day War in 1967 between Israel and an Egypt-Syria Jordan alliance.¹¹ Over the course of the Six Day War, Israel captured key territories that are central to the conflict in the region today: the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula.¹² The conflict created hundreds of thousands of refugees and brought over a million Palestinians to the occupied territories under Israeli rule, thus marking a significant development in the Israel-Palestine dispute.¹³ In November 1967, the UN passed UN Resolution 242, calling for Israel's withdrawal from its captured territories in the war in exchange for 'lasting peace'.¹⁴ This resolution became the foundation upon which diplomatic efforts between Israel and its neighbors were built on, laying the groundwork for diplomatic discussions such as the Camp David Accords with Egypt and the rise in the idea of a two-state solution with Palestine.¹⁵

6 years later, Syria and Egypt launched a surprise offensive against Israel by crossing the Suez Canal and making initial gains on the Sinai Peninsula. This led Israel into the Yom Kippur War, which was, notably, the last time they declared war on an opposing nation before the Hamas attack in October 2023.¹⁶ In the following years, the Arabs would be met with a humiliating victory wherein 8,000-15,000 Arabs were killed and 15,000-35,000 of them were wounded.¹⁷ Given that the Yom Kippur War was the third Arab-Israeli Conflict in the span of 3 decades, the Camp David accords were hosted by the United States to allow Israel and Egypt to reach a common ground.¹⁸ These were a pair of political agreements that formed the framework for the 1979 Israel-Egypt peace treaty. The Accords recognised the "legitimate rights

¹⁰ Britannica, "Palestine Liberation Organization | Definition, Goals, History, & Facts," in Encyclopædia Britannica, April 11, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Palestine-Liberation-Organization>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Britannica, "Six-Day War | Causes & Summary," in Encyclopædia Britannica, March 29, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Britannica, "Israel-Hamas War | Explanation, Summary, Casualties, & Map | Britannica," Britannica (Britannica, March 14, 2024), <https://www.britannica.com/event/Israel-Hamas-War>.

¹⁷ Itamar Rabinovich, *Waging Peace : Israel and the Arabs at the End of the Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus And Giroux, 1999).

¹⁸ George W Gawrych, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War: The Albatross of Decisive Victory [Illustrated Edition]* (Pickle Partners Publishing, 2015).

of the Palestinian people” and guaranteed to the people full autonomy within a period of five years.¹⁹ This idea of ‘full autonomy’ would be discussed with Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians outside of Camp David.²⁰ Despite the extent of the peace negotiations in Camp David, former Israeli Prime Minister Begin specifically insisted that “on no condition will there be a Palestinian state.”²¹

1987 saw the outbreak of the First Intifada. This was a series of protests, acts of civil disobedience and riots carried out by Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories and Israel.²² It was a result of the collective Palestinian frustration over Israel’s military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip since the Six Day War.²³ Simultaneously, Hamas was formed: a militant Palestinian group that had the aim of establishing an independent Islamic state in historical Palestine.²⁴ They were quick to join Iran’s Axis of Resistance and continue to operate in the Gaza Strip with a substantial amount of support from Iran.²⁵

After the First Intifada, the Oslo Accords came about from 1993-95 to try and achieve peace based on UN Resolution 242. The discussions in Oslo, Norway led to both the recognition of Israel by the PLO and the recognition by Israel of the PLO as the ‘representative of the Palestinian people.’²⁶ The Oslo Accords also resulted in the formation of the Palestinian Authority (PA) that was tasked with the responsibility of conducting limited Palestinian self-governance over parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.²⁷ The Oslo Accords were supposed to bring about Palestinian self-determination, in the form of a Palestinian state

¹⁹ Mfa.gov.il, 2024, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>.

²⁰ A presidential retreat in Maryland, United States, used often when addressing the President of the United States of America

²¹ Mfa.gov.il, 2024, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>.

²² History.com Editors, “Intifada Begins on Gaza Strip,” HISTORY, February 9, 2010, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/intifada-begins-on-gaza-strip>.

²³ Zachary Lockman and Joel Beinin, Intifada : The Palestinian Uprising against Israeli Occupation (Boston, Ma: South End Press, 1989).

²⁴ Britannica, “Hamas | Definition, History, Ideology, & Facts,” in Encyclopedia Britannica, November 11, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hamas>.

²⁵ Adam Zeidan, “Axis of Resistance | Groups, Countries, Map, Leaders, Middle East, Iran, Hamas, Houthi, & Hezbollah,” Encyclopedia Britannica, October 25, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Axis-of-Resistance>.

²⁶ “Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip,” web.archive.org, November 15, 2002, https://web.archive.org/web/20021115180646/http://knesset.gov.il/process/docs/heskemb_eng.htm.

²⁷ “MIDEAST ACCORD: THE OVERVIEW; RABIN and ARAFAT SIGN ACCORD ENDING ISRAEL’S 27-YEAR HOLD on JERICHO and the GAZA STRIP,” The New York Times, May 5, 1994, <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/05/05/world/mideast-accord-overview-rabin-arafat-sign-accord-ending-israel-s-27-year-hold.html?pagewanted=all>.

alongside Israel. This would mean that Israel, which was formed on the land of historic Palestine would accept Palestinian claims to national sovereignty.²⁸ The claims, however, would only be limited to a fraction of historic Palestine (parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip), with the rest left to Israel's control. Right-wing Israelis had no desire to give the Palestinians any concessions, and did not want any agreements with the PLO, which they considered a "terrorist organisation".²⁹ Meanwhile, Palestinian groups, including Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), warned that a two-state solution would forgo the right of Palestinian refugees to return to the historic lands - calling the Oslo Accords a 'Palestinian Versailles'.³⁰ In the end, the Accords failed to establish a definite State of Palestine and only served to anger the extremist militant groups like Hamas and the PIJ.³¹

This anger fuelled the outbreak of the Second Intifada that lasted from 2000-2005 wherein then-Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon sparked the uprising when he stormed al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem with more than 1,000 heavily armed police and soldiers on September 28, 2000.³² Over the course of the Second Intifada, Israeli security forces engaged in gunfights, targeted killings, tank attacks, and airstrikes; Palestinians engaged in gunfights, stone-throwing, and rocket attacks.³³ ³⁴ Additionally, approximately 138 suicide bombings were carried out by Palestinian militant factions mainly targeting Israeli civilians.³⁵ ³⁶ By the end, the death toll was calculated to be around 3,000 Palestinians and

²⁸ Al Jazeera, "What Were the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinians?," www.aljazeera.com, September 13, 2023,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/13/what-were-oslo-accords-israel-palestinians>.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Anne Le More, *International Assistance to the Palestinians after Oslo : Political Guilt, Wasted Money* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2008).

³¹ Al Jazeera, "What Were the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinians?," www.aljazeera.com, September 13, 2023,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/13/what-were-oslo-accords-israel-palestinians>.

³² Ali Adam, "Palestinian Intifada: How Israel Orchestrated a Bloody Takeover," www.aljazeera.com, September 28, 2020,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/9/28/palestinian-intifada-20-years-later-israeli-occupation-continues>

³³ Samy Cohen, "Botched Engagement in the Intifada," Palgrave Macmillan US eBooks, January 1, 2010, 73–91, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230112971_6.

³⁴ Avi Kober, "Targeted Killing during the Second Intifada:: The Quest for Effectiveness," *Journal of Conflict Studies* 27, no. 1 (2024): 94–114,

https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/jcs/2009-v29-jcs_27_1/jcs27_1_1art06/.

³⁵ Nada Matta and René Rojas, "The Second Intifada," *European Journal of Sociology* 57, no. 1 (April 2016): 65–113, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003975616000035>.

³⁶ R. J. Brym and B. Araj, "Suicide Bombing as Strategy and Interaction: The Case of the Second Intifada," *Social Forces* 84, no. 4 (June 1, 2006): 1969–86, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2006.0081>.

1,000 Israelis.³⁷ The Second Intifada ended with the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit of 2005 wherein Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon mutually agreed to take decisive steps towards de-escalating the violence and hostilities,³⁸ with Israel completely pulling out of the Gaza Strip in 2005.³⁹

Things remained settled for 2 years - with the Israeli government looking to withdraw troops and settlers from the West Bank - when Hamas' unexpected victory in the 2006 Palestinian elections and their subsequent takeover of the Gaza Strip incited a new wave of uncertainty in Israeli-Palestinian matters.⁴⁰ Israel recognized the West Bank administration, led by the Palestinian Authority, as the legitimate Palestinian government and later declared the Gaza Strip under Hamas a hostile entity. Israel then imposed a blockade on the Gaza Strip, sealing border crossings and heavily restricting imports.⁴¹ This led to a period of attacks and retaliatory strikes that eventually ended in each side declaring a unilateral cease-fire months later.⁴²

The Israel-Hamas War is the most recent in one of many conflicts and has ignited Iran's Axis of Resistance in retaliation against Israeli action across the Middle Eastern region. Israel and Hezbollah have had violent clashes since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas War as Hezbollah claimed its solidarity to Hamas and their cause.⁴³ Meanwhile, Israel and Iran have engaged in increasingly destructive military strikes after the assassinations of key Iranian and Hezbollah leaders by Israel.⁴⁴ Additionally, Houthi militants in Yemen launched strikes against Israel and commercial ships in the Red Sea in an attempt to prevent Israeli ships from

³⁷ "B'Tselem - Statistics - Fatalities," archive.ph, April 14, 2013, https://archive.today/20130414103627/http://old.btselem.org/statistics/english/Casualties.asp?sD=29&sM=09&sY=2000&eD=15&eM=1&eY=2005&filterby=event&oferet_stat=before.

³⁸ Spencer C Tucker, *Middle East Conflicts from Ancient Egypt to the 21st Century* [4 Volumes] (Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2019).

³⁹ Britannica, "Israel - Netanyahu's Second Stint | Britannica," www.britannica.com, n.d., <https://www.britannica.com/place/Israel/Netanyahus-second-stint>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Al Jazeera, "Mapping 11 Months of Israel-Lebanon Cross-Border Attacks," Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera, September 11, 2024), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/11/mapping-11-months-if-israel-lebanon-cross-border-attacks>.

⁴⁴ Raffi Berg, Tom Spender, and Jonathan Beale, "Why Has Iran Attacked Israel?," www.bbc.com, April 14, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68811276>.

navigating the Red Sea.⁴⁵ ⁴⁶ From the beginning of the war, Israel has launched more than 220 attacks on Syria through air raids and artillery attacks, but the Syrian government has largely stayed out of the regional conflict.⁴⁷ Syria serves as a proxy for the ongoing and escalating hostilities between Israel and Iran.⁴⁸ These conflicts will be further elaborated upon in the Background Information section.

The Israel-Hamas War has also raised widespread humanitarian concerns. Approximately 75% of Gaza's population has been displaced which have led to severe humanitarian crises as many are left without shelter or basic necessities.⁴⁹ Moreover, there are significant shortages of fuel, food, water, medication, and essential medical supplies due to Israel's blockade on the Gaza Strip. The siege has also resulted in a 90% drop in electricity availability which has impacted hospital power supplies, sewage plants and the shutting down of the desalination plants that provide drinking water.⁵⁰

Addressing the Israel-Hamas War is imperative to combatting the humanitarian crisis in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and is the key to de-escalating conflicts across the Middle East. Peace talks and negotiations have broken down time and time again and as conflicts grow increasingly complex and violent the idea of reaching a peaceful resolution grows in difficulty. Delegates must navigate the layers of history that have led to the Israel-Hamas War and subsequent conflicts in the region as well as develop solutions that work not only in the short term, but also ensure peace and stability far into the future.

⁴⁵ "US Warship Intercepts Missiles Fired from Yemen 'Potentially towards Israel,'" BBC News, October 20, 2023, sec. Middle East, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67166863>.

⁴⁶ Al Jazeera, "Yemen's Houthis Say They Targeted Two Israeli Ships in Red Sea: Report," Al Jazeera, December 3, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/3/yemens-houthis-say-they-targeted-two-israeli-ships-in-red-sea-report>.

⁴⁷ Justin Salhani, "Israel's Attacks on Syria Explained," Al Jazeera, October 12, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/12/how-can-israel-attack-syria>.

⁴⁸ Hanefi YAZICI, "SURIYE'DE VEKALET SAVAŞLARI ve ORTADOĞU'DA YENİ GÜÇ DENGESİ," Yönetim ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi 6, no. 3 (October 8, 2018): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.11611/yead.449260>.

⁴⁹ "See How Israel's Siege Has Plunged Gaza into Darkness and Isolation," Washington Post, October 26, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/10/26/gaza-israel-siege-blackout-isolation/>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Definition of Key Terms

Hammas

Hammas, or the Islamic Resistance Movement, is a Palestinian nationalist and Islamist organization founded in 1987 during the First Intifada, primarily as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood. It operates both as a political party and a militant group, governing the Gaza Strip since 2007 and advocating for armed resistance against Israel while seeking to establish an Islamic state in historical Palestine.^{51 52}

Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) is a militant organization founded in 1981 that seeks to liberate historical Palestine through armed struggle, rejecting any political negotiations with Israel. It operates primarily in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, advocating for the establishment of an Islamic state and employing tactics such as suicide bombings and rocket attacks against Israeli targets.⁵³ While Hammas and the PIJ coordinate some military operations and receive support from Iran, they often act independently from each other.⁵⁴

Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is the national military of Israel, comprising three main branches: the Israeli Army, the Israeli Air Force, and the Israeli Navy. Established in 1948, the IDF is a conscripted force responsible for the defense of the State of Israel and its citizens, engaging in various military operations and conflicts throughout its history.⁵⁵

Fatah

Fatah, formally known as the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, is a Palestinian nationalist and social democratic political party founded in the late 1950s, aiming to liberate

⁵¹ BBC, "What Is Hamas, What Is Happening in Israel, and Other Questions," BBC News, October 21, 2024, sec. Middle East, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67039975>.

⁵² Kali Robinson, "What Is Hamas?," Council on Foreign Relations, October 17, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-hamas>.

⁵³ "Islamic Jihad (PIJ) – Mapping Palestinian Politics – European Council on Foreign Relations," ECFR, March 21, 2018, https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping_palestinian_politics/palestinian_islamic_jihad/.

⁵⁴ Erik Skare, "Iran, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad: A Marriage of Convenience," European Council on Foreign Relations, December 18, 2023, <https://ecfr.eu/article/iran-hamas-and-islamic-jihad-a-marriage-of-convenience/>.

⁵⁵ "What Is the IDF? A Brief Explainer on the Israel Defense Forces.," USA TODAY, n.d., <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2023/10/16/what-is-the-idf/71203296007/>.

Palestine through armed struggle and political means. It became the largest faction within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and has played a significant role in Palestinian politics.⁵⁶ Fatah's main goals today include the establishment of an independent Palestinian state through diplomatic negotiations and political engagement, while also emphasizing the need for armed resistance against Israeli occupation as a legitimate means of struggle. The organization seeks to unify Palestinian factions, address internal divisions, and uphold the rights of Palestinians.⁵⁷

Houthi rebels

The Houthi rebels, officially known as Ansar Allah, are a Zaydi Shia Islamist political and military movement that emerged in northern Yemen during the 1990s. They have been a significant force in Yemen's civil war, opposing the Yemeni government and receiving support from Iran, while also engaging in regional conflicts, including attacks on Israel and shipping in the Red Sea.⁵⁸

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is a branch of the Iranian armed forces established in 1979 to protect the Islamic Republic and its revolutionary ideals, operating independently of Iran's regular military.⁵⁹ It plays a significant role in Iran's military strategy, internal security, and regional influence, overseeing various military and paramilitary operations, including support for allied groups like Hezbollah and Hamas.⁶⁰

Hezbollah

Hezbollah, meaning "Party of God," is a Lebanese Shiite political party and militant group that emerged during the Lebanese Civil War in the early 1980s, primarily in response to

⁵⁶ Britannica, "Fatah | Group, Definition, & History | Britannica," in Encyclopædia Britannica, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Fatah>.

⁵⁷ Zena Tahhan, " Hamas vs Fatah: Same Goal, Different Approaches," www.aljazeera.com, October 12, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/10/12/hamas-and-fatah-how-are-the-two-groups-different>.

⁵⁸ BBC, "Who Are the Houthi Rebels and Why Are They Attacking Red Sea Ships?," BBC, December 22, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67614911>.

⁵⁹ Council on Foreign Relations, "Iran's Revolutionary Guards," Council on Foreign Relations, May 6, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/irans-revolutionary-guards>.

⁶⁰ Britannica, "Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) | History, Facts, Subsidiaries, & Commanders | Britannica," www.britannica.com, n.d., <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islamic-Revolutionary-Guard-Corps>.

the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.⁶¹ Backed by Iran, Hezbollah has evolved into a powerful entity within Lebanon, maintaining a significant military presence and engaging in various conflicts with Israel while also participating in the Lebanese political system.⁶²

Axis of Resistance

Iran's Axis of Resistance is a loose military network of militant groups and state-controlled forces in the Middle East, supported by Iran and its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). It includes Hezbollah, Syrian forces, Hamas, and others, opposing the influence of Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United States.⁶³

Genocide

Genocide is defined as acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. This includes actions such as killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm, deliberately inflicting conditions of life aimed at physical destruction, preventing births within the group, and forcibly transferring children to another group, as outlined in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.⁶⁴

Intifada

Intifada is an Arabic term meaning "shaking off," used to describe uprisings or rebellions, particularly in the context of Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation. The term is most commonly associated with two significant Palestinian uprisings: the First Intifada (1987-1993), characterized by widespread protests and civil disobedience, and the Second Intifada (2000-2005), marked by increased violence and armed conflict.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Kali Robinson, "What Is Hezbollah?," Council on Foreign Relations, October 4, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-hezbollah>.

⁶² BBC, "What Is Hezbollah in Lebanon and Will It Go to War with Israel?," Wwww.bbc.com, November 3, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67307858>.

⁶³ Adam Zeidan, "Axis of Resistance | Groups, Countries, Map, Leaders, Middle East, Iran, Hamas, Houthi, & Hezbollah," Encyclopedia Britannica, October 25, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Axis-of-Resistance>.

⁶⁴ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "What Is Genocide?," Ushmm.org (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2019), <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/learn-about-genocide-and-other-mass-atrocities/what-is-genocide>.

⁶⁵ Al Jazeera, "Intifada - PalestineRemix," Aljazeera.com, 2015, <https://remix.aljazeera.com/aje/PalestineRemix/phone/intifada.html>.

Ceasefire

A ceasefire is an agreement between conflicting parties to temporarily stop fighting, often to facilitate negotiations or humanitarian aid. It may be formalized through treaties or informal understandings and does not necessarily signify the end of hostilities, as it serves primarily as a truce to halt military actions for a specified period or under certain conditions.^{66 67}

Camp David Accords

The Camp David Accords were a set of two political agreements signed on September 17, 1978, between Egypt and Israel, facilitated by the U.S. at Camp David. These accords established a framework for peace between Egypt and Israel, leading to the 1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty, while also addressing the issue of Palestinian self-governance in the occupied territories, although the latter provisions were not fully implemented.⁶⁸

Oslo Accords

The Oslo Accords were a series of agreements signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization from 1993 to 1999, aimed at establishing a framework for peace and Palestinian self-governance. Key components included mutual recognition between the two parties, the creation of the Palestinian Authority to govern parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and a commitment to negotiate a final status agreement addressing contentious issues such as borders, refugees, and the status of Jerusalem within five years.⁶⁹

Two-state solution

The two-state solution is a proposed framework for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by establishing two independent states: one for the Jewish people (Israel) and one for the Palestinian people (Palestine).⁷⁰ This approach aims to address national aspirations and territorial claims while promoting coexistence, with discussions often centered around borders based on pre-1967 lines, although significant obstacles, including settlement expansion and

⁶⁶ Cambridge Dictionary, "Ceasefire," @CambridgeWords, December 11, 2024, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/learner-english/ceasefire>.

⁶⁷ "Doctors without Borders | the Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law," [guide-humanitarian-law.org](https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/cease-fire/), n.d., <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/cease-fire/>.

⁶⁸ Jimmy Carter, "Camp David Accords | Summary, History, & Facts," in Encyclopædia Britannica, September 11, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Camp-David-Accords>.

⁶⁹ Britannica, "Oslo Accords | Palestinian Liberation Organization-Israel [1993] | Britannica," in Encyclopædia Britannica, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Oslo-Accords>.

⁷⁰ Britannica, "Two-State Solution | Definition, Facts, History, & Map," in Encyclopædia Britannica, November 20, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/two-state-solution>.

political opposition, have hindered its implementation.⁷¹

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is a political entity founded in 1964 to represent the Palestinian people and advocate for their national aspirations, including the liberation of Palestine and the return of refugees.⁷² Initially conceived at an Arab League summit, the PLO has evolved into an umbrella organization encompassing various Palestinian factions, with its most prominent member being Fatah, and has played a crucial role in negotiating peace agreements with Israel, including the Oslo Accords in the 1990s.⁷³

Palestine Authority (PA)

The Palestinian Authority (PA), officially known as the Palestinian National Authority, is the governing body established in 1994 to exercise partial civil control over the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, following the Oslo Accords.⁷⁴ Initially intended as a temporary administrative body, the PA has faced significant challenges, including internal political divisions, particularly after Hamas took control of Gaza in 2007, and ongoing conflicts with Israel, while it continues to claim authority over both territories and seeks to establish an independent Palestinian state.⁷⁵

Self-determination

Self-determination refers to the right of a people or nation to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development without external interference.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Reuters, “What Is the Two-State Solution to the Israel-Palestinian Conflict?,” Reuters, January 25, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/what-is-two-state-solution-israel-palestinian-conflict-2024-01-25/>.

⁷² “Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) – Mapping Palestinian Politics – European Council on Foreign Relations,” ECFR, March 20, 2018, https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping_palestinian_politics/plo/.

⁷³ ADL, “Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) | ADL,” www.adl.org, September 1, 2016, <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/palestine-liberation-organization-plo>.

⁷⁴ “Palestinian Authority (PA),” ECFR, March 20, 2018, https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping_palestinian_politics/palestinian_authority/.

⁷⁵ Al Jazeera, “What Is the Palestinian Authority and What Is Its Relationship with Israel?,” www.aljazeera.com, October 11, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/11/what-is-the-palestinian-authority-and-how-is-it-viewed-by-palestinians>.

⁷⁶ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Self-Determination | Definition, History, & Facts,” in Encyclopædia Britannica, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/self-determination>.

Background Information

This section will be broken down into the 3 main sections: the Israel-Hamas War, conflicts against Iran's Axis of Resistance and humanitarian concerns due to the ongoing fighting.

Israel-Hamas War

The Israel-Hamas War began on 7th October 2023 when Hamas launched air, land and sea assault on Israel from the Gaza Strip.⁷⁷ This involved a rocket barrage and a few thousand Hamas militants breaching the Israel-Gaza barrier and attacking Israeli civilian communities and military bases. This led to the death of approximately 1200 people⁷⁸ and the capture of around 250 Israelis in retaliation for Israel's previous arrests of Palestinian prisoners and detainees.⁷⁹ Hamas stated that its attack was in response to Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinian territories and Golan Heights, blockade of Gaza, expansion of settlements in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights as well as Israel's disregard for international law and the general plight of the Palestinians.^{80 81 82}

⁷⁷ Human Rights Watch, "October 7 Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes by Hamas-Led Groups | Human Rights Watch," Human Rights Watch, July 17, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/17/october-7-crimes-against-humanity-war-crimes-hamas-led-groups>.

⁷⁸ Al Jazeera, "Israel Revises down Toll from October 7 Attack to 'around 1,200,'" Al Jazeera, November 10, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/10/israel-revises-death-toll-from-october-7-hamas-attack-to-1200-people>.

⁷⁹ Human Rights Watch, "October 7 Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes by Hamas-Led Groups | Human Rights Watch," Human Rights Watch, July 17, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/17/october-7-crimes-against-humanity-war-crimes-hamas-led-groups>.

⁸⁰ Al Jazeera, "'World Is Watching': Fears Grow of a Huge Gaza Invasion by Israel," [www.aljazeera.com](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/7/world-is-watching-fears-grow-of-a-massive-gaza-invasion-by-israel), October 7, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/7/world-is-watching-fears-grow-of-a-massive-gaza-invasion-by-israel>.

⁸¹ Bethan McKernan et al., "Seven Days of Terror That Shook the World and Changed the Middle East," *The Observer*, October 14, 2023, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/14/seven-days-of-terror-that-shook-the-world-and-changed-the-middle-east>.

⁸² Jack Khoury, "Hamas Releases Memo Explaining Why It Waged War on Israel; Gazans Question Timing, Cite Criticism of Hamas," *Haaretz*, January 21, 2024, sec. Israel News, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-21/ty-article/.premium/hamas-releases-memo-explaining-why-it-waged-war-on-israel-gazans-question-timing/0000018d-2d3a-db77-ad9f-ff3abfd30000>.

Israel's aerial bombardment campaign

In retaliation for the October 7th attack, Israel launched one of the most destructive bombing campaigns in modern history⁸³ and invaded Gaza on the 27th of October with the objective of destroying Hamas and freeing hostages.⁸⁴ The bombing of the Gaza Strip by the Israeli Air Force continues to be part of Israel's aerial bombardment campaign against Hamas. These airstrikes have damaged or destroyed hundreds of Palestinian refugee camps, schools, hospitals, mosques, and other civilian infrastructure.⁸⁵ Between 22nd October and 6th November 2024, Israeli planes bombed the area around the Al Shifa and Al Quds Hospitals and the Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital.⁸⁶ ⁸⁷Additionally, the Israelis have led airstrikes on the Nasser Medical Complex. Across the Gaza Strip 136 paramedics have been killed and 25 ambulance vehicles have been destroyed.⁸⁸ According to UNICEF and Save the Children, by April 2024 Israel had bombed 30 out of the 36 hospitals in the Gaza Strip.⁸⁹ The IDF claimed that this bombing was justified as Hamas allegedly used these medical facilities for military operations, such as storing weapons or conducting attacks.⁹⁰ Notably, several organisations including the UN Human Rights Watch and Think Global

⁸³ Julia Frankel, "Israel's Military Campaign in Gaza Is among the Most Destructive in History, Experts Say," PBS NewsHour, December 21, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israels-military-campaign-in-gaza-is-among-the-most-destructive-in-history-experts-say>.

⁸⁴ Financial Times, "Can Israel Achieve Its War Goals in Gaza?," [www.ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/282ffdcd-70c0-4da5-9a7e-5a31d7677fe5), n.d., <https://www.ft.com/content/282ffdcd-70c0-4da5-9a7e-5a31d7677fe5>.

⁸⁵ Evan Dyer, "Israel's Gaza Bombing Campaign Is the Most Destructive of This Century, Analysts Say," CBC, December 30, 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/israel-gaza-bombing-hamas-civilian-casualties-1.7068647>.

⁸⁶ Brishti Basu, "Gaza Hospital Braces for Bombs after Communications Blackout and Health-Care 'Nightmare,'" CBC, October 29, 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/gaza-hospitals-bombs-healthcare-1.7012078>.

⁸⁷ Jacob Magid, "'There's No Explanation for Such an Attack': Ankara Says IDF Bombed Turkish-Funded Hospital in Gaza," [www.timesofisrael.com](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/theres-no-explanation-for-such-an-attack-ankara-says-idf-bombing-turkish-funded-hospital-in-gaza/), n.d., https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/theres-no-explanation-for-such-an-attack-ankara-says-idf-bombing-turkish-funded-hospital-in-gaza/.

⁸⁸ Farah Najjar and Joseph Stepanky, "Israel-Hamas War Updates: Israeli Strike Hits Gaza Medical Convoy," Al Jazeera, November 3, 2023, <https://aje.io/ddc07n?update=2459310>.

⁸⁹ "Over 2% of Gaza's Child Population Killed or Injured in Six Months of War," Save the Children International, 2024, <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/over-2-gaza-s-child-population-killed-or-injured-six-months-war>.

⁹⁰ CNN, "How Gaza's Hospitals Became Battlegrounds," [www.cnn.com](https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2024/01/middleeast/gaza-hospitals-destruction-investigation-intl-cmd/), n.d., <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2024/01/middleeast/gaza-hospitals-destruction-investigation-intl-cmd/>.

Health have challenged the IDF's claims and placed a spotlight on the fact that these attacks have resulted in significant casualties for the Palestinian civilians.⁹¹

On October 23, 2023 airstrikes killed 436 people in the Al-Shati refugee camp and southern Khan Younis in one night. The continued bombing of this refugee camp over the next few months resulted in the destruction of Al-Shati refugee camp by March 2024; this refugee camp was one of the world's most densely populated areas before the war.⁹² Additionally, on 28 October 2023 the Israeli Air Force bombed residential buildings in the Jabalia refugee camp leading to what is described by Al Jazeera as a "massive massacre."⁹³ Between October 2023 and 2024, it was reported by the UNOCHA that 87% of the schools in Gaza had been hit or damaged by airstrikes.⁹⁴ In March 2024, the United Nations recorded 212 'direct hits' on schools in Gaza by Israeli bombardment out of which 53 were completely destroyed.⁹⁵ This included an United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) school, Al-Fakhoora school, Al-Azhar University, and Al-Tabaen school.⁹⁶

Over the course of the war, Israeli airstrikes have also destroyed a UNRWA humanitarian supply depot, the headquarters of the Palestinian Civil Defence and Gaza's flour mills.⁹⁷ ⁹⁸According to a UN-led consortium, 60% of all housing in Gaza has been

⁹¹ Human Rights Watch, "Gaza: Unlawful Israeli Hospital Strikes Worsen Health Crisis | Human Rights Watch," Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch, November 14, 2023), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/14/gaza-unlawful-israeli-hospital-strikes-worsen-health-crisis>.

⁹² Federica Marsi and Usaid Siddiqui, "Israel's War on Gaza Updates: South Africa Asks ICJ to Prevent Famine," Al Jazeera, March 6, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/3/6/israels-war-on-gaza-live-un-food-convoy-blocked-from-north-gaza-by-israel?update=2753286>.

⁹³ Joseph Stepansky and Farah Najjar, "Israel-Hamas War Updates: Dozens Killed in Jabalia Camp, Gaza Official Says," Al Jazeera, October 31, 2023, <https://aje.io/93du7y?update=2451880>.

⁹⁴ Daniel Wood, "These Maps and Images Show What's Left of Gaza, 1 Year into the Israel-Hamas War," NPR, October 10, 2024, <https://www.npr.org/2024/10/09/g-s1-27175/israel-hamas-war-gaza-map>.

⁹⁵ "Gaza War: 'Direct Hits' on More than 200 Schools since Israeli Bombing Began," UN News, March 27, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1148031>.

⁹⁶ Farah Najjar and Joseph Stepansky, "Israel-Hamas War Updates: Aid Groups Warn Israel's Siege Strangling Gaza," Al Jazeera, November 17, 2023, <https://aje.io/2jzuwp?update=2494308>.

⁹⁷ Jordan News, "Israeli Air Strike Destroys UNRWA Warehouse," Jordan News | Latest News from Jordan, MENA (Jordan News | Latest News from Jordan, MENA, October 16, 2023), <https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-20/Middle-East/Israeli-air-strike-destroys-UNRWA-warehouse-31568>.

⁹⁸ Andrew Jeong et al., "Israel-Gaza War: Limited Fuel to Be Allowed into Gaza, U.S. And Israeli Officials Say; Communications in Gaza Partly Restored," Washington Post (The Washington Post, November 17, 2023), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/17/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-palestine/#>.

destroyed by these bombings⁹⁹ and according to a joint report by the EU, World Bank and the UN approximately 57% of the water infrastructure has been damaged and destroyed.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, 75% of Gaza's telecom towers have been left inoperable by the Israelis¹⁰¹ and 57% of Gaza's agricultural land has been degraded by the ongoing conflict.¹⁰² It was reported in March 2024, that in the span of 5 months the Israeli attacks had led to the destruction of 1,000 mosques in the Gaza strip.¹⁰³

It was discovered that Israel had also conducted extensive airstrikes in areas it had previously told civilians to evacuate to - safe zones. CNN has stated that it has verified at least three locations Israel bombed after telling civilians it was safe to go there.¹⁰⁴

Israel's extensive aerial bombardment campaign has elicited global condemnation. On 6 January 2024, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths stated that Gaza had "simply become uninhabitable."¹⁰⁵ James Elder, the UNICEF spokesman, stated, "I have never seen such devastation. Just chaos and ruin, with rubble and debris scattered in every single direction."¹⁰⁶ According to Humanity &

⁹⁹ PBS News, " Hamas and Israel Exchange More Hostages for Prisoners on 5th Day of Fragile Cease-Fire," PBS News, November 28, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/hamas-and-israel-exchange-more-hostages-for-prisoners-on-5th-day-of-fragile-cease-fire>.

¹⁰⁰ European Union, World Bank, and United Nations, "Gaza Strip Interim Damage Assessment," March 29, 2024, <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf>.

¹⁰¹ Mersiha Gadzo and Maziar Motamedi, "Israel's War on Gaza Updates: Fighting Rages in North's Evacuation Zone," Al Jazeera, May 16, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/5/16/israels-war-on-gaza-live-mass-displacement-as-israelis-intensify-assaults?update=2903896>.

¹⁰² Reuters, "More than Half of Cropland in Hungry Gaza Is Damaged, UN Says," Reuters, June 13, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/more-than-half-cropland-hungry-gaza-is-damaged-un-says-2024-06-13/>.

¹⁰³ Maziar Motamedi, "Israel's War on Gaza Updates: 'Extreme Hunger' in Gaza as Ramadan Begins," Al Jazeera, March 10, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/3/10/israels-war-on-gaza-live-israel-is-restricting-lifesaving-aid-unrwa?update=2761896>.

¹⁰⁴ Jake Tacchi and CNN, "Israel Struck Some Areas It Directed Civilians to in Gaza, CNN Analysis Shows," CNN, December 21, 2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/21/middleeast/israel-strikes-evacuation-zones-gaza-intl-cmd/index.html>.

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/France24.English>, "Gaza Has 'Simply Become Uninhabitable': UN Humanitarian Chief," France 24, January 5, 2024, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240105-gaza-has-simply-become-uninhabitable-un-humanitarian-chief>.

¹⁰⁶ "Gaza's Children: Trapped in a Cycle of Suffering," www.unicef.org, n.d., <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/gazas-children-trapped-cycle-suffering>.

Inclusion, approximately 45,000 bombs were dropped on the Gaza Strip in the conflict's first three months.¹⁰⁷ Corey Scher of the CUNY Graduate Center stated that "The rate of damage being registered is unlike anything we have studied before. It is much faster and more extensive than anything we have mapped."¹⁰⁸

Iran's Axis of Resistance

As detailed earlier, Iran's Axis of Resistance comprises several militant groups that term themselves as resistance forces and state-controlled armed forces that are supported by Iran and the IRGC. Since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas conflict, several members of the Axis of Resistance have been in conflict with Israel as a show of support for the establishment of the Arab state of Palestine and as actions of their own self-interest.¹⁰⁹ Primarily the conflict stems from animosity between Iran and Israel, this has led to proxy wars in regions such as Lebanon (Hezbollah) as detailed below.¹¹⁰

Iran-Israel [Direct] Conflict

Israel-Iran tensions only began to escalate in April 2024 when Israel bombed the Iranian embassy in Damascus, Syria,¹¹¹ claiming that Iranian officials in the building were allegedly meeting with Palestinian militant leaders at the time of the attack.¹¹² Iran vowed to respond, and Western sources suspected it would directly attack Israel.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ "Unexploded Bombs, a Long-Term Threat to Life in Gaza," France 24, March 11, 2024, <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20240311-unexploded-bombs-long-term-threat-gaza-strip-israel-humanity-inclusion>.

¹⁰⁸ Laurence Coustal, "'Unlike Anything We Have Studied': Gaza's Destruction in Numbers," www.barrons.com, n.d., <https://www.barrons.com/news/unlike-anything-we-have-studied-gaza-s-destruction-in-numbers-cf896782>.

¹⁰⁹ Adam Zeidan, "Axis of Resistance | Groups, Countries, Map, Leaders, Middle East, Iran, Hamas, Houthi, & Hezbollah," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, October 25, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Axis-of-Resistance>.

¹¹⁰ "Israel Attacks Show Syria's Conflict Becoming a Regional Proxy War," www.telegraph.co.uk, n.d., <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10039056/Israel-attacks-show-Syrias-conflict-becoming-a-regional-proxy-war.html>.

¹¹¹ Léonie Chao-Fong, Patrick Wintour, and Lorenzo Tondo, "Middle East Crisis: Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps Says Two of Its Generals Killed in Damascus Consulate Strike – as It Happened," *The Guardian* (The Guardian, April 2024), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2024/apr/01/israel-hamas-war-airstrike-iran-consulate-gaza-syria-live-updates#top-of-blog>.

¹¹² Amanda Taub, "Israel Bombed an Iranian Embassy Complex. Is That Allowed?," *The New York Times*, April 2, 2024, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/02/world/europe/interpreter-israel-syria-embassy.html>.

¹¹³ MJ Lee and Jennifer Hansler, "US Preparing for Significant Iran Attack on US or Israeli Assets in the Region as Soon as next Week," *CNN*, April 5, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/05/politics/us-israel-iran-retaliation-strike/>.

Subsequently, Israel began preparations for an attack by evacuating Israeli embassies and jamming GPS signals in the case of an aerial bombing.¹¹⁴

2 weeks later, Iran and its proxies attacked Israel with approximately 300 drones and several ballistic missiles.¹¹⁵ The Houthis, Islamic Resistance in Iraq, Badr Organisation, and True Promise Corps also launched attacks on Israel under Iranian command.¹¹⁶ Although several drones were intercepted by Jordan, the United States and the United Kingdom, Israel was hit across various cities including the West Bank and Golan Heights.¹¹⁷ This was viewed as the Iranian response to the bombing in Damascus and increased the volatility of the situation as the world anticipated an Israeli response.

On 19 April 2024, Israel retaliated against Iran by attacking three targets in or near Isfahan International Airport.¹¹⁸ One of the targets was a radar for the Natanz nuclear site. While Iran claimed that its air defense shot down all Israeli projectiles, satellite images showed a damaged air defense battery and damage to the attacked radar system.¹¹⁹ After this event, CNN was informed anonymously that direct-to-state strikes were over, signalling a want for de-escalation from both sides.¹²⁰

The summer of 2024 saw an increase in clashes between Hezbollah and Iran that will be elaborated upon in the next subsection.

¹¹⁴ Jane Arraf, "Iranian Officials Accuse Israel of a Deadly Attack on Iran's Consulate in Syria," NPR, April 2024, <https://www.npr.org/2024/04/01/1242131816/iran-consulate-attack-syria-israel>.

¹¹⁵ Erin Banco, Lara Seligman, and Paul McLeary, "Iran Launches Large-Scale Attack against Israel," POLITICO (Politico, April 13, 2024), <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/04/13/iran-israel-attacks-00152116>.

¹¹⁶ Lucas Lillieholm, "US Warship Shoots down Attack Drones over the Red Sea," CNN, November 23, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/22/politics/us-warship-attack-drones-red-sea/index.html>.

¹¹⁷ By Chris Lau CNN Sophie Tanno and [Tori B. Powell](/profiles/tori-powell), "Live Updates: Devastation in Gaza as Israel Wages War on Hamas," CNN, April 13, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-04-13-24/index.html>.

¹¹⁸ Farnaz Fassihi et al., "Israeli Weapon Damaged Iranian Air Defenses without Being Detected, Officials Say," The New York Times, April 20, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/18/world/israel-iran-gaza-war-news/satellite-imagery-shows-that-a-precision-attack-damaged-an-air-defense-system-at-an-iranian-base>.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ By Kathleen Magramo CNN Elizabeth Wolfe and Aditi Sangal, "Direct State-To-State Strikes between Israel and Iran Are 'Over,' Says Regional Intelligence Source," CNN, April 19, 2024, https://edition.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-iran-gaza-conflict-news-04-19-24/h_b3be04c2f747ec45fc2a338bbc768cf6.

On October 1 2024, Iran launched 200 missiles at Israel in two waves. Iran claimed this was an attack of 'self-defense' in retaliation after Israel's assassinations of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, Hezbollah Leader Hassan Nasrallah, and IRGC general Abbas Nilforoushan.¹²¹ The Nevatim Air Base in Negev was hit by around 20-32 missiles, damaging a hangar and taxiway. Other missiles hit a few areas in Tel Aviv and Gedera but none caused major damage.¹²² Beyond physical damage, the strike angered Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He called the strike a "big mistake", vowing that Iran will "pay for it."¹²³ Additionally, Israel's strongest ally, the U.S., promised "severe consequences" pledging that it would continue to aid Israel so that Iran would face repercussions for its actions.¹²⁴

The hostility between Iran and Israel has not only led to direct conflict but has also led to an escalation in proxy wars across the region. Some call the current circumstances in the Middle East, the Iran-Israel Cold War.¹²⁵

Israel-Hezbollah Conflict

Israel and Hezbollah have been in conflict since Hamas's initial attack. What started as Hezbollah launching rockets and artillery at Israeli positions on October 8th turned into a "prolonged exchange of bombardments, leading to extensive displacement in Israel and Lebanon."¹²⁶ Israel retaliated by launching drone strikes and artillery shells at Hezbollah positions. Hezbollah has claimed that it will not stop attacking Israel until they halt their

¹²¹ Victoria Kim et al., "Israel Invades Southern Lebanon: Live Updates and News," Nytimes.com (The New York Times, October 2024),

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/10/01/world/israel-lebanon-hezbollah>.

¹²² "Website Filtered," Telegraph.co.uk, 2024,

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/10/03/pictured-israel-nevatim-air-base-damage-iranian-missiles/>.

¹²³ Ivana Kottasová et al., "Israel Says Iran 'Will Pay' for Launching a Major Missile Attack against It," CNN, October 2024, <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/10/01/politics/iran-missile-attack-israel/index.html>.

¹²⁴ "US: We Will Help Israel Exact 'Severe Consequences' from Iran for Missile Attack,"

Timesofisrael.com, 2024,

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-we-will-help-israel-exact-severe-consequences-from-iran-for-missile-attack/>.

¹²⁵ "An Iranian Writer Travels the Jewish State as the Cold War between Israel and Iran Gets Hot," Tablet Magazine, March 9, 2012,

<https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/93510/iran-around-tel-aviv>.

¹²⁶ Neri Zilber, "Israel's Dilemma in Confronting the Threat from Hezbollah," The Christian Science Monitor, November 16, 2023,

<https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2023/1116/Israel-s-dilemma-in-confronting-the-threat-from-Hezbollah>.

military operations in Gaza.¹²⁷ Meanwhile, Israel has stated that it will continue to retaliate against Hezbollah until its citizens can return safely to the northern border.¹²⁸

On September 17th 2024, it was reported by Al Jazeera that thousands of hand-held pages exploded in the hands of Hezbollah operatives in Lebanon.¹²⁹ This was one of two waves of Israel's attacks on Hezbollah's communication devices. 10 days later, the IDF claimed that it had attacked Hezbollah's headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon's capital, and targeted the Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. Hezbollah's commander of the south, Ali Karaki was also killed during this attack.¹³⁰

On October 1st, 2024 Israel began its invasion of southern Lebanon. The IDF managed to dismantle a large chunk of Hezbollah's military infrastructure in southern Lebanon and destroy a massive portion of its missile stockpile in the region.¹³¹ A ceasefire agreement was established on 27th November 2024. It was set to last for 60 days and its terms necessitated Hezbollah to transport its fighters across the Litani River further north (~ 30 km away from the Israeli border) while Israel would begin to withdraw its forces from the areas of southern Lebanon it had occupied.¹³²

Overall the Israel-Hezbollah conflict has forced ~96,000 people to leave their homes in northern Israel, while 1.4 million Lebanon have found themselves displaced due to the frequent border clashes and volatility over the year.¹³³

¹²⁷ Al Jazeera, "Mapping 11 Months of Israel-Lebanon Cross-Border Attacks," Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera, September 11, 2024), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/11/mapping-11-months-if-israel-lebanon-cross-border-attacks>.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Al Jazeera, "The History of Conflict between Hezbollah and Israel," Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera, September 18, 2024), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/18/hezbollah-and-israel-a-timeline-of-conflict>.

¹³⁰ Al Arabiya English, "Hezbollah Confirms Senior Leader Ali Karaki Was Killed in Israeli Strike," Al Arabiya English, September 29, 2024, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2024/09/29/hezbollah-confirms-ali-karaki-killed-in-israeli-strike>.

¹³¹ The Economist, "Israel and Hizbullah Strike a Fragile Deal to End Their War," The Economist, November 26, 2024, <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2024/11/26/israel-and-hizbullah-strike-a-fragile-deal-to-end-their-war>.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Reuters, "Around One Million Lebanese Displaced by Israeli Attacks, Official Says," ynetnews, September 28, 2024, <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/hy2hmk10r>.

Humanitarian Concerns

The Israel-Palestine conflict has led to a slew of humanitarian issues in the Middle Eastern region. This includes massive casualties, widespread displacement, a public health crisis, food and water insecurity and access to humanitarian aid.

The ongoing conflict has resulted in staggering death tolls, with reports indicating over 38,000 Palestinian deaths and significant casualties among Israelis, including civilians and children. This violence has led to the displacement of nearly the entire population of Gaza, with approximately 1.7 million people forced to flee their homes multiple times due to military operations.¹³⁴ Additionally, it is important to note that there has been a complete collapse of healthcare facilities and infrastructure in Gaza due to the prolonged Israeli bombings of hospitals.¹³⁵ The blockade has prevented the entry of necessary medical aid into the region and the compromised sanitation of the Strip has increased the people's susceptibility to diseases. Notably, there was an outbreak of the poliovirus in the region for the first time in 25 years in July 2024.¹³⁶ This serves as an indication of the truly inhumane conditions the people of Gaza are living in and the magnitude of the public health crisis the people face.

The blockade of Gaza

Since 1991, Israel has been placing restrictions on the movement of goods in and out of the Gaza Strip. However, after Hamas's victory in 2007, this restriction turned into a complete blockade on the movement of people and goods in and out of the Gaza Strip. Following the attacks of October 7th, the blockade's restrictions grew even more severe and has essentially cut off access to essential supplies such as food, water and medical aid. This has led to critical humanitarian conditions and imminent famine in the region. This was announced as a 'total blockade' of the Gaza Strip.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ United Nations, "Humanitarian Situation in Gaza 'a Moral Stain on Us All', Secretary-General Tells Security Council, Stressing International Law Must Be Respected by All | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," [press.un.org](https://press.un.org/en/2024/sgsm22310.doc.htm), July 17, 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sgsm22310.doc.htm>.

¹³⁵ Rick Maity et al., "The Ongoing Israel-Hamas Conflict: A Humanitarian Health Crisis," *Annals of Medicine and Surgery*, June 20, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1097/ms9.0000000000002242>.

¹³⁶ "Polio in Gaza: Experts Explain the Outbreak and the Public Health Response | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health," Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (HSPH, October 3, 2024), <https://hsph.harvard.edu/news/polio-gaza-public-health-response/>.

¹³⁷ Al Jazeera, "Israel Announces 'Total' Blockade on Gaza," www.aljazeera.com, October 9, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/9/israel-announces-total-blockade-on-gaza>.

Food and water insecurity

In January 2024, Israel blocked 56% of humanitarian aid to northern Gaza¹³⁸ and in February 2024 it was reported by the UNRWA that they had blocked food for 1.1 million Palestinians in Gaza.¹³⁹ The abovementioned Israeli airstrikes on Gaza have destroyed food infrastructure such as mills and food stores. Additionally, there is an extensive scarcity of essential supplies due to the blockade of Gaza. 2.2 million people in Gaza are at emergency levels of food insecurity and exacerbated the overall humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.¹⁴⁰ These famine conditions have been recorded as the “highest number of people facing catastrophic hunger” on the IPC scale. It is also expected to be the most severe anthropogenic famine since World War 2.¹⁴¹

Following the total blockade on Gaza, clean water has become unavailable for most living in the region. This is exacerbated by Israeli airstrikes in the region that have destroyed the water accessibility infrastructure in the Strip. The people of Gaza have long struggled to access safe, adequate water even before the attack of October 2023. Approximately 90% of Gaza’s water supply comes from the Coastal Aquifer Basin.¹⁴² Unfortunately, the water in the basin is brackish and has been contaminated over time due to seawater intrusion, over extraction, sewage and chemical infiltration. Due to Israel’s siege, Gaza’s access water immediately dropped by 95%. The United Nations has reported that the average Gazan lives on only 3 litres per day (the emergency

¹³⁸ Patrick Wintour and Patrick Wintour Diplomatic editor, “Israel Appears to Be in Breach of ICJ Orders on Gaza, Senior UN Official Says,” The Guardian, February 10, 2024, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/10/israel-appears-to-be-in-breach-of-icj-orders-on-gaza-senior-un-official-says>.

¹³⁹ “Israel Is Holding up Food for 1.1 Million Palestinians in Gaza, the Main UN Aid Agency There Says,” AP News, February 9, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-unwra-bank-aid-4ed5e0652dd81b875055679a01a19371>.

¹⁴⁰ British Red Cross, “Gaza Humanitarian Crisis: Aid Running Out, Mass Displacement,” British Red Cross, November 5, 2024, <https://www.redcross.org.uk/stories/disasters-and-emergencies/world/whats-happening-in-gaza-humanitarian-crisis-grows>.

¹⁴¹ Alex de Waal, “We Are about to Witness in Gaza the Most Intense Famine since the Second World War,” The Guardian, March 21, 2024, sec. Opinion, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/mar/21/we-are-about-to-witness-the-most-intense-famine-since-world-war-ii-in-gaza>.

¹⁴² Christina Bouri and Diana Roy, “The Israel-Hamas War: The Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza,” Council on Foreign Relations, February 8, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/israel-hamas-war-humanitarian-crisis-gaza>.

standard is 15 litres per day). This highlights the severity of the water insecurity that the people of the Gaza Strip face due to the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict.¹⁴³

Major Countries and Organisations Involved

Israel

Israel is the center of the entire conflict in the Middle Eastern region. The establishment of its statehood has been contested since the failed implementation of the UN Partition Plan and the First Arab-Israeli War. Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip, Syria and Lebanon and actions towards Iran have resulted in a region abundant in proxy wars and volatility.¹⁴⁴ Specifically Israel has been the recipient of attacks from a variety of members from Iran's Axis of Resistance: from missile strikes by Iran to border clashes with Hezbollah and skirmishes in the Red Sea against the Houthi militant rebels. It has also provided equivalent retaliation to these strikes in the forms of airstrikes, blockades and invasions.¹⁴⁵

Iran

Iran's involvement in the Israel-Palestine conflict has been a key supporter of Hamas and other militant groups like Hezbollah and the Houthi rebels. It has positioned itself as a key opposition against Israel in the widespread regional struggle.¹⁴⁶ Iran's leadership has publicly celebrated Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 and framed it as a testmate to the resilience of Palestinian resistance against the oppression of Israel.¹⁴⁷ The formation of Iran's Axis of Resistance is theorised to be part of its strategy to disrupt Israel's influence in the region and disturb normalisation efforts between Israel and Arab states.¹⁴⁸ As tensions have escalated over these 14 months, Iran has threatened retaliation against any Israeli ground invasion of Gaza and has emphasised its commitment to the Palestinian cause. Simultaneously, it has used the conflict to amplify its regional influence.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ BBC, "What Is Hamas, What Is Happening in Israel, and Other Questions," BBC News, October 21, 2024, sec. Middle East, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67039975>.

¹⁴⁵ Al Jazeera, "The History of Conflict between Hezbollah and Israel," Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera, September 18, 2024), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/18/hezbollah-and-israel-a-timeline-of-conflict>.

¹⁴⁶ Raffi Berg, Tom Spender, and Jonathan Beale, "Why Has Iran Attacked Israel?," [Www.bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68811276), April 14, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68811276>.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Al Jazeera Staff, "Timeline of Iran-Israel Escalation since the War on Gaza Began," Al Jazeera, April 19, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/19/how-iran-israel-tensions-have-escalated-since-the-war-on-gaz-a-a-timeline>.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

Lebanon

Lebanon's involvement in the Israel-Hamas War and spillover conflicts has been mainly characterised through Hezbollah. Following Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, Hezbollah began engaging in clashes with Israel at the Israeli northern border.¹⁵⁰ They claimed this to be a show of their support and solidarity for the Palestinian cause and a response to decades of Israeli aggression.¹⁵¹ The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah escalated in the latter months of 2024 when Israel began to conduct extensive airstrikes and ground operations against Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon.¹⁵² Most recently, a U.S. brokered ceasefire agreement was reached to halt the fighting and establish a framework to address both Hezbollah's and Israel's security concerns regarding southern Lebanon.¹⁵³ Iran is a major supporter of Hezbollah and as such a portion of Hezbollah's actions against Israel are also sanctioned by Iran.¹⁵⁴

United States of America

Historically, the U.S has been Israel's primary ally by providing approximately \$3.8 billion in military annually and supporting its right to self-defense against threats like Hamas. In the past the U.S has attempted to mediate peace efforts between Israel and the Arab states as well as Israel and the Palestinian representatives.¹⁵⁵ This was seen through their heavy involvement in the Camp David Accords in 1978 and the Oslo Accords in the 1990s. These were the first documents that aimed to establish a framework for a two-state solution. Hence, the U.S. has played a pivotal role in the Israel-Palestine conflict for decades - whether that be through military aid or diplomatic and economic involvement.¹⁵⁶ The Biden administration has sought to balance support for Israel with calls for humanitarian assistance to Palestinians and has pushed

¹⁵⁰ Al Jazeera, "Mapping 11 Months of Israel-Lebanon Cross-Border Attacks," Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera, September 11, 2024), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/11/mapping-11-months-if-israel-lebanon-cross-border-attacks>.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² "What's Happening in Lebanon? A Guide to the War-Torn Democracy," Council on Foreign Relations, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/whats-happening-lebanon-guide-war-torn-democracy>.

¹⁵³ Victoria Kim et al., "Israel Invades Southern Lebanon: Live Updates and News," Nytimes.com (The New York Times, October 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/10/01/world/israel-lebanon-hezbollah>.

¹⁵⁴ Adam Zeidan, "Axis of Resistance | Groups, Countries, Map, Leaders, Middle East, Iran, Hamas, Houthi, & Hezbollah," Encyclopedia Britannica, October 25, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Axis-of-Resistance>.

¹⁵⁵ Jim Zanotti and Jeremy Sharp, "Israel and Hamas Conflict in Brief: Overview, U.S. Policy, and Options for Congress" (Congressional Research Service, October 4, 2024), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47828>.

¹⁵⁶ Kali Robinson, "What Is U.S. Policy on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?," Council on Foreign Relations, July 12, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-us-policy-israeli-palestinian-conflict>.

for ceasefire negotiations amid escalating violence.¹⁵⁷ This ongoing involvement reflects the U.S.'s strategic interests in the region and the extent of their influence over Israel.

Syria

Following the escalation of violence after Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, Syria has refrained from significant military engagement against Israel, opting instead for sporadic cross-border shelling and rocket attacks on the occupied Golan Heights.¹⁵⁸ Despite expressing solidarity with Palestinians and hosting pro-Palestinian rhetoric, Assad's regime was careful not to provoke Israel directly, especially given the ongoing Israeli airstrikes targeting Iranian assets and militias within Syria.¹⁵⁹ This restrained approach reflected a broader strategy to maintain stability within Syria while managing its complex relationships with Iran and Hezbollah. Given the ousting of Assad and the end of his regime in December 2024, the stance Syria's future leadership will take in the ongoing Israel-Hamas War is yet to be seen.

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

The UNRWA plays a critical role in providing humanitarian assistance to millions of Palestinian refugees across Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Due to the onset of the Israel-Hamas War, the UNRWA has faced significant challenges, including increased demand for aid amid widespread destruction and displacement.¹⁶⁰ The agency has reported distributing food packages to nearly 1.9 million individuals and conducting millions of medical consultations during the crisis.¹⁶¹ However, its operations have been severely hampered by Israel's recent legislation prohibiting UNRWA from functioning within Israeli-controlled areas, which threatens to dismantle vital aid networks.¹⁶² The UN General Assembly has expressed

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Anchal Vohra, "Syria Doesn't Care Enough about Israel to Get Involved in War," Foreign Policy, November 12, 2024, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/11/12/syria-israel-assad-war-gaza-lebanon/>.

¹⁵⁹ "What Role Does Syria Play in the Hamas-Israel Conflict? – DW – 11/15/2023," dw.com, n.d., <https://www.dw.com/en/what-role-does-syria-play-in-the-hamas-israel-conflict/a-67399322>.

¹⁶⁰ Dwayne Oxford, "What Does UNRWA Do and Why Has Israel Banned It from West Bank, Gaza?," Al Jazeera, October 29, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/29/what-does-unrwa-do-and-why-has-israel-banned-it-from-west-bank-gaza>.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² "If Legal and Political Framework in Which UNRWA Operates Does Not Hold, We Cannot Stay and Deliver,' Its Chief Tells Fourth Committee, Warning of Agency's Collapse | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," Un.org, November 13, 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/gaspd823.doc.htm>.

strong support for UNRWA, urging Israel to allow unrestricted access for humanitarian aid despite its blockade of the Gaza Strip.¹⁶³

Timeline of Events

Date	Event	Description
October 7, 2023	Hamas launches assault on Israel from the Gaza Strip	On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel, firing over 5,000 rockets and infiltrating Israeli territory with militants, resulting in the deaths of approximately 1,200 people and the abduction of around 250 hostages.
October 8, 2023	Border clashes between Israel and Hezbollah begin	Hezbollah began launching rocket strikes into northern Israel in response to the Hamas-led attack on Israel, marking the start of intensified border clashes between the two forces.
October 9, 2023	Israel places the Gaza Strip under a 'total blockade'	Israel announced a "total blockade" of the Gaza Strip in response to the Hamas attack, cutting off the entry of food, water, medicine, fuel, and electricity to the territory.
October 27, 2023	Beginning of Israel's aerial bombardment campaign	Israel commenced its aerial bombardment campaign in response to the Hamas attack, targeting Hamas compounds, command centers, and other military infrastructure in Gaza.
January, 2024	People in Gaza reach emergency levels of starvation	The Israel-Hamas War led to imminent famine in the region. Due to the simultaneous block of food aid and the destruction of agricultural land

¹⁶³ Al Jazeera, "UN General Assembly Demands 'Immediate' Ceasefire in Gaza, Supports UNRWA," Al Jazeera, December 12, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/12/un-general-assembly-demands-immediate-ceasefire-in-gaza-supports-unrwa>.

		by Israeli airstrikes, millions of people in Gaza face emergency levels of starvation.
April 1, 2024	Israel strikes on the Iranian Embassy in Damascus	Claiming that Iranian officials were meeting Hamas militants in Damascus, Israel attacked the Iranian Embassy.
April 13, 2024	Iran retaliates with a drone and missile strike	Iran and its proxies attacked Israel with approximately 300 drones and several ballistic missiles as a response to the Israeli airstrike in Damascus.
April 19, 2024	Israel retaliates against Iran	Israel retaliated against Iran by attacking three targets in or near Isfahan International Airport. However, hostilities de-escalated for a few months after this.
September 17, 2024	First wave of Israel's attacks on Hezbollah's communication devices	Thousands of hand-held pagers used by Hezbollah operatives exploded in Lebanon.
September 27, 2024	Israeli assassinations of key Hezbollah leaders	An attack on Hezbollah's headquarters in Beirut led to the assassination of Hassan Nasrallah and Ali Karaki.
October 1, 2024	Israel begins ground invasion of southern Lebanon	Israel begins its ground invasion of southern Lebanon, targeting Hezbollah positions following weeks of escalating military actions and airstrikes in the region.
October 1, 2024	Iran launches another missile strike against Israel	Iran launches a missile attack on Israel, firing approximately 180 ballistic missiles, which were largely intercepted by Israeli air defense systems, marking a significant escalation in hostilities between the two nations.

November 27, 2024	Israel and Hezbollah reach a ceasefire agreement	A ceasefire agreement was signed between Israel and Hezbollah, mediated by the United States and France, establishing a 60-day halt to hostilities and outlining troop withdrawals from southern Lebanon.
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Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- UN Partition Plan, 1948 (Resolution 181)
- UN Resolution 194, 1948
- Establishment of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, December 8 1949
- UN General Assembly Resolution 3236, 1974
- International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion, 2004
- UN General Assembly Resolution 67/19, 2012
- ICJ Advisory Opinion on Israeli Policies, 2023
- UN General Assembly Resolution on Nakba, 2023
- UNGA Resolution on Occupation, 2024

Previous Action

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 through the UN Partition Plan, there have been several agreements to end conflicts such as the First Arab-Israeli War, the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War. This section will focus on primarily two key discussions that occurred in the late 1900s to present a solution to the Palestinian question.

The Camp David Accords of 1978 were a pair of political agreements signed by then-Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin after 12 days of secret negotiations at Camp David, the country retreat of the President of the United States in Maryland.¹⁶⁴ The first framework titled ‘A Framework for Peace in the Middle East’ dealt with the Palestinian territories (outlined in UN Resolution 181). However, it was written without the participation of any Palestinian representatives and was condemned by the United Nations for this exclusion. The Camp David Accords stated that it recognised the “legitimate rights of the Palestinian people”, which was a process that would guarantee the full autonomy of

¹⁶⁴ William B Quandt, *The Middle East : Ten Years after Camp David* (Washington, D.C, 1988).

the people within a set period of five years.¹⁶⁵ Israeli Prime Minister Begin, however, particularly insisted that “on no condition will there be a Palestinian state.” The idea of a ‘full autonomy’ was to be discussed with Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians. The fate of Jerusalem and the question of the Palestinian Right of Return was deliberately excluded from this agreement¹⁶⁶

The Camp David Accords paved the way for the Oslo Accords of 1993 and 1995, which were a pair of interim political agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.¹⁶⁷ The Oslo process initially began with the recognition of Israel by the PLO and the recognition of the PLO by Israel as the official representative of the Palestinian people.¹⁶⁸ A key outcome of the Oslo Accords was the creation of the Palestinian National Authority, also known as the Palestine Authority. This organisation had the responsibility of conducting limited Palestinian self-governance over parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.¹⁶⁹ The Oslo Accord negotiations centered around Israeli settlements, the status of Jerusalem and Israel’s control over the Palestinian territories following the establishment of the PA. It is important to note that the Oslo Accords did not create a definite Palestinian state.¹⁷⁰

After the Second Intifada in 2005, there were several attempts to restart discussions on border issues and Jerusalem such as the Annapolis Conference of 2007 and the Kerry Initiative from 2013-14. Time and time again, discussions failed to come to an agreement or dissolved before any definitive action could be taken.^{171 172}

¹⁶⁵ Mfa.gov.il, 2024, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Camp%20David%20Accords>.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ “Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements,” web.archive.org, November 15, 2002, https://web.archive.org/web/20021115183950/http://knesset.gov.il/process/docs/oslo_eng.htm.

¹⁶⁸ Al Jazeera, “What Were the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinians?,” www.aljazeera.com, September 13, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/13/what-were-oslo-accords-israel-palestinians>.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Britannica, “Oslo Accords | Palestinian Liberation Organization-Israel [1993] | Britannica,” in Encyclopædia Britannica, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Oslo-Accords>.

¹⁷¹ Nicole Narea, “The Many, Many Times Israelis and Palestinians Tried to Make Peace — and Failed,” Vox, November 22, 2023, <https://www.vox.com/world-politics/2023/11/22/23971375/israel-palestine-peace-talks-deal-timeline>.

¹⁷² Center for Preventive Action, “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” Global Conflict Tracker (Council on Foreign Relations, October 6, 2024), <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>.

Following the attack of October 7, 2023, all peace negotiations came to a standstill as Israel found itself in conflict from all sides and Hamas rallied against the Jewish state to fight for the Palestinian Right of Return.

Possible Solutions

Answering the Palestinian question

The most important solution to begin the resolution of this conflict is answering the Palestinian question itself. Since the Camp David Accords the idea of a two-state solution has been discussed in peace agreements and has been endorsed by key figures on the global stage such as the EU, the G7 nations and the Arab League. Delegates can explore a two-state solution that divides Israel and Palestine along the lines of the original UN Partition Plan or those that existed before the Six Day War in 1967. This would have to include a mutual agreement regarding the exchange of land to accommodate the widespread Israeli settlements in the West Bank while also ensuring the Palestinian state has the resources to thrive. It is imperative to address the status of Jerusalem as well. The city stands as a mark of great religious importance for both the Jews and Arabs and as such its status must be addressed so that no one group is marginalised. Previous proposals have suggested that East Jerusalem serve as the capital of the Palestinian state, while West Jerusalem maintains its position as the capital of Israel. Determining the status of Jerusalem will go a long way in furthering discussions regarding the two-state solution.

De-escalation of conflict

A dialogue must be set up between Israel, Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran to begin the official de-escalation of the conflict in the region. This dialogue may be mediated by foreign parties such as the United States and Norway, who have also taken initiative to address the Israel-Palestine conflict in the past. This dialogue will be crucial to creating a framework in which all parties de-escalate conflict in areas like the Gaza Strip and Lebanon and bolster the peace process and negotiations regarding a two-state solution.

Addressing the humanitarian concerns

Lastly, it is imperative to address the grave humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip. Delegates should find solutions towards lifting the blockade on Gaza and allowing unrestricted

humanitarian aid to the people while also maintaining the security integrity of both Israel and Gaza. This can be done by establishing secure corridors that can be classified as demilitarised zones to facilitate the safety of the humanitarian workers. By providing unrestricted access for humanitarian organisations like the UNRWA, issues like the severe food and water insecurity, the lack of healthcare facilities and dangerously compromised sanitation can be addressed. Long-term recovery efforts in the region can address the reconstruction of vital infrastructure like hospitals and schools as well as residential areas.

Overall, delegates should explore solutions that address all aspects of the conflict and understand that addressing the Palestinian question plays a crucial role in addressing the proxy wars of Iran and Israel. Additionally, the delegates of the Security Council should prioritise the dire and inhumane conditions of the Gaza Strip due to Israel's aerial bombardment campaign and find a solution that supports the welfare of the people while maintaining the security of both Israel and the Palestinian territory.

Research Report vetted by Deputy Secretary-General Aryav Bhesania

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