THE ARAB LEAGUE

STUDY GUIDE



Bombay Scottish School, Mahim
Scottish Model United Nations 2024

AGENDA

SMUN 2024

Agenda: The Israel-Palestine conflict

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Greetings Delegates,

It is with utmost pleasure that we, as your Executive Board, extend our warmest invitation to the Arab League Committee of SMUN 2024!

In these unprecedented times, the significance of international collaboration and dialogue cannot be overstated. As representatives of diverse nations and cultures, your participation in this committee is crucial in addressing the pressing issues facing the Arab world and beyond.

Throughout history, the Arab League has been instrumental in fostering cooperation, promoting peace, and advancing the common interests of its member states. Now, more than ever, your role in shaping the future of our region is paramount.

With this in mind, we have curated a comprehensive agenda, "The Israel-Palestine Conflict," that encompasses a spectrum of topics pertinent to the Arab world's socio-political landscape. From a humanitarian crisis to regional security, the agenda has been selected to encourage robust debate and innovative solutions.

As delegates, you hold the power to enact positive change and inspire meaningful action. Through diplomacy, negotiation, and consensus-building, we are confident that you will rise to the occasion and uphold the principles of unity and cooperation that define the Arab League.

We encourage you to approach this conference with an open mind, a spirit of collaboration, and a commitment to finding equitable solutions that benefit all stakeholders. Together, let us strive toward a future of prosperity, stability, and mutual respect.

We eagerly await your presence at SMUN 2024 and look forward to witnessing the impactful discussions that will emerge from the Arab League Committee.

Best regards,

The Executive Board, Arab League,
SMUN 2024.

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

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Established in 1945, the Arab League stands as a cornerstone of regional cooperation among the 22 member states it encompasses, primarily across North Africa and the Middle East. Its formation marked a significant milestone in Arab history, symbolising a collective effort to address common challenges and pursue shared aspirations. Through its multifaceted approach, the league aims to foster unity, promote stability, and advance prosperity across the Arab world.

At its core, the Arab League serves as a platform for promoting Arab unity, transcending borders and cultural differences to forge a sense of solidarity among member states. This unity is crucial in navigating the complex geopolitical landscape of the region, where historical rivalries and divergent interests often intersect. By providing a forum for dialogue and collaboration, the league endeavours to build trust and consensus, laying the groundwork for collective action on regional issues.

One of the league's primary functions is to promote regional stability, serving as a mediator in conflicts and a catalyst for peacebuilding efforts. From the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the ongoing crises in Syria, Yemen, and Libya, the league plays a vital role in facilitating diplomatic negotiations and promoting peaceful resolutions. Through its diplomatic channels and collective security mechanisms, the league seeks to prevent the escalation of tensions and mitigate the impact of conflicts on the region's stability.

Economic cooperation is another key pillar of the Arab League's mission, with initiatives aimed at enhancing trade relations, promoting investment, and fostering economic development. By leveraging the collective strength of its member states, the league seeks to unlock the full potential of the Arab world's resources and human capital, driving sustainable growth and prosperity. From infrastructure projects to joint ventures in key industries, economic cooperation within the league holds the promise of shared prosperity and mutual benefit.

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

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Furthermore, the Arab League is committed to preserving and promoting Arab culture and heritage, recognizing the importance of cultural exchange in fostering understanding and mutual respect among member states. Through initiatives such as cultural festivals, educational programs, and heritage preservation projects, the league seeks to celebrate the rich diversity of Arab societies and strengthen the bonds of solidarity among its peoples.

As the Arab League reconvenes, it faces a myriad of challenges and opportunities in the ever-evolving global landscape. From the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to the broader shifts in regional geopolitics, the league must adapt and innovate to effectively address the needs of its member states and uphold its founding principles. By reaffirming its commitment to unity, stability, and prosperity, the Arab League remains a beacon of hope for the Arab world, guiding its nations toward a brighter future.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA

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The Israel-Palestine conflict, which dates back to the early 1900s, has been a persistent source of tension in the Middle East. Over the years, it has escalated, resulting in numerous conflicts and deep-seated animosity between the two sides. The reconvention of the Arab League this year presents a significant opportunity to address and potentially resolve this longstanding conflict. As discussions unfold, one key aspect to consider is whether Israel's actions align with the principles outlined in the Arab League Charter. The Charter emphasises the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.

Moreover, the plight of the Palestinian people remains a pressing concern. Decades of conflict, displacement, and occupation have left many Palestinians living in dire conditions, with limited access to basic rights and opportunities. Despite various attempts at peace negotiations and international interventions, the situation for Palestinians continues to be precarious. The reconvention of the Arab League offers an opportunity to reassess the prospects for Palestinian statehood and the realisation of their rights to self-determination and sovereignty.

Hamas, a prominent Palestinian political and militant group, plays a significant role in the dynamics of the Israel-Palestine conflict. As the de facto governing authority in the Gaza Strip, Hamas wields considerable influence over the Palestinian territories. However, its tactics, including rocket attacks on Israeli civilians and its refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist, have often complicated efforts toward peace and reconciliation.

Hamas's involvement in the conflict adds another layer of complexity to the discussions within the Arab League and underscores the challenges of finding a comprehensive and sustainable solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA

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As the reconvention of the Arab League takes place and discussions on the Israel-Palestine conflict unfold, addressing these critical questions and concerns will be paramount. Finding a way forward that respects the rights and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians while upholding the principles of international law and regional stability remains a formidable task.

IMPORTANT TERMS

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- Occupation- When the armed force of a state holds territory beyond its national borders in violation of the prevailing international law, it is termed as Occupation. This term is often used to describe Israeli settlements in Gaza and the West Bank.
- Settlements- This refers to the private Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank or Gaza, where Israeli citizens currently live. Settlements are authorised by the Israeli government and first began in 1967, after the 6-Day War. 10% of Israel's population currently lives in these settlements, whose legal validity is controversial.
- Ceasefire- The U.N. defines a ceasefire as a "cessation of all acts of violence against the civilian population". It usually includes a formal agreement to de-escalate conflict by withdrawing forces or repositioning.
- Humanitarian Pause- The U.N. defines it as a "temporary cessation of hostilities purely for humanitarian purposes."
- Palestinian Right of Return- The right of Palestinian as well as their descendants to return to their properties or settlements from which they were displaced during the period of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has its foundation in Article 13(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which states that "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country".
- Zionism- A Jewish nationalist political movement with the goal of the creation as well as support of a Jewish national state in Palestine. Its core beliefs are that all Jews constitute one nation and that only one solution to anti-Semitism is the concentration of as many Jews as possible in Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish State there.

IMPORTANT TERMS

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- Intifada- Intifada refers to terms such as ‘uprising’ or ‘shaking off’. This term has been used to describe periods of extreme Palestinian protest against Israel in the form of aggression and terrorism.
- Nakba- Nakba (meaning catastrophe in Arabic) refers to the violent displacement as well as the dispossession of Palestinian citizens during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.
- Two-State Solution- A proposed resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict with the goal of establishment of two separate states, one for the Israelis and the other for the Palestinians, living in peace and security.
- One-State Solution/Bi-national state- This refers to a plan for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian issue that calls for the creation of a single, cohesive state where Israelis and Palestinians live side by side as equal citizens.
- Evacuation corridor- Dubbed the death corridor, Salah al-Din is a route declared safe by the IDF for Palestinians to evacuate from. Reports show that this ‘humanitarian corridor’ with dead bodies and dismembered body parts continues to be targeted by the Israeli forces, and is regarded as forced displacement by many.
- Kibbutz- A traditional agricultural community based in Israel, where people voluntarily live and work together on a non-competitive basis. Kibbutz residents were among the many to be targeted by Hamas in the October 7 Attacks.
- Iron Dome- Developed in 2006, the Iron Dome is an all-weather Israeli missile defence system designed to protect against incoming short-range weapons developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, Israel Aerospace Industries, and some U.S. aid.

IMPORTANT TERMS

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- Green Line- It is the line of demarcation between Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and Syria from the period following Israel's Independence War(1948) until the Six Day War(1967) when Israel captured the West Bank & East Jerusalem from Jordan, the Gaza Strip from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria.
- Apartheid Wall/Separation Wall- The Israeli West Bank barrier, comprising the West Bank Wall and the West Bank fence, is a separation barrier built by Israel along the Green Line and inside parts of the West Bank.
- Water Rights: Water acts as an instrument of War; Israel controls about 80% of water reserves in the West Bank, but both the West Bank and Gaza Strip face severe water stress and drought. Access to water resources is a state-controlled weapon, allowing Israeli-owned vineyards, olive groves, livestock farms, and date plantations to flourish while Palestinian farmers suffer.

HISTORY

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Timeline

- 1917- Balfour Declaration: British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour expressed official support of Britain for a Jewish "national home" in Palestine under the Balfour Declaration.
- 1945: On 22nd March, the Arab League was formed as a consolidation of pan-Arabism, with its founding member states as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Transjordan (now Jordan), Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. The Organization has 22 members today.
- 1947: The UN adopted Resolution 181, which called for the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, handing over about 55 percent of the land to Jews. The Arabs were granted 45% of the land, while Jerusalem was declared a separate internationalised area.
- 1948: 1st Arab-Israeli War - In 1948, the Jewish declaration of Israel's independence prompted surrounding Arab states to attack. At the end of the war, Israel controlled about 50% more territory than originally envisioned by the UN partition plan. Israeli militias expelled Palestinians from their homes and killed tens of thousands in what is called the Nakba - 'catastrophe'.
- 1956: 2nd Arab-Israeli War - During the Suez War, Israel, Great Britain, and France launched a joint attack against Egypt with the primary goal of deposing Egypt's leader Nasser, whose policy of closer Soviet relations and nationalisation of the Suez Canal threatened the West.
- 1967: Six-Day War - Israeli forces seized the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank & East Jerusalem from Jordan and Sinai Peninsula & the Gaza strip from Egypt.

HISTORY

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- 1973: Yom Kippur War - Known in the Arab world as the October War, in the Yom Kippur War, Egypt and Syria decided to launch a two-front coordinated attack to regain the territory they lost in 1967. The war drew both the United States and the Soviet Union into an indirect confrontation in defence of their respective allies.
- 1975: The United Nations grants the PLO observer status in 1975 and recognizes Palestinians' right to self-determination.
- 1976: Operation Entebbe - In June 1976, an Air France Airbus A300 with 248 passengers was hijacked by two members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – External Operations (PFLP-EO). The Uganda-backed hijackers had demanded the release of 40 Palestinian militants imprisoned in Israel and 13 prisoners in four other countries in exchange for the hostages. Operation Entebbe was a mission to rescue hostages through commandos of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) at the Uganda based Entebbe Airport.
- 1978: Camp David Accords - Brokered by the U.S., these set the stage for peace talks between Israel and its neighbours and a resolution to the "Palestinian problem". Israel gave the entire Sinai Peninsula back to Egypt, and, in return, Egypt recognized Israel's right to exist. After normalising relations with Israel via the accords, Egypt was expelled from the Arab League (but eventually readmitted in 1989), and all Arab countries broke diplomatic relations with Cairo. Jordan signed a treaty for peace with Israel (1992), making Egypt & Jordan the first two Arab countries to have normalised association with Israel.
- 1982: Lebanon War - Increased tensions resulted in the Israeli bombing of Beirut and southern Lebanon, where the PLO had several strongholds.
- 1987: Formation of Hamas, an offshoot of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood seeking to fulfil its agenda through violent jihad and regarded as a terrorist organisation by the U.S. government.

HISTORY

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- 1993: Oslo Accords - Under the Oslo Accords, Israel and the PLO agreed to officially recognize each other and renounce the use of violence.
- 2002: Arab Peace Initiative - Also known as the 'Saudi Initiative', the Arab Peace Initiative was a proposal for an end to the Arab–Israeli conflict endorsed by the Arab League. The initiative gave potential for the normalisation of relations by the Arab world with Israel in return for its full retreat from the territories it occupied, a "just settlement" of the refugee problem in Palestine based on the 194th UN Resolution, and the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.
- 2006: 2nd Lebanon War - In July 2006, Hezbollah launched an operation against Israel in an attempt to pressure the country into releasing Lebanese prisoners.
- 2006: Hamas won the Palestinian Authority's legislative elections, in an election widely considered to be free and fair. Since then, no new elections have been held in the Palestinian territories.
- 2007: Israel begins a land, sea, and air blockade on Gaza, regulating its access to food, fuel, and electricity - one that has continued for 16 years.
- 2011: The Arab League suspends Syria's membership in response to Bashar al-Assad's violent suppression of peaceful protests.
- 2023: In May, Syria was readmitted into the Arab League after 12 years, marking a major victory for Bashar al-Assad's government and a key step in normalising Syria's relations with the Arab world.
- 2023: From 24th November 2023 to 30th November 2023, a temporary ceasefire was enacted in the Gaza Strip, with the initial agreement mediated by Qatar.

SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS

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West Bank: The West Bank lies between Jordan and Israel. Ramallah, one of its primary cities, is the de facto capital of administration for Palestine. Israel seized control of it in the war of 1967 and has built settlements there over the years.

Gaza: The Gaza Strip lies between Egypt and Israel. The latter occupied the strip following 1967, but gave up control of Gaza City and daily administration in the majority of the territory during the Oslo peace process. Israel unilaterally removed Jewish settlements from the territory 2005), though it still controls international access to it.

Golan Heights: The Golan Heights is a plateau of strategic importance that was captured from Syria by Israel in the war of 1967. Israel effectively annexed the territory in 1981. In recent times, the USA has officially recognized Golan Heights and Jerusalem as parts of Israel.

Jerusalem: Designated a U.N. World Heritage Site, the city is currently divided between West Jerusalem, which is predominantly Jewish, and East Jerusalem with a major Palestinian population. Israel took hold of East Jerusalem following the Six-Day War (1967) as well as the West Bank – an action which, sparking controversy, was not recognized universally by the global community. The Old City in occupied East Jerusalem holds religious significance for Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

ARAB LEAGUE

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Formed in 1945, the League of Arab States is a group of 22 Arab nations with the main aim of achieving
(a) Palestinian statehood
(b) post-colonial governance and sovereignty
but marred by internal conflicts and authoritarian regimes.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

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October 7 Attacks/Operation Al-Aqsa Flood

The al-Aqsa Flood Operation launched by the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, on the morning of October 7 was the first invasion on Israeli soil since the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, and marked a major shift in Israel-Palestine relations.

Hamas breached the Gaza–Israel barrier, attacked Israel's military bases, killed civilians in Israeli communities, and held over 230 civilians and soldiers as hostages in the Gaza Strip, including 30 children, with the stated goal of forcing Israel to release Palestinian prisoners. The day has since been labelled as the deadliest for the Jewish community since the Holocaust - and the bloodiest in Israel's history.

According to reports by some media agencies, Israeli intelligence had been warned of a possible Hamas threat nearing the October 7 date, but it was dismissed, and no precaution was taken, enabling Hamas to take over 20 settlements and 11 military sites in just a few hours.

Hamas claims the attacks are in opposition to Israel's continued 16-year blockade of Gaza, violence at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the damage caused by Israeli settlers on "Palestinian" land.

Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza

The Gaza Strip is a small territory of about 360 square kilometres and has been experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis as a result of a sixteen-year blockade by Israel.

More than half of all Gazans depend on international assistance for basic services, and 80% of them are considered refugees under international law.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

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Palestinians thus compose the largest stateless community in the world. As of January 2024, some 75% of the territory's population of more than two million have been displaced, with more than a million crammed into Rafah, a tiny sliver of land.

Israel maintains a complete siege of Gaza, cutting off electricity and water, and supplies of food and medicine remain scarce. Reports have warned that more than 90% of Gaza's population is facing crisis levels of food insecurity. Without fuel, Gaza's only power station has gone dark; the lack of electricity has shut down desalination and waste-water treatment plants, further jeopardising access to safe drinking water.

A U.N. report shows that approximately 30% of Gaza's total structures have been destroyed or damaged. According to the Red Cross, Gaza's health system collapsed in November 2023 and now remains crippled, with hospitals running extremely low on rationed fuel reserves and medical supplies. There has been a steep rise in malnutrition among the more than 155,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women. 690,000 menstruating women and girls in Gaza have extremely limited access to menstrual hygiene supplies.

Refugee Crisis in Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon

Nearly one-third of the registered Palestine refugees, more than 1.5 million individuals, live in 58 recognized Palestine refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

Egypt has some 390,000 refugees, most of them Palestinian. UNRWA estimates that Lebanon currently hosts over 250,000 Palestinian refugees and Jordan, the only Arab country to allow Palestinians to become naturalised citizens, has over 2 million of them – the largest number of all.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Egypt and Jordan, the two countries that flank Israel on opposite sides and share borders with Gaza and the occupied West Bank, respectively, have replied with a staunch refusal to admit more refugees.

Their refusal is supposedly rooted in fear that Israel wants to force a permanent expulsion of Palestinians into their countries and negate Palestinian demands for statehood.

The ICJ Genocide Hearing:

On 11th January, 2024, the hearing for South Africa's genocide case against Israel concerning the war in Gaza began in the Hague. South Africa called the attention of the court to the fact that more than 23,000 Palestinians have been massacred by Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip since 7th October. Ronald Lamola, South Africa's justice minister, said: "No armed attack on a state territory, no matter how serious, even an attack involving atrocity crimes, can provide justification for or defence to breaches to the [1948 Genocide] Convention whether it's a matter of law or morality".

South Africa contended that Israel had not adhered to Article 2 of the Convention by committing actions that must be categorized as genocide. A number of "genocidal acts" committed by Israel were then listed, the primary being the "mass killing of Palestinians in Gaza".

Israel argued that its efforts to facilitate humanitarian assistance to people in Gaza testified to its objective of protecting the civilian population, rather than destroying it. Israel also refuted the claim that Israel had bombed hospitals and argued that they had found evidence of Hamas using "every single hospital in Gaza" for military purposes.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

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The ICJ ordered Israel to preserve evidence of genocide and to hand in a report to the court within the month regarding its cooperation with the order. Further, it noted that “there is a real and imminent risk of irreparable prejudice” to the people of Palestine.

The Red Sea Crisis:

Soon after the massacre on 7 October, the Houthi leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi declared his support for Hamas and said his forces were “ready to move in the hundreds of thousands to join the Palestinian people and confront the enemy”. For the following month, involvement of the Houthis was no more than missile and drone attacks that were intercepted largely by Israeli and USA countermeasures. On 19 November, militants utilised a helicopter to capture a Japanese-operated cargo ship in the Red Sea. The ship was ultimately owned by an Israeli businessman.

Yemen's Houthi rebels, supported by Iran, have thus launched dozens of attacks against ships in the Red Sea since November, targeting boats headed for Israel in an act of "solidarity" with those living in the Gaza Strip, which has become a warzone between Hamas and Israel.

Although the US has offered protection to shipping travelling through the region “to uphold the foundational principle of freedom of navigation”, President Biden has said he wants to avoid direct military confrontation with the Houthi rebels, as he does not wish to trigger escalation.

On 31st December, 2023, US naval forces made a military confrontation, killing all crew on three Houthi boats that had been attacking a container ship. Britain’s defence secretary has said the UK “won’t hesitate to take further action” if the Houthi attacks continued.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

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The security of shipping in the Red Sea is crucial to the global economy since it's an essential route for trade connecting Asia to Europe as well as the US. A number of Yemenis view this crisis as a viable means of exerting pressure on Israel and its allies in protection of Palestinian civilians, and analysts say the intervention of the Houthis has contributed to shoring up their domestic support.

The Houthis have not been visibly deterred, stating recently that if humanitarian aid is not allowed into Gaza and Israel does not stop its attacks, they will not stop harassing shipping "even if America succeeds in mobilising the entire world".

ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL TREATIES/LAWS

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Hostage-taking by Hamas :

Hostage-taking is defined as "the seizure, detention or otherwise holding of a person (the hostage) accompanied by the threat to kill, injure or continue to detain that person in order to compel a third party to do or to abstain from doing any act as an explicit or implicit condition for the release, safety or well-being of the hostage."

Following the October 7 Attack, Hamas seized over 200 civilian hostages, some of whom are dual nationals, foreigners, minors, or people with disabilities. In a recorded message on October 9, the Hamas armed wing threatened to execute them. Hamas has also declared it will not release the hostages until Israel ends its bombardment of Gaza, and only then in exchange for the release of 5,000 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. While it freed more than 100 hostages under a weeklong cease-fire deal in November, it still holds some 136 people captive, though an estimated 32 of them have died, according to sources.

Hostage-taking is prohibited under Common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which applies to the armed conflict between Israel and Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups, and Article 34 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies in occupied territories. Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) also defines hostage-taking as a war crime.

Hamas' sexual violence against Israeli civilians:

Hamas has engaged in sexual violence in the recent October 7 Attacks. The BBC has reported evidence of "rape, sexual violence and mutilation of women".

ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL TREATIES/LAWS

UN Special Procedures Experts stated they were "alarmed at increasing reports of sexual violence perpetrated by Hamas…on 7 October 2023." A report by The Guardian also concluded the use of "orderly use of rape and sexual assault" by Hamas in the October 7 Attacks.

Released hostages have reported on sexual violence that they and other captives endured while being held in Gaza. Israel states that there is "clear evidence" collected from forensic investigations and statements from witnesses and first responders that sexual crimes have been committed on a scale large enough to define it as a crime against humanity.

Israeli Blockade of the Gaza Strip:

Israel's withdrawal of its ground forces from Gaza in 2005 did not end its occupation of Gaza. Since then, Israel has maintained effective control over Gaza, including its territorial waters and airspace, the movement of people and goods (except at Gaza's border with Egypt), making the Strip an open-air prison.

Apart from being condemned by the U.N. for being a form of "collective punishment", the blockade also violates the 4th Geneva Convention and has long been considered illegal by groups including the International Committee of the Red Cross.

However, the Secretary-General's Panel of Inquiry report of 2011 found that the Gaza blockade is legal under international law. "Israel faces a real threat to its security from militant groups in Gaza," determined the UN inquiry.

ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL TREATIES/LAWS

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Violations by Israeli settlements:

According to human rights groups, since the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel has constructed tens of thousands of homes on "Palestinian" land to accommodate their settlers whilst demolishing over 50,000 Palestinian homes, farm buildings, and water tanks.

In 2016, a United Nations Security Council resolution said Israeli settlements had "no legal validity". In 2021, the U.N. The Special Rapporteur report states that the Israeli settlements were in violation of the absolute prohibition against "settler implantation" in the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and they amounted to a war crime.

Israel's Settlements as Apartheid:

The UN Special Rapporteur, in March 2022, on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) reported that the system satisfies the evidentiary standard that prevails, for the crime of apartheid, a crime against humanity. A statement released by the UN notes the "unprecedented levels of Israeli state and settler violence against Palestinians". Tamir Pardo, a former head of the Mossad intelligence agency has recently commented that "there is an apartheid state" in Israel.

Since 1967, Palestinian territories such as the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and East Jerusalem have been held by Israel. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Israeli government authorities in 2023 demolished and captured 948 Palestinian-owned structures so far, forcibly displacing over 1,676 Palestinians.

ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL TREATIES/LAWS

Violation of Palestinian Water Rights:

The Oslo II (the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) remains the key agreement controlling the use of water in the West Bank.

The Palestinian Authority says that Israel has both blocked maintenance and upgrades and limited the ability to increase water availability by stalling the creation of key infrastructure.

According to the U.N., only a small fraction of the water supplied by Israel to Gaza is getting through. People are getting about 3 litres of water per day and rationing their water usage; the World Health Organization recommends between 50 and 100 litres.

POSITION OF STAKEHOLDERS

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Palestinian Authority:

The Palestinian Authority (PA) has been overseeing parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank since the mid-'90s. It was removed by Hamas from Gaza (2007). Although its creation was supposed to pave the way to an independent Palestinian state, today it is considered to have little real power and is operating under the control of the Israeli military.

Hmoud Abbas has said, "If the world wants security and stability in the region, it must end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and recognise the independent Palestinian state". The Palestinian President has stated that Israel is waging a "war against the Palestinian people", not Hamas, and that the United States must come up with a solution and stop blindly supporting Israel's atrocities and "occupation" of Palestine.

Saudi Arabia:

For the months leading up to October 2023, Saudi Arabia and Israel – with the U.S. involved – have been formulating plans for normalising their relations. In January 2024, Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the U.K. stated that his country would normalise relations with Israel only if there was a two-state solution between the Israelis and Palestinians. In early February, the Saudi Foreign Ministry declared that it would not open diplomatic relations with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is recognised on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. The statement added that "Israeli aggression" against the Gaza Strip must also stop and Israeli forces must withdraw from the occupied territory.

POSITION OF STAKEHOLDERS

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Qatar:

Qatar is an intimate ally of the USA and the best-positioned power in the region to both have an influence on Hamas and mediate with Israel. It is not directly involved in the conflict but is no bystander.

Qatar has not publicly condemned the Hamas attacks on Israel and has blamed Israeli policies for the escalation in violence. Qatari officials have described Israel's bombardment of the Gaza Strip as "barbaric." In recent weeks, Doha (the capital city of Qatar) has helped broker the release of four Israeli hostages held by Palestinian militants. It has also helped to negotiate — in coordination with the U.S., Egypt, Israel, and Hamas — for foreigners trapped in Gaza to leave through the territory's crossing with Egypt. Qatar has also hosted Hamas leaders in exile, though it remains unclear whether it can keep doing so amid growing pressure from the U.S., Israel, and Europe, which designate Hamas as a terrorist organisation.

The Qatar-funded media network Al Jazeera has long angered Israel. The U.S. Secretary of State reportedly asked Qatar's emir to tone down Al Jazeera's coverage of the carnage in Gaza. The journalists of this network have been targeted/killed while they covered the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Egypt:

Egypt has remained key to any resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Egypt sees Hamas not only as an obstruction to a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but also as an ally of the Muslim Brotherhood organisation that opposed the regime of then-President Hosni Mubarak.

POSITION OF STAKEHOLDERS

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The leaders of Egypt (and other Arab states) privately support the same post-Israel-Hamas outcome of the war that the U.S. is advocating, in search of regional stabilisation– a final restoration of Palestinian Authority governance of Gaza. Abdel Fath el-Sisi (President of Egypt) has denounced Israel's approach to the conflict in Gaza. Understanding its low ability to influence the operations of Israel, Egypt has sought to shield itself from the fallout from Israel's decisions.

It has worked with the USA, Qatari, Israeli, and other international officials to augment the flow of humanitarian aid through the Rafah crossing for distribution to citizens of Gaza.

Syria:

The Syrian regime has played a more muted role in support of its on-and-off ally, Hamas. It was only last year that Hamas formally re-established ties with the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, reportedly on the encouragement of its main supporters - Hezbollah and Iran. Syria's contribution to Hamas's material strength is small and unlikely to have played any role in facilitating the October 7 Attacks.

Syria plays an important role in the Iran-led 'Axis of Resistance', simply by virtue of its geostrategic position, but within the alliance with these countries, the Syrian regime is a "passive actor". Syria by itself would be "unwilling and unable to launch a war against Israel". While Syrians suffer the consequences of the regime's alliance with Hamasthere is widespread realisation in the Arab world that the Syrian regime is simply championing the Palestinian cause for its political purposes, to deflect attention away from its own domestic human rights violations.

POSITION OF STAKEHOLDERS

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Morocco:

Morocco normalised ties with Israel in 2020, under a deal brokered by the U.S. Despite their policy of normalising ties with Israel, Moroccan authorities have said they continue to back the creation of a Palestinian state and have urged a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and the protection of civilians there. Islamist and leftist groups in Morocco have increasingly spoken out against the normalisation policy. Morocco's public has also called for the government to cut ties with Israel due to continued Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip. Despite rising demands for stronger action, the Moroccan government has only continued to reiterate its previous comments.

A drone deal at the end of 2022 for the purchase of 150 Israeli drones tilted the balance of power in the Western Sahara further in Morocco's favour. Moreover, an agreement for Israel to develop Moroccan surveillance satellites promises to solidify that advantage.

Lebanon:

Following the attacks of 7th October, the armed Lebanese group Hezbollah and Israel's military unleashed artillery fire and other attacks across their common state demarcation. The Iran-backed Hezbollah has said it would stand "in solidarity" with the Palestinian people.

Lebanon's politicians, however, vehemently oppose opening a front against Israel. Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah has called for a ceasefire in Gaza instead of broader escalation with Israel. This impacted Lebanon since Hezbollah has maximum sway over the Lebanese political atmosphere. Leaders from every front have openly spoken against a new war with Israel that Lebanon would not be able to afford. Free Patriotic Movement leader Gebran Bassil declared that "all Lebanese people agree that they don't want war."

POSITION OF STAKEHOLDERS

Nabih Berri, Speaker of the Parliament has said that Lebanon has the right to defend itself against Israeli attacks, although he demurred on the need to join the current conflict. Additionally, this nation has also been bombed by Israel in specific positions.

Sudan:

Sudan has spoken out in its support for the rights of the Palestinian people in reply to the October 7 Attacks. "Sudan renews its support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in their independent state and calls for commitment to the decisions of international legitimacy and the protection of innocent civilians," the Sudanese Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"The decline in international concern with the Palestinian issue, including the absence of progress relating to the two-state solution, has led to continued violence and tensions in the region," it added. The developments in Palestine caused the ministry to express their worry, emphasising the need to resolve the crisis according to decisions of global legitimacy and to allow the Palestinians to find their independent state.

Jordan:

The UN General Assembly adopted a Jordanian resolution that called for an “immediate, permanent, and sustainable humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities,” and a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. Recently, Al-Safadi took the significant step of recalling Jordan’s ambassador to Israel.

The fact that Jordan sees Israel’s attempt to displace Palestinians as a “declaration of war” is significant since the two countries normalised relations in 1994, hinting that the countries’ bilateral relations are at a low point.

POSITION OF STAKEHOLDERS

The Jordanian government has majorly responded to the war in Gaza with purely diplomatic measures. Following the Al-Ahli hospital bombing, King Abdullah cancelled a summit that Jordan had organised, hosting along with the President of the USA, Joe Biden. Crown Prince Hussein took a sharp stance against Israeli killing of civilians in Gaza and supervised the aid convoys provided by Jordan to Gaza through the Egyptian Rafah crossing.

Reports suggest that the news of the violent October 7 Attack was celebrated among segments of the Jordanian public. The Jordanian streets saw spontaneous celebration, as people gave out sweets and chanted slogans in support of Hamas' al-Qassam Brigades.

A large number of Jordanians in cities across the country have proceeded to protest against the Israeli assault. Following the attack on Al-Ahli hospital, Gaza, demonstrators in Amman attempted to storm and set the Israeli embassy on fire.

Iran:

Rahim Safavi, an adviser to Supreme Leader Ali Hosseini Khamenei, congratulated the Palestinian fighters and affirmed Tehran's support "until the liberation of Palestine and Jerusalem." Hamas' surprise attack is a strategic win for Tehran and the Iranian-led "axis of resistance" because it has shattered Israelis' sense of security in a heavily militarised country, removed the possibility of Saudi-Israeli normalisation for the near future, and showed the cohesion of many Iran-backed non-state actors that go against the status quo of the region.

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi has affirmed the Arab world's common goal to "end war crimes against Palestine." Iran has emerged as one of the most strident voices against the Israeli bombardment of Gaza in line with its staunch anti-Israel foreign policy.

POSITION OF STAKEHOLDERS

Its message is that an Israeli ground invasion in Gaza would cross a redline: Iran is recruiting volunteer fighters and is seeking to rally the wider Islamic world against Israel.

It is likely that Iran boosts support for its regional partners, surrogates, and proxies such as Fatemiyoun Brigade, Lebanese Hezbollah, and Iraqi Shia militias and pressures them to act against Israel. The Iran-backed Houthi attacks in the Red Sea are an example of this approach.

Iraq:

Official statements from Iraq have neither faulted nor disregarded Hamas specifically and only the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause have been mentioned.

Iraq's political stance on Israel has never changed despite regime change in 2003. Iraq has participated in the 1948, 1967, and 1973 wars against Israel and does not diplomatically recognize Israel. Iraq was the only country that did not agree to a cease-fire with Israel in the 1948 war.

Iraq's most senior Shia religious leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani has consistently repeated calls for justice for Palestinians and expressed his concerns about the condition of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

U.S :

President Biden of the U.S. issued a joint statement along with the leaders of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom, which expressed a "steadfast and united support to the State of Israel", and an "unequivocal condemnation of Hamas and its appalling acts of terrorism".

POSITION OF STAKEHOLDERS

The United States is widely considered to be Israel's closest ally and has consistently vetoed resolutions pertaining to Israeli occupation in the UN Security Council - including those calling for a ceasefire. It is a firm proponent of the two-state solution.

The Biden administration has further promoted Israeli-Arab normalisation and resumed aid for Palestinians. Military support was shown by the US towards Israel during the Red Sea Conflict, where the US navy took action against the Houthis attacking freight ships related to Israel. However, in recent times, it has come under domestic and international pressure to sway Israel on its controversial actions in Gaza.

Russia:

Putin has historically viewed Israel as a source of future economic investment, especially in hi-tech, and encouraged Jewish emigres in the United States and Europe, even political dissidents, to move to Russia. He sees Israel as a key pillar for Russian foreign policy in the Middle East, alongside Iran and Saudi Arabia - aligning with the Russian policy of having good relations with virtually all nations in the Middle East.

The October 7 Attacks became a final point of rupture for Russia and Israel, which was preceded by tension concerning the denigration of the Jewish President of Ukraine, Volodimir Zelenskyy, and the cooperation between Russia and Iran for political and military support. Russia has taken a more openly pro-Palestine stance and drafted a (U.S. vetoed) resolution in the UN Security Council calling for a "humanitarian ceasefire". It has quickly and publicly rekindled its relationships with the representatives of Hamas and other Palestinian constituencies.

POSITION OF STAKEHOLDERS

SMUN 2024

E.U.:

In January 2024, European foreign ministers unanimously reiterated their vision for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict of a two-state solution, with the building of Israel alongside a Palestinian state.

The 27 European Union (E.U.) member states are still unable to agree on a unified call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. They showed a rare unity to form a solution which still seems to be a long way off, but which Europe has defended since 1980.

"The priority is to try to stop the military activities, stop the bombing, in order to provide more humanitarian assistance and to free the hostages and to avoid more civilian casualties, " said Josep Borrell, the E.U. 's top diplomat. Borell added that unless the crisis is resolved, “we will go for another cycle of violence, from funeral to funeral, from generation to generation.”

QUESTIONS DELEGATES ARE EXPECTED TO TACKLE

SMUN 2024

1. Does the Israeli occupation of Palestine violate international law? Does it amount to genocide?
2. Is Hamas representative of the collective will of all Palestinians? What implications does this have on the ongoing war tactics employed by Israel and its allies on civilian populations?
3. Is a two-state solution preferable to or more feasible than a one-state solution? Why?
4. What, if any, responsibility do the allies of Israel bear for the alleged war-crimes committed by Israel against Palestinians?
5. Are the recent developments in the Israel-Palestine Crisis a symbol of the waning power of the United States over world affairs?
6. How does the ongoing Israel-Palestine crisis represent two distinct alliance blocs - one being the Global South (primarily composed of former colonies) and the other being the West (mostly former imperial powers)?

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