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**SITUATION IN THE
MIDDLE EAST**

Crisis Session Dossier prepared for the United Nations Security Council, dated 21 February 2013.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

It is imperative to understand, what makes up a good council. All of you are experienced enough to know that a good council is made up of every single element working to its maximum potential, and even one un-researched delegate, or a simple delay by the conference staff or a wrong decision by the executive board, makes a huge difference to the entire council experience. All this is what we want to NOT have in this Security Council.

While intellect and oratory do hold importance, a large part of the success enjoyed by a delegate, results from his or her research. This study guide will provide you with an excellent base to begin your research; however, you are also expected to read up on issues beyond those discussed here.

You are the representative of your allotted country and it is our hope that you put in wholehearted efforts to research and comprehensively grasp all important facets of the diverse agenda. Our aim in the council would be to urge you, the delegates to put your best foot forward and take back an unforgettable experience.

All the best!

Sidharth Das
President

Arijit Chakraborti
Vice President

Chandrakant Khetan
Rapporteur

BRIEF ABOUT THE SECURITY COUNCIL



Under the Charter, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions.

The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

The Security Council also recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and the admission of new Members to the United Nations. And, together with the General Assembly, it elects the judges of the International Court of Justice.

You are also advised to look into the Practice of the UN Security Council and how the Charter affects the same. This will be highly informative as to the inner workings of the SC and hence, debate on it.

<http://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/actions.shtml>

PROOF/EVIDENCE IN COUNCIL



RIANOVOSTI

Evidence or proof is acceptable from sources:

1. News Sources:

a. **REUTERS** – Any Reuters article which clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council. (<http://www.reuters.com/>)

b. **State operated News Agencies** – These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any Country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are,

i. RIA Novosti (Russia) <http://en.rian.ru/>

ii. IRNA (Iran) <http://www.irna.ir/ENIndex.htm>

iii. BBC (United Kingdom) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

iv. Xinhua News Agency and CCTV (P.R. China) <http://cctvnews.cntv.cn/>

2. **Government Reports:** These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country.

However, a nuance is that a report that is being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as credible information. Examples are,

- i. **Government Websites** like the State Department of the United States of America (<http://www.state.gov/index.htm>) or the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (<http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm>)
- ii. **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** of various nations like India (<http://www.mea.gov.in/>), People's Republic of China (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>), France (<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/>), Russian Federation (http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/main_eng)
- iii. **Permanent Representatives** to the United Nations Reports (<http://www.un.org/en/members/>) (Click on any country to get the website of the Office of its Permanent Representative).
- iv. **Multilateral Organizations** like the NATO (<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>), ASEAN (<http://www.aseansec.org/>), OPEC (http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/), etc.

3. UN Reports: All UN Reports are considered are credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the Security Council.

- i. **UN Bodies:** Like the SC (<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/>), GA (<http://www.un.org/en/ga/>), HRC (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/HRCIndex.aspx>) etc.
- ii. **UN Affiliated bodies** like the International Atomic Energy Agency (<http://www.iaea.org/>), World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org/>), International Monetary Fund (<http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>), International Committee of the Red Cross (<http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp>), etc.
- iii. **Treaty Based Bodies** like the Antarctic Treaty System (<http://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm>), the International Criminal Court (<http://www.icc-cpi.int/Menus/ICC>)

Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>), Amnesty International (<http://www.amnesty.org/>), Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org/>) or newspapers like the Guardian (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>), Times of India (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>), etc. be accepted.

ABOUT MIDDLE EAST CRISIS



The Middle East is indeed an explosive cauldron of conflicts and a lot of controversies are also observed regarding different issues such as nuclear weapon possession, civil uprising against the political governance, ethnic wars, human rights violation and also political interest of some nations due to the oil reserve that these regions possess. Let's revise through these issues country wise and try to understand their relations with the world, their foreign policy and the conflict/problems they have had. We shall also try to find the reason for the same and deal with the crisis and try finding some suitable solutions for the same. These are just the outlines and you need to research deeper into these to understand them.

ISSUES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- Inter Country Conflict
 - Israel-Palestine
 - Israel-Iran
- Intra Country Conflicts
 - Syria (Lebanon-Turkey Spillover)
 - Libya(*)
 - Egypt(*)
 - Fatah-Hamas(*)
 - Turkey-PKK and Iran-PJAK Conflicts(*)
 - Iraq(*)
 - Afghanistan(*)
 - Jordan(*)
- Iranian Nuclear Program
- The Sharia – International Law Debate

Issues marked with an * denote that information has not been provided in this guide but delegates research for the same for additional information to help them in the council.

THE ISRAEL - PALESTINE ISSUE¹



When the United Nations was founded on 24 October 1945, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, under a Mandate received in 1922 from the League of Nations, administered the territory of Palestine.²

Among the issues that the Mandatory Power had to deal with, particularly after the end of the Second World War, was the question of a proposed Jewish home in Palestine. In November 1917, the British Government, in the so-called “Balfour Declaration”³, had declared itself in favor of “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”, on the understanding “that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine”. Increasing Jewish immigration had been consistently opposed by the Arab inhabitants of Palestine, who in the mid-1940s comprised about two thirds of the territory’s population of 2 million. Faced with escalating violence, the British Government decided, in February 1947, to bring the question of Palestine before the new United Nations.

Drawing attention to “the desirability of an early settlement in Palestine”, Great Britain asked that, a special session of the General Assembly be called immediately in order to constitute and instruct a special committee to prepare a preliminary study on the question of Palestine for consideration by the Assembly at its next regular session.

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1947

At the first special session of the General Assembly, which began on 28 April 1947, five Arab countries — Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syria — tried unsuccessfully to include in the agenda an item that would address “the termination of the Mandate over Palestine and the declaration of its independence”. The Jewish Agency for Palestine

¹ <http://unispal.un.org/pdfs/DPI2499.pdf>

² <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/2FCA2C68106F11AB05256BCF007BF3CB>

³ <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/E210CA73E38D9E1D052565FA00705C61>

presented the Jewish case, while the Arab Higher Committee spoke for the Palestinian Arabs.

CREATION OF UNSCOP

At the special session, the Assembly established the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), made up of 11 Member States, to investigate all questions relevant to the problem of Palestine and to recommend solutions to be considered by the General Assembly at its regular session in September 1947. During the course of a two-and-a-half-month investigation, the Special Committee went to Palestine and the neighboring countries of Lebanon, Syria and Trans-Jordan, and also visited displaced persons camps in Austria and Germany, which had been ravaged by the Second World War and had experienced the tragedy of the European Jews under Nazism⁴. UNSCOP completed its work on 31 August 1947, with its members agreeing on the question of terminating the Mandate, the principle of independence and the role of the United Nations. There was no consensus, however, on a settlement of the question of Palestine. The committee considered two proposals on the question of Palestine: the majority and minority proposals. The majority of the members recommended that Palestine be partitioned into an Arab State and a Jewish State, with a special international status for the city of Jerusalem under the administrative authority of the United Nations. The three entities were to be linked in an economic union. The minority plan called for an independent federated structure comprising an Arab State and a Jewish State, with Jerusalem as the capital of the federation. Australia abstained from voting on either plan because it maintained that the recommendations exceeded the Committee's terms of reference.

At its second regular session, after an intense two-month-long debate, the General Assembly, on 29 November 1947, adopted resolution 181 (II), approving with minor changes the Plan of Partition with Economic Union as proposed by the majority in the Special Committee on Palestine⁵. The partition plan, a detailed four-part document attached to the resolution, provided for the termination of the Mandate, the progressive withdrawal of British armed forces and the delineation of boundaries between the two States and Jerusalem. The plan included:

- The creation of the Arab and Jewish States, not later than 1 October 1948;
- Division of Palestine into eight parts: three were allotted to the Arab State and three to the Jewish State, with the town of Jaffa forming an Arab enclave within Jewish territory, and

⁴ <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/2D17B10E29EBCB4B85256A76006DD2DA>

⁵ <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C330061D253>

- An international regime for Jerusalem, the eighth division, to be administered by the United Nations Trusteeship Council.

The plan also set out the steps to be taken prior to independence. It dealt with the questions of citizenship, transit, the economic union and a declaration to be made by the provisional government of each proposed State regarding access to holy places and religious and minority rights. By resolution 181 (II), the Assembly also set up the United Nations Palestine Commission to carry out its recommendations and requested the Security Council to take the necessary measures to implement the plan of partition.

The Jewish Agency accepted the resolution despite its dissatisfaction over such matters as Jewish emigration from Europe and the territorial limits set on the proposed Jewish State. The plan was not accepted by the Palestinian Arabs and Arab States on the ground that it violated the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which granted people the right to decide their own destiny. They said that the Assembly had endorsed the plan under circumstances unworthy of the United Nations and that the Arabs of Palestine would oppose any scheme that provided for the dissection, segregation or partition of their country, or which gave special and preferential rights and status to a minority.

END OF THE BRITISH MANDATE

The adoption of resolution 181 (II) was followed by outbreaks of violence in Palestine. As the situation deteriorated, the Security Council called for a special session of the General Assembly, which then met from 16 April to 14 May 1948. On 17 April, the Security Council called for the cessation of all military and paramilitary activities in Palestine, and on 23 April it established a Truce Commission to supervise and help bring about a ceasefire. For its part, the General Assembly relieved the Palestine Commission of its responsibilities and decided to appoint a mediator charged with promoting a peaceful settlement in cooperation with the Truce Commission. On 20 May, Count Folke Bernadotte, President of the Swedish Red Cross, was chosen as United Nations Mediator.

THE FIRST ARAB-ISRAELI WAR, 1948-1949

On 14 May 1948, Britain relinquished its Mandate over Palestine and disengaged its forces. On the same day, the Jewish Agency proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel on the territory allotted to it by the partition plan. Fierce hostilities immediately broke out between the Arab and Jewish communities. The next day, regular troops of the neighbouring Arab States entered the territory to assist the Palestinian Arabs.

The fighting was halted after several weeks, under a four-week truce called for by the Security Council on 29 May 1948. The truce went into effect on 11 June and was supervised

by the United Nations Mediator with the assistance of a group of international military observers, which came to be known as the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)⁶. Despite the efforts of the Mediator, no agreement could be reached on an extension of the truce, and fighting broke out again on 8 July.

On 15 July 1948, the Security Council decided in a resolution that the situation in Palestine constituted a threat to the peace. It ordered a ceasefire and declared that failure to comply would be construed as a breach of the peace requiring immediate consideration of enforcement measures under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. In accordance with the resolution, a second truce came into force. By that time, Israel controlled much of the territory allotted to the Arab State by the partition resolution, including the western part of Jerusalem. Egypt and Jordan respectively controlled the remaining portions of the Gaza district and the West Bank of the Jordan River (which included East Jerusalem, with its walled Old City). More fighting took place in October 1948 and March 1949, during which Israel took over other areas, some of which had been allotted to the Arab State. In 1950, Jordan brought the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, formally under its jurisdiction pending a solution to the problem.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 194 (III): THE RIGHT TO RETURN

At its third regular session, on 11 December 1948, the General Assembly adopted resolution 194 (III)⁷, in which it delineated ways to resolve the Palestine problem. Following suggestions contained in the report prepared by Count Bernadotte for a solution to the increasingly intractable situation in Palestine, the Assembly declared that:

- Refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date;
- Compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return.

The Assembly also called for the demilitarization and internationalization of Jerusalem and for the protection of, and free access to, the holy places in Palestine. Resolution 194 (III) also provided for the establishment of a three-member United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, which was to assume the functions of the United Nations Mediator insofar as it was considered necessary. It was instructed to assist the parties in achieving a final settlement on all outstanding questions and to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees. The Assembly subsequently elected France, Turkey and the United States to comprise the Conciliation Commission.

⁶ <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/untso/>

⁷ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/043/65/IMG/NR004365.pdf?OpenElement>

On 11 May 1949, Israel became a Member of the United Nations. In admitting Israel, the General Assembly specifically took note of Israel's declarations and explanations made earlier to the Assembly's Ad Hoc Political Committee regarding the implementation of resolutions 181 (II) and 194 (III). Those declarations and explanations referred, among other things, to the international regime envisaged for Jerusalem, the problem of Arab refugees and boundary questions.

With the question of Palestine unresolved, an insecure peace, punctuated by violence and acts of force, was maintained in the region from 1950 until 1967, when Israel came to occupy the entire area of the former British Mandate of Palestine.

ESTABLISHMENT OF UNEF I

Armed conflict erupted anew in the Middle East on 29 October 1956, when Israel began military operations against Egypt – to be joined later by France and the United Kingdom. Amidst sharply rising tensions, Egypt had nationalized the Suez Canal in July of that year.

At an emergency special session, the General Assembly called for a ceasefire, and the crisis ended with the eventual withdrawal of the invading forces and the deployment of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I)—the first United Nations peacekeeping force. UNEF I was withdrawn in May 1967. On 5 June 1967, hostilities broke out between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

By the time a ceasefire called for by the Security Council was accepted by the parties, Israeli military forces had occupied the Egyptian Sinai, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and part of the Syrian Golan Heights.

After the ceasefire was secured, the Security Council adopted resolution 237 (1967)⁸, in which it called upon Israel to ensure the safety, welfare and security of the inhabitants of the areas where military operations had taken place and to facilitate the return of displaced persons.

SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242

On 22 November 1967, the Security Council, after much negotiation, unanimously adopted resolution 242 (1967)⁹, laying down principles for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. The resolution stipulated that the establishment of a just and lasting peace should include the application of two principles:

⁸ <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/E02B4F9D23B2EFF3852560C3005CB95A>

⁹ <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7D35E1F729DF491C85256EE700686136>

- Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict, and
- Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

The resolution also affirmed the territorial inviolability of every State in the region and called for “achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem”.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which had been formed in 1964 to further Palestinian interests and aspirations, strongly criticized the resolution, which it said reduced the question of Palestine to a refugee problem.

WAR OF 1973 AND SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 338

In October 1973, war broke out again between Egypt and Israel in the Suez Canal area and the Sinai, and between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic on the Golan Heights. As fighting reached a critical stage, the Soviet Union and the United States jointly requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council. On 22 October, the Security Council adopted resolution 338 (1973)¹⁰, which reaffirmed the principles of resolution 242 and called for negotiations aimed at “a just and durable peace in the Middle East”. The ceasefire call was later confirmed in resolution 339 (1973) of 23 October, and the Secretary-General was requested to dispatch United Nations observers immediately.

THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS, 1978

A new element in the Middle East situation was introduced in November 1977, when Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat visited Jerusalem. Subsequently, direct negotiations between Egypt and Israel, with the United States as intermediary, led in September 1978 to the signing of two “frameworks for peace”, known as the Camp David Accords. Despite strong opposition from most of the other Arab States and the PLO, the accords resulted in the signing of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in March 1979, and this led to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Sinai in April 1982.¹¹

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON QUESTION OF PALESTINE, 1981

¹⁰ <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7FB7C26FCBE80A31852560C50065F878>

¹¹ <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel-Egypt%20Peace%20Treaty>

The General Assembly, concerned that a just solution to the question of Palestine had not been achieved, had decided in 1981 to convene an international conference on the subject. The International Conference on the Question of Palestine took place at the United Nations Office in Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983. It was attended by representatives of 137 States—117 as full participants and 20 as observers—as well as by the PLO. This initiative did not receive full support: Israel, the United States and some other countries opposed holding the Conference.

The Conference adopted by acclamation a Declaration on Palestine and approved a “Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights”, recommending measures to be taken by States, United Nations organs and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Conference considered it essential that an international peace conference on the Middle East be convened under United Nations auspices, with the participation, on an equal footing, of all parties to the conflict.

GROWING RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

While international attention to the Palestine issue had focused during the 1950s and early 1960s primarily on the problem of Palestinian refugees and interstate conflict, after the 1967 war the question of Palestine began to be understood in a broader political context. Palestinians stepped up their endeavours to achieve their national rights. The Palestine Liberation Organization adopted a new national charter in 1968, stating that the international community had so far failed to discharge its responsibility and calling for continuing the struggle to achieve Palestinian rights.

In December 1969, the General Assembly recognized, in resolution 2535 (XXIV)¹², that “the problem of the Palestine Arab refugees has arisen from the denial of their inalienable rights under the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”. In September 1974, 56 Member States proposed that “the question of Palestine” be included as an item in the General Assembly’s agenda.

OBSERVER STATUS FOR THE PLO, 1974

On 13 November 1974, in a landmark appearance before the General Assembly in New York, the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, welcomed the re-examination by the United Nations of the question of Palestine, “We consider that step to be a victory for the world Organization as much as a victory for the cause of our people,” he said. At the end of a lengthy speech, he declared, “Today I have come, bearing an olive branch and a freedom-fighter’s gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand.” Nine days later, the General Assembly invited the PLO to participate in its proceedings with observer status, as the representative of the

¹² <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/41F2C6DCE4DAA765852560DF004E0AC8>

Palestinian people. This observer status was later extended to cover all United Nations bodies.

Later, in its resolution 43/177¹³ of 15 December 1988, the General Assembly acknowledged the proclamation of the State of Palestine made by the Palestine National Council. The Assembly reaffirmed the need to enable the Palestinian people to exercise sovereignty over its territory occupied since 1967. Also, the General Assembly decided that the designation “Palestine” should be used (in place of the designation “Palestine Liberation Organization”) in the United Nations system, without prejudice to the observer status and functions of the PLO within the system.

CREATION OF THE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE, 1975

In 1975, the General Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, also known as the Palestinian Rights Committee. The Committee was asked to prepare a programme to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights. In 1976, the Committee presented two sets of recommendations, one concerned with the Palestinians’ right of return to their homes and property, and the other with their rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty.

THE FIRST INTIFADA, 1987-1993

In December 1987, after more than 20 years under military occupation, the Gaza Strip and West Bank erupted in a spontaneous popular uprising that became known as the first intifada (an Arabic word for “shaking off” that quickly entered the international political lexicon). Palestinians from all walks of life—youth, merchants, labourers, women and children—staged massive demonstrations, economic boycotts, tax resistance and strikes to protest the military occupation of their land and to demand national independence.

The Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General responded with deep concern to the measures taken by the occupation authorities against the intifada. From the outset of the uprising, beginning with Security Council resolution 605¹⁴ (1987) of 22 December 1987, the question of means to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinians in the occupied territory in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949¹⁵ received special attention. In resolution 605, the Security Council “strongly deplored those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which violate the human rights of the

¹³ <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/146E6838D505833F852560D600471E25>

¹⁴ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/524/77/IMG/NR052477.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁵ <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/380>

Palestinian people in the occupied territories, and in particular the opening of fire by the Israeli army, resulting in the killing and wounding of defenseless Palestinian civilians”.

THE ‘OSLO CHANNEL’ AND THE ‘WASHINGTON HANDSHAKE’, 1993

The so-called “Oslo channel” was originally facilitated by a Norwegian social scientist, Terje Roed-Larsen, together with a senior PLO official and an Israeli academic, starting late in 1992. It later progressed under the guidance of the then Norwegian Foreign Minister, Johan Joergen Holst. The Oslo talks were brought to a conclusion late in August 1993, and the news of an Israeli-PLO agreement was broken to an amazed and hopeful world.

On 10 September 1993, Israel and the PLO exchanged letters of mutual recognition¹⁶. The PLO recognized Israel’s right to exist, and Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. Three days later, on 13 September 1993, in a ceremony at the White House in Washington, D.C., in the presence of United States President Bill Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei V. Kozyrev, Israeli and PLO representatives signed the “Declaration of Principles on Interim Self Government Arrangements” (the Oslo Accord)¹⁷. Following the signing, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, who were also present, shook hands.

The Accord stated, among other things:

- The aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations was to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, the elected Council for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973);
- The issues of Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbours, were deferred to a “permanent status” negotiations phase, which should start no later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period.

The General Assembly expressed full support for the Declaration and also stressed the need for the United Nations to play an active role in the peace process. It also urged Member States and the United Nations system to provide greater economic and technical assistance to the Palestinians.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN INTERIM AGREEMENT, 1995

¹⁶

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Foreign%20Relations/Israels%20Foreign%20Relations%20since%201947/1992-1994/107%20Israel-PLO%20Mutual%20Recognition-%20Letters%20and%20Spe>

¹⁷ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,ARAB,,,3de5e96e4,0.html>

On 4 May 1994, the Palestinians and Israelis concluded an agreement in Cairo for the first phase of implementation of the Declaration of Principles¹⁸. On that date, the interim period formally began. On 1 July, Yasser Arafat, leader of the PLO, arrived in Gaza to take charge of the new Palestinian Authority.

In a tragic blow to the peace process, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by an Israeli extremist on 4 November 1995 in Tel Aviv. The Secretary-General condemned the assassination. The General Assembly, in a special meeting held on 5 November, paid tribute to the slain Israeli leader. In January 1996, the newly installed Palestinian Authority held its first democratic elections to choose an 88-member Palestinian Legislative Council. Yasser Arafat was elected President of the Palestinian Authority.

The peace process suffered severe setbacks in February and March 1996 when multiple suicide bombings in Israel killed about 55 Israelis and wounded another 100 or so. The attacks were strongly condemned by the Security Council, which said the clear purpose of these “vile acts” was to undermine Middle East peace efforts. On 13 March 1996, the Secretary-General joined nine heads of State and nine heads of government at a “Summit of Peacemakers” in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, to oppose acts of violence in the Middle East.

Prior to the Israeli election in May 1996, negotiations on a permanent status agreement between the parties were formally launched. However, no progress had been made when violence erupted following the new Israeli Government’s decision to open an old tunnel under the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem. After the Security Council on 27 September 1996 called for immediate cessation and reversal of acts that aggravated the situation, negotiations on permanent status were resumed in October 1996.

In January 1997, Israel and the PLO signed the Hebron Protocol concerning the redeployment of the Israel Defence Force (IDF) in Hebron¹⁹. The Protocol also created a timetable for further redeployment of Israeli forces in the West Bank and for the resumption of the permanent status negotiations; in March, Israel approved a plan for further troop redeployments in the West Bank.

The next two years saw very little progress in negotiations. The General Assembly convened its tenth emergency special session in April 1997 and met twice in resumed sessions in July and November of that year. Increasingly concerned at the deteriorating situation, the General Assembly resumed the emergency special session in March 1998 to discuss “illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Palestinian

¹⁸ <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/THE+ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN+INTERIM+AGREEMENT.htm>

¹⁹

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/Protocol+Concerning+the+Redeployment+in+Hebron.htm>

territory". The Assembly expressed its concern at the persistent violations by Israel of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (the Fourth Geneva Convention) and reiterated its call to the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to convene a conference on measures to enforce the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

That meeting, for which the Assembly had set a target date of not later than February 1998, was not convened. At the initiative of Switzerland, a closed meeting between Israel and the PLO was convened in Geneva in June 1998, and in October 1998 a meeting of experts of the High Contracting Parties took place. It was not until 15 July 1999 that a conference finally took place, in Geneva, and it lasted for only one day. In a statement issued at the end of the conference, the participating High Contracting Parties reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. The conference adjourned on the understanding that it would convene again in the light of consultations on the development of the humanitarian situation in the field.

THE CAMP DAVID TALKS, 2000

In July 2000, United States President Clinton invited the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority for peace talks at Camp David, Maryland. The summit ended inconclusively, with the two sides unable to reach an agreement on "permanent status" issues, including borders, settlements, refugees and Jerusalem. Both sides, however, renewed their commitment to continue negotiations with a view to concluding an agreement as soon as possible. With peace talks stymied, the situation on the ground quickly deteriorated.

THE 'SECOND (AL-AQSA) INTIFADA'

At the end of September 2000, a new wave of protests and violence began in the occupied Palestinian territory after the leader of the opposition in Israel, Ariel Sharon (who would later become Prime Minister), visited the sacred Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif compound in Jerusalem under heavy police escort on 28 September. Protests broke out and at least 50 persons were reported killed and some 1500 injured most of them Palestinians, as a result of five days of continuing clashes between Israelis and Palestinians throughout the occupied territory.

The Security Council, alarmed at the dramatic escalation, condemned by resolution 1322 (2000) this latest wave of violence in the Middle East and the excessive use of force against Palestinians²⁰.

²⁰ <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/22F8A95E5C0579AF052569720007921E>

With the outbreak of the second (Al-Aqsa) intifada, a new stage of the conflict, and of the search for peace, began. Secretary-General Kofi Annan visited the region in October 2000 and met with leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority and other leaders in the area.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators met again in Taba, Egypt, in January 2001, to try to build on the momentum achieved at Camp David six months earlier. Although considerable progress was reported to have been made, the parties were unable to conclude an agreement before negotiations had to end owing to imminent Israeli elections for both prime minister and parliament.

In February 2001, a new Government headed by Ariel Sharon took over in Israel, declaring its willingness to continue negotiations while indicating that it would not be bound by the understandings of his predecessor Government. Violence continued unabated in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Secretary-General, addressing the Palestinian Rights Committee on 1 March 2001, described the crisis as “a human tragedy and a source of grave concern for the future”.

The Security Council met in March 2001 to consider suggestions for establishing a United Nations observer force in the occupied Palestinian territory to provide protection for Palestinian civilians.

When a draft proposing the Council’s readiness to set up such a mechanism was put to a vote on 27 March 2001, nine countries voted in favour and one against, with four abstentions, but the negative vote of a permanent member, the United States, blocked the proposal.

In the succeeding months, violence continued, with unprecedented numbers of deaths and injuries on both sides. In a hopeful sign, a fact-finding report was released by the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee (“the Mitchell Committee”)²¹. The report, among other things, called for an immediate ceasefire; a freeze on Jewish settlement construction; denunciation of terrorism, and the resumption of peace talks.

Members of the Security Council also voiced their full support for the Secretary-General’s efforts to resume dialogue among the parties to the Middle East conflict and expressed their backing for the Mitchell report. In a statement made after a closed-door briefing by the Secretary-General on 22 May 2001, the Council President appealed to the parties to give serious consideration to the Mitchell committee’s recommendations, and called on them immediately to begin the steps required to implement those recommendations, including confidence-building measures.

VIOLENCE SPREADS AND ESCALATES INTO ALL-OUT CONFLICT

²¹ <http://www.nad-plo.org/userfiles/file/Reports/sheikh.pdf>

In June and August of 2001, separate suicide-bomb attacks in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem killed 36 civilians and shocked the world. Israel re-introduced its tactic of targeted and extra-judicial killings of accused Palestinian militants, with a missile attack on a leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a PLO faction, in his office in the West Bank city of Ramallah; in response, the PFLP claimed responsibility for the assassination of an Israeli cabinet minister in a Jerusalem hotel. Israeli forces re-entered Palestinian areas of the West Bank from which they had previously pulled back.

The upsurge in violence greatly alarmed the Security Council, which in March 2002 adopted resolution 1397 (2002) demanding the “immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction”, and reaffirming “a vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side with insecure and recognized borders”²². In the same month, the League of Arab States, meeting in Beirut, adopted a peace plan proposed by Crown Prince (later King) Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, under which the Arab States offered recognition of Israel in return for a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Arab territories.

However, the diplomacy was again overshadowed by events on the ground: a suicide bomber killed 30 Israelis during a Passover dinner at a restaurant in Netanya, and Israeli forces mounted “Operation Defensive Shield”, their biggest offensive action in the West Bank since the 1967 war²³.

They encircled the Palestinian president’s compound in Ramallah, and detained a popular Fatah leader, Marwan Barghouthi, from his home. On 30 March, the Security Council, in resolution 1402 (2002) called for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian cities²⁴. As the situation continued to deteriorate, the Council met again on 4 April and unanimously adopted resolution 1403 (2002) demanding immediate implementation of the ceasefire and troop withdrawals²⁵.

LAUNCH OF THE QUARTET

In April, the Secretary-General met in Madrid, Spain, with the foreign ministers of the United States and Russia (the co-sponsors of the 1991 Madrid peace conference), and with Javier Solana, the High Representative of the European Union for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. They declared the need for an immediate cessation of violence, an end to “illegal and immoral” suicide attacks and for progress on the implementation of cease-fire proposals and political measures to end the conflict. This constituted the first meeting of the “Quartet” – the European Union, the United States, Russia and the United Nations, –

²² <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/283/59/PDF/N0228359.pdf?OpenElement>

²³ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/499/57/IMG/N0249957.pdf?OpenElement> Pg 7

²⁴ <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/SC7348.doc.htm>

²⁵ <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/7205247.28298187.html>

which would spearhead international efforts in the search for a peaceful solution from then on.

THE ROAD MAP IS UNVEILED

In the midst of the escalation of violence at the beginning of 2003, diplomatic efforts resumed. On 30 April, the Quartet formally presented to the parties a "Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict", a blueprint, which became known as the "Road Map". The Road Map was a three-phase plan, to be implemented in measurable incremental steps and based on the foundations laid by the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), agreements previously reached by the parties, and the Arab Peace Initiative²⁶.

Significantly, the Road Map was accepted by both Israelis, albeit with reservations, and Palestinians as the primary blueprint and reference point for all efforts to end the conflict. From 2002 onwards, the Quartet continued to meet regularly at "principals" level (as at Madrid in 2002) and on the ground at envoy level through the facilitation of the Gaza-based United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

The Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, and the newly appointed Palestinian Prime Minister, Mahmoud Abbas, met with United States President George Bush and King Abdullah of Jordan in Aqaba, Jordan, on 4 June 2003. Prime Minister Abbas said: "The armed intifada must end and we must use and resort to peaceful means in our quest to end the occupation and suffering of Palestinians and Israelis." Prime Minister Sharon said: "We can ... reassure our Palestinian partners that we understand the importance of territorial contiguity in the West Bank for a viable Palestinian State," and pledged to immediately begin the dismantlement of "unauthorized" outposts. This was followed by a meeting of the Quartet principals, also in Jordan, at which they pledged to support the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to carry out their commitments, and welcomed efforts by Egypt and others to achieve a halt to armed action by Palestinian groups.

The Israeli and Palestinian Prime Ministers met again in Jerusalem on 1 July to discuss progress in implementing the Road Map. In a joint news conference held before the meeting, Prime Minister Abbas called Israel's withdrawal from the northern Gaza Strip "important steps" and said other occupied Palestinian towns and cities would be next. He hoped they would agree on forming joint committees to further the Road Map's implementation, while four alleged militants in the West Bank. After two more suicide bombings killed 15 persons, Israeli forces resumed their siege of the Palestinian presidential compound in Ramallah. In October, after a female suicide bomber killed 21

²⁶ http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/middle_east/quartet-comque-4may04.htm

Israelis, at a Haifa restaurant, the General Assembly again condemned such killings, while demanding also that Israel stop and reverse the construction of the separation barrier. In November, the Security Council adopted resolution 1515 (2003), endorsing the Road Map²⁷. Prime Minister Sharon, meanwhile, announced a plan for the unilateral “disengagement” of Israeli military forces and settlers from the Gaza Strip. Prime Minister Sharon reiterated that his first priority was Israel's security.

In August, a suicide attacker from Hamas killed 21 persons on a Jerusalem bus, and Israel carried out extra-judicial killings of a Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip and four alleged militants in the West Bank.

THE ‘GENEVA INITIATIVE’

A new, but unofficial, peace effort emerged in December 2003, when representatives of Israeli and Palestinian civil society, led by two former cabinet ministers of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Yossi Beilin and Yasser Abed Rabbo, launched the “Geneva Initiative”, a detailed model peace accord to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which touched on final status issues. Although it had no official standing, this blueprint for peace generated significant public support among the Israelis and Palestinians. After meeting the founders of the initiative in New York on 5 December, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the Road Map remained the “key mechanism” for moving forward, and that “the momentum needed for conflict resolution in the Middle East must come from people working together for change”.

There was a further escalation of violence in many forms in 2004. In separate missile attacks on Gaza City in March and April, Israel Defence Forces killed the two top leaders of the Islamist Hamas movement, Shaikh Ahmad Yassin and Abdul Aziz Rantisi. In May, Palestinian militants blew up an Israeli military vehicle in the Gaza Strip, killing six soldiers; Israel launched a large operation along Gaza's border with Egypt to stop alleged cross-border infiltration and arms smuggling, and in the operation dozens of Palestinian houses were demolished and 40 Palestinians were killed. In July and August, suicide bombers killed more than 20 Israelis in Netanya and Beersheba. In September, after Qassam rockets killed two Israeli children in the Negev town of Sderot, Israeli forces re-occupied the northern Gaza Strip in a 17-day military operation in which more than 100 Palestinians were killed.

In November 2004, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who had been in declining health over the previous 11 months during which he was confined to his compound in Ramallah, was flown to a hospital in France, where he died on 11 November,

²⁷ <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/71B2C135FCA9D78A85256DE400530107>

Diplomatic contacts marked the start of 2005. In February, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, now the head of an Israeli “unity government”, met at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, with Mahmoud Abbas, who had been popularly elected in January to succeed Yasser Arafat as President of the Palestinian Authority. Once again, the two leaders announced an end to violence, and Israel announced a plan for a release of 900 Palestinian prisoners and a withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian cities. The results of the conference were seen as heralding the “end” of the intifada; the planned Israeli troop withdrawals were “frozen” within days, however, after a suicide bombing killed five people at a Tel Aviv nightclub.

In March, the Quartet principals met again in London, simultaneously with an international meeting to “support Palestinian institution building”. A Quartet statement commended the announced Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank, but reiterated that such moves must be “full and complete” and undertaken in a manner consistent with the Road Map. It cautioned that a “state of scattered territories will not work”. After the London meeting, the Secretary- General visited the region for further talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders. Israel withdrew its forces from the West Bank towns of Jericho and Tulkarm.

In April, the Quartet appointed the former president of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, as its “special envoy for Gaza disengagement”, with part of his mission being to facilitate the handover of economic assets, including such infrastructure as agricultural greenhouses in the evacuated Gaza settlements, to the Palestinian authorities. In May, Israel released 400 Palestinian prisoners. In June, after Prime Minister Sharon and President Abbas had met in Jerusalem, the Quartet again met in London and urged both parties to “avoid and prevent any escalation of violence”.

ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM GAZA STRIP AND EMERGENCE OF HAMAS

In August, despite some opposition from within Israel, Prime Minister Sharon carried out a smooth and prompt evacuation of all civilian settlements in the Gaza Strip and four in the northern West Bank; in September, the last Israeli soldiers left the Gaza Strip and the Israeli settlements there were handed over to the Palestinians. This marked the first Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territory since 4 June 1967, even though Israel retained control over Gaza’s borders, air space and territorial waters. In an address to the General Assembly, Prime Minister Sharon declared that the Palestinians were “entitled to freedom and to a national, sovereign existence in a State of their own”, while reasserting Israel’s claim to an “undivided” Jerusalem²⁸.

28

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Key+Speeches/PM+Sharon+addresses+the+UN+General+Assembly+15-Sep-2005.htm>

In January 2006, two events occurred, which would seriously affect the dynamics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon suffered a debilitating stroke, and, in elections for a new Palestinian Legislative Council, the Hamas movement, which does not recognize Israel, does not accept previous agreements, and does not renounce violence, won a majority of seats. President Abbas asked the Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, to form a new Palestinian Government; at almost the same time, Ehud Olmert was elected as Prime Minister of Israel.

In response to the Hamas election victory, Israel halted transfers of tax revenues to the Palestinians, and major external donors, including the United States and the European Union, moved to withhold financial and economic assistance from the Palestinian Authority. They insisted that for aid to be resumed, the Hamas-led Government must commit itself to the principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Road Map plan providing for two States living side by side in peace.

In June, amidst signs of a growing humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, the Quartet endorsed a European Union proposal for a “Temporary International Mechanism” to facilitate “needs- based assistance directly to the Palestinian people”, without passing it through the Palestinian Government. Under this mechanism, designed to pay the salaries of Palestinians employed in the health sector and to provide for uninterrupted supplies of fuel and power and basic allowances to the poorest segment of the population, the European Union disbursed some \$865 million to the Palestinians in 2006.

In the second half of 2006, Gaza residents were living in a war-like environment, with almost daily Israeli military strikes occurring from land, air and sea, and the continuous firing of Palestinian rockets into Israel. Between 25 June and 12 October 2006, 261 Gazans died in the violence – 60 of them children; during the same period, two Israelis were killed and 15 injured by home-made rockets fired from the Gaza Strip. By September 2006, President Abbas, of Fatah, and Prime Minister Haniyeh, of Hamas, agreed on the formation of a Palestinian unity Government. However, heavy fighting erupted between armed Palestinian factions in Gaza; many fighters were killed and unity talks broke down.

AGREEMENT ON A NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT

New reconciliation efforts marked the beginning of 2007. In February, the leaders of Hamas and Fatah met in Mecca, at the invitation of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, and agreed on a formula for power-sharing in the Palestinian Authority, and in March a “Palestinian national unity Government” was formed, with ministers drawn from both Hamas and Fatah as well as independent members. In its programme, the new Government affirmed that it “honours the decisions of international legitimacy and the agreements that have been signed by the PLO” – a formulation that the major Western donors said still fell short of a

full recognition of Israel and commitment to non-violence and to the peace process. Donor restrictions on funding for the Palestinian Authority remained in place, and major Western donor representatives said they would continue to eschew contacts with Hamas members of the Palestinian Government.

In March, a summit meeting of the League of Arab States in Riyadh agreed to reaffirm the Saudi plan adopted at an Arab summit in Beirut in 2002, which offered the recognition of Israel in return for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territory and normalization of relations. The same month, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon made his first official visit to the region, meeting with Israeli officials in Jerusalem and with Palestinian leaders in the West Bank.

In April, President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert met in Jerusalem to discuss immediate humanitarian and security issues, as well as efforts to build confidence between the two sides, but the meeting was inconclusive.

Meeting in Berlin in March, and again later in May, the Quartet principals welcomed the Arab Peace Initiative, as well as new efforts to renew the dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians. However, in renewed inter-factional violence during the period from mid-March to mid-May 2007, 68 Palestinians were killed and 200 were injured. The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs told the Security Council on 24 May that the renewed violence threatened both the survival of the Palestinian Unity Government and the prospects for any fruitful Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

HAMAS TAKEOVER OF THE GAZA STRIP AND ITS AFTERMATH

In June, Hamas violently seized de facto political authority in the Gaza Strip. In response, President Abbas dissolved the Palestinian National Unity Government, declared a state of emergency, and created an emergency cabinet by appointing Salam Fayyad to serve as Prime Minister.

With the formation of the new Palestinian Government, the United States and the European Union decided to renew direct assistance to the Palestinian Authority. Israel also took action in support of President Abbas, and resumed transfer of tax and custom revenues and started releasing Palestinian prisoners.

To boost the peace process in the light of the new developments, the Quartet appointed in June former British Prime Minister Tony Blair as its Representative and expressed support for an international meeting proposed by the United States President to support a negotiated two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE AND RESUMPTION OF PEACE TALKS

In an effort to revive the peace process, the United States convened a conference in Annapolis, Maryland, on 27 November 2007. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas participated, along with representatives of key international actors and regional neighbors, including Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria.

The Conference produced a joint understanding by Israeli and Palestinian leaders, who agreed to immediately launch good-faith bilateral negotiations in order to conclude a peace treaty, resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues without exception, as specified in previous agreements,” and to conclude an agreement before the end of 2008. For this purpose, a Steering Committee was established and the first session of the Committee was held in Jerusalem on 12 December.

DE FACTO RECOGNITION OF PALESTINE IN THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations, with a resounding vote of 138 votes in favour, nine against and 41 members states abstaining, upgraded the status of Palestine to a “non-member state” from “entity”. Amidst celebrations in Palestine, protests were heard from United States of America and Israel against this move.²⁹

Timeline of the Palestinian Question at the United Nations
<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/Chronological?OpenView>

Fundamental Understanding of Key Issues
<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/iss.htm?OpenForm>

²⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/29/us-palestinians-statehood-idUSBRE8AR0EG20121129>

THE ISRAEL – IRAN ISSUE



Israel and Iran have not been at each other's throats since their conception, rather the opposite. Even though under Shah Reza Pahlavi, formal recognition was never granted to the state of Israel after it declared its independence in 1948, both of them maintained close economic and political ties, as Iran did with United States of America as well.

The geo political scenario changed drastically when Khomeini started the Islamic Revolution against the Shah of Iran and the ties between the two countries soured. From close economic and political relations, Iran adopted an anti-Zionist stance and refused to recognize Israel as a country, instead naming them the Zionist Regime and the territory of Israel as the Occupied Lands which belongs to Palestine.

Three major issues influence the relations between Israel and Iran, namely the relations of Israel with United States of America and the premise of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran being primarily against the American White Revolution, and Iranian relations with Hamas and Hezbollah. The third issue is a nuclear stalemate, with Israel accusing Iran of developing nuclear weapons while Iran maintains that its nuclear programme is strictly for peaceful purposes and energy production. Israel, on the other hand has maintained the policy of Nuclear Opacity, neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons in the Israeli arsenal. The relations between Iran and Israel reached explosive levels after the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as the President of Islamic Republic of Iran in 2005 and his alleged remarks to 'wipe Israel off the face of the earth' and similar remarks coming from Israeli leaders³⁰³¹.

³⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/02/us-iran-idUSBRE8600HG20120702>

³¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/03/us-iran-israel-drugs-idUSBRE86201520120703>

Hezbollah is a Shia militant group and political party based in Lebanon which was founded in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Major inspiration of its leaders came from Ayatollah Khomeini and its forces were organized and trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. Headed by Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah has grown to have a large armed wing and eleven out of thirty cabinet seats, effectively meaning a political veto in the running of Lebanon. They were also instrumental in the 2006-08 political protests in Lebanon and despite a 2008 notification from the United Nations regarding the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from South Lebanon, Hezbollah continues to follow its 1985 manifest and has been granted the authority to continue fighting to take back the occupied lands of Israel, while being militarily supported by Iran.

PROTESTS IN SYRIA

Protests against the government of Bashar Al-Assad began on 15 March 2011, against the Ba'ath Party which has been in power since 1979. Protests erupted all across the nation and the Syrian Army was deployed in April 2011 to quell the demonstrations. Due to the crackdown on the protests, including open firing on the protestors by the Syrian Army and continuous rocket strikes against the rebel held areas, Syria's membership was suspended by the Arab League and Syria has drawn wide spread criticism from all across the world. In July 2012, the International Committee of the Red Cross classified the Syrian situation as Non-International Armed Conflict and put it under the scope of International Humanitarian Law including the Geneva Conventions.³²

The Free Syrian Army is the main opposing faction fighting with the government in Idlib and Aleppo in the northwest, Homs, Hama and Rastan in the central region, Daraa and Houran in the south and Dayr al-Zawr and Abu Kamal in the east. Rebels also hold areas and outer suburbs of Damascus where the fighting has intensified in recent days.

SANCTIONS ON SYRIA

The EU originally imposed sanctions which came into force on 10 May 2011. The current trade sanction measures in force are set out in Council Decision 2012/122/CFSP which was adopted and came into force on 27 February 2012. The EU has also imposed a further implementing measure - Council Regulation (EU) No 509/2012 - which came into force on 17 June 2012. This measure, which also amends Council Regulation EU (No 36/2012) imposes a prohibition on the sale, supply, transfer or export of listed luxury goods and certain dual-use items and chemicals.

In addition the EU has imposed a travel ban and an asset freeze on specified Syrian officials.

There are extensive trade restrictions on Syria. These include an arms embargo, which is a ban on the export of 'arms and related material' (ie military ammunition, weapons and goods). This can be put in place by either the UN, the EU, the Organisation on Security and Co-operation in Europe, or at a UK national level.

Other specific trade sanction measures adopted by the EU include:

- a prohibition on the sale, supply, transfer or export of arms and related material of all types

³² <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/update/2012/syria-update-2012-07-17.htm>

- a prohibition on the sale, supply, transfer or export of a list of equipment that could be used for internal repression
- a prohibition on the trade of gold, precious metals and diamonds
- a prohibition on the provision of technical or financial assistance or of brokering services related to any of the above
- an asset freeze against, and prohibitions on making funds or economic resources available (including the supply of goods) to a specified list of people held responsible for the violent repression against civilians
- a ban on cargo flights operated by Syrian carriers
- a travel ban against specific listed individuals

There are limited exemptions in place, including the transport of supplies to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and for supply of non-lethal equipment for humanitarian or protective use.

Other measures include:

- a prohibition on the sale, supply, transfer or export of equipment or software intended for use by the Syrian regime in monitoring or interception of internet and telephone communications. Provision of technical or installation assistance in support of such items will also be prohibited. There is an exemption for pre-existing contracts
- a prohibition on the supply or transfer of specified equipment or technology to be used in certain oil and gas natural sectors in Syria or to Syrian-owned enterprises outside Syria. There is no exemption for pre-existing contracts
- a prohibition on participation in the construction of new power plants for the production of electricity in Syria, including through the provision of finance or financial assistance for such projects or the acquisition of shares in, or formation of joint ventures with, enterprises in Syria engaged in such projects
- a prohibition on the sale, supply, transfer or export of listed luxury goods

Additionally, the EU has also imposed a prior authorization (export licensing) requirement for the sale, supply, transfer or export of a further list of dual-use items which might be used for internal repression.

There are also additional restrictive measures placed on Syrian banks and insurance. These include:

- a prohibition on Syrian banks from opening new branches, subsidiaries or representative offices in EU member states and from establishing joint ventures or acquiring an interest in banks in the EU. Likewise, EU financial institutions are prohibited from doing the same activities in Syria

- member states are obliged not to provide loans or other forms of financial support to the Syrian government, together with restrictions on the supply of banknotes and coinage to the Central Bank of Syria
- a prohibition on the provision of re/insurance to the Syrian government or entities or controlled by it³³

The **US** designated Syria a "state sponsor of terror" in 1979, a label which brought a raft of sanctions with it. Those have been added to since, by the Bush administration in 2004 and last year by Barack Obama in response to the current crisis. In August 2011 President Obama signed a new executive order, imposing sanctions on Syria's energy sector and freezing all Syrian government assets in the US.³⁴

Arab League members suspended Syria last November and imposed sanctions. They include the freezing of Syrian government assets in Arab countries, stopping dealings with the Syrian central bank, the suspension of commercial flights to and from Syria, halting investment by Arab governments for projects in Syria, and a travel ban on senior officials.

Turkey announced plans to freeze Syrian government assets and suspend all financial dealings with Turkey on 30 November 2011. Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoglu also said a co-operation agreement with Syria would be suspended until a new government was in place.

Canada, Australia and Switzerland have also imposed sanctions.

However, the negative votes of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China has restrained the slapping of fresh sanction on Syria and the Assad government by the United Nations Security Council and have even continued supplying arms to the beleaguered Syrian Armed Forces fighting the rebels.³⁵³⁶

NATO STAND ON SYRIA

NATO has categorically refused to intervene militarily in Syria, calling it more complex than the situation in Libya, and has also refused to give humanitarian or medical assistance. NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said in February 2012, "Syria is ethnically, politically, religiously much more complicated than Libya."

In August 2012, the White House warned the Assad regime that its **preparation or use of chemical weapons** would precipitate an armed military intervention by the United States

³³ <https://www.gov.uk/sanctions-on-syria>

³⁴ <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33487.pdf>

³⁵ <https://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/sc10714.doc.htm>

³⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/13/us-syria-crisis-russia-idUSBRE91COKH20130213>

with similar intention being voiced by the Netanyahu government in Israel³⁷³⁸. "We have been very clear to the Assad regime but also to other players on the ground that a red line for us is, we start seeing a whole bunch of weapons moving around or being utilized," President Barack Obama said.

As of February 2013, U.S. policy toward Syria remains focused on ratcheting up diplomatic and economic pressure on the Assad regime, as well as providing non-lethal and humanitarian aid to opposition forces. The Obama administration has repeatedly voiced concerns that funneling heavy weapons to the opposition forces could result in their spread to Islamist extremists.

Current status of talks between the government and the opposition:
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/16/us-syria-crisis-idUSBRE91E0L320130216>

The fighting between the Free Syrian Army and the Syrian Armed forces has resulted in the death of over 70,000 people and displacement of more than 1.2 million Syrians leading to a humanitarian crisis where ICRC is the only organization that has aid personnel on the ground to deal with the issue. Human Rights violations have raged unrestrained by both sides, for example, the Al Houla massacre and the rocket strikes at the heart of cities and villages killing hundreds of people.³⁹⁴⁰⁴¹⁴²

Since demonstrations began in March, the Syrian government has restricted independent news coverage, barring foreign free press outlets and arresting reporters who try to cover protests. Some journalists had been reported to have gone missing, been detained, been tortured in custody, or been killed on duty. International media have relied heavily on footage shot by civilians, who would often upload the files on the internet.

The government disabled mobile phones, landlines, electricity, and the Internet in several places. Authorities had extracted passwords of social media sites from journalists through beatings and torture. The pro-government online group the Syrian Electronic Army had frequently hacked websites to post pro-regime material, and the government has been implicated in malware attacks targeted at those reporting on the crisis.

The Syrian government still refuses to allow U.N. convoys to cross from Turkey into northern Syria, as most border crossings are controlled by the Free Syrian Army, she said.

³⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/27/syria-crisis-israel-idUSL5N0AW0GQ20130127>

³⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/31/us-syria-israel-attack-idUSBRE90T0K120130131>

³⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/17/syria-crisis-idUSL6N0AM96B20130117>

⁴⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/11/syria-crisis-alawites-idUSL5E8N8GEB20121211>

⁴¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/26/syria-crisis-idUSL5E8JQ3DU20120826>

⁴² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/26/us-syria-crisis-idUSBRE8610SH20120826>

Four million Syrians were deemed in need of aid late last year, but the situation has deteriorated since due to shelling, inflation, and shortages of food and medicine, she said.

Some 70,000 people have been killed in the nearly two-year-old revolt against President Bashar al-Assad that has also sent 860,000 refugees fleeing abroad, according to the world body.

Typhoid has broken out in an rebel-held Deir al-Zor due to people drinking contaminated water from the Euphrates River, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Tuesday.⁴³

THE TURKISH SPILLOVER

Turkey has been one of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's fiercest critics, hosting a NATO Patriot missile defense system to protect against a spillover of violence and leading calls for international intervention to end the conflict.

The United Nations said on Friday that refugee numbers have spiked, with around 5,000 people fleeing each day, 2,000 more a day than last year's figures.

Turkey is sheltering more than 177,000 refugees in 16 camps, although tens of thousands more Syrians have crossed into Turkey and are staying with relatives or in private accommodation, according to the country's disaster management agency.

Government officials complain Turkey has received only around \$35 million for its humanitarian assistance from foreign donors, half of that from the United Nations.

The government is tightly controlling the aid effort; channeling assistance largely through Turkish NGOs in what it says is a bid to ensure it is properly coordinated.⁴⁴

THE LEBANON SPILLOVER

The tiny and fragile Mediterranean state already hosts 260,000 refugees - equivalent to 6.5 percent of its population - and has sought to absorb them in homes and communities, fearing large camps of Sunni Muslim Syrians could inflame sectarian tensions still smouldering from its own 1975-1990 civil war.

But the accelerating exodus from Syria's bloodshed means that the number of Syrians seeking help in Lebanon is growing by 3,000 a day, leaving authorities and the UNHCR refugee agency struggling to provide for them.

The issue also highlights the country's current political divide. Some of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's Lebanese foes openly called for camps to be set up, hoping it would

⁴³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/19/syria-crisis-aid-amos-idUSL6N0B1BM620130219>

⁴⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/08/us-syria-crisis-turkey-idUSBRE9170DX20130208>

highlight the scale of his crackdown on the nearly two-year-old uprising in which an estimated 60,000 people have been killed.

The government of Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, dominated by Assad allies including Hezbollah, preferred to support aid efforts to house the refugees in homes and schools in their own Sunni Muslim communities.

Aid workers say that the political concerns constrained their ability to help during the first year of the conflict, particularly in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, where pockets of Christians, pro-Hezbollah Shi'ite Muslims and Sunni Muslim supporters of the armed Syrian rebels live close by.

They are still struggling. A report by the French aid group Medecins Sans Frontieres said half the refugees in Lebanon were not receiving sufficient medical care and many more were living in inadequate winter shelter.

UNHCR has increased registration of new refugees to 40,000 a month, but even that may not keep pace with new arrivals and its capacity is stretched to the limit.⁴⁵

Russian Position on the Situation in Syria:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/20/us-syria-crisis-dialogue-idUSBRE91J0JR20130220>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/18/us-syria-crisis-russia-aid-idUSBRE91H0DR20130218>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/02/us-syria-crisis-idUSBRE9100KV20130202>

⁴⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/09/us-syria-crisis-lebanon-idUSBRE91803220130209>

THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM



Fordow Nuclear Plant being built under a mountain to protect it from airstrikes

The Iranian Nuclear Program was started in the 1950s with the help of United States of America under the Atoms for Peace Program and continued with western help until the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Khomeini was in staunch opposition to the nuclear program and banned all clandestine research. But after his death in 1989, the nuclear program went under major expansion with the help of Russian Federation who helped Iran set up their first reactor at Bushehr which reached its full capacity in 2012.



Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant completed in 2011 with the help of Russian Federation and reached full capacity in 2012.

A party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and having Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA, the Iranian Nuclear Program has been in controversy over the lack of cooperation Iran has sometimes shown the Agency and the recent stalemate in talks with the P5 regarding stopping of all enrichment related activities in Iran. The latest in a spate of talks between Iran and the P5 is the Gold Sanctions offer where the P5 would have suggested an easing of sanctions on the trade of gold and other precious metals in return for steps to close down the facility Iran had been developing at Fordow, underneath a mountain, to protect it from airstrikes.⁴⁶ The controversy around the Fordow plant stems from the threat by Israel to militarily intervene if the talks between the P5 and Iran do not result in Iran dismantling its nuclear program, and the fact that this plant is being used to enrich uranium to 20%, only a short technical step away from converting it to weapons grade plutonium.⁴⁷

Due to all these issues, already four rounds of UN sanctions have been put on Iran⁴⁸⁴⁹⁵⁰⁵¹⁵²⁵³⁵⁴⁵⁵, besides the individual sanctions by United States of America⁵⁶, United Kingdom⁵⁷, the European Union⁵⁸⁵⁹ and other nations which have resulted in the stagnancy of the Iranian economy despite their might in the OPEC and status as a petroleum exporter. The sanctions have bottle necked trade to a minimum and frozen most of the assets outside the boundaries of Iran.⁶⁰⁶¹

November 2012 Report of the IAEA regarding unanswered questions by the Islamic Republic of Iran: <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2012/gov2012-55.pdf>

News on current talks: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/02/15/289117/iaea-reports-on-iran-political-biased/>

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/02/15/289056/iaea-call-to-visit-parchin-beyond-npt/>

⁴⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/18/us-iran-nuclear-idUSBRE91H09Z20130218>

⁴⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/17/iran-nuclear-fordow-idUSL6N0BH19K20130217>

⁴⁸ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/453786b00.html>

⁴⁹ [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1737\(2006\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1737(2006))

⁵⁰ [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1747\(2007\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1747(2007))

⁵¹ [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1835\(2008\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1835(2008))

⁵² [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1803\(2008\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1803(2008))

⁵³ [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1929\(2010\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1929(2010))

⁵⁴ [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1984\(2011\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1984(2011))

⁵⁵ [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2049\(2012\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2049(2012))

⁵⁶ <http://www.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/iran/index.htm>

⁵⁷ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/fin_sanctions_iran_nuclear.htm

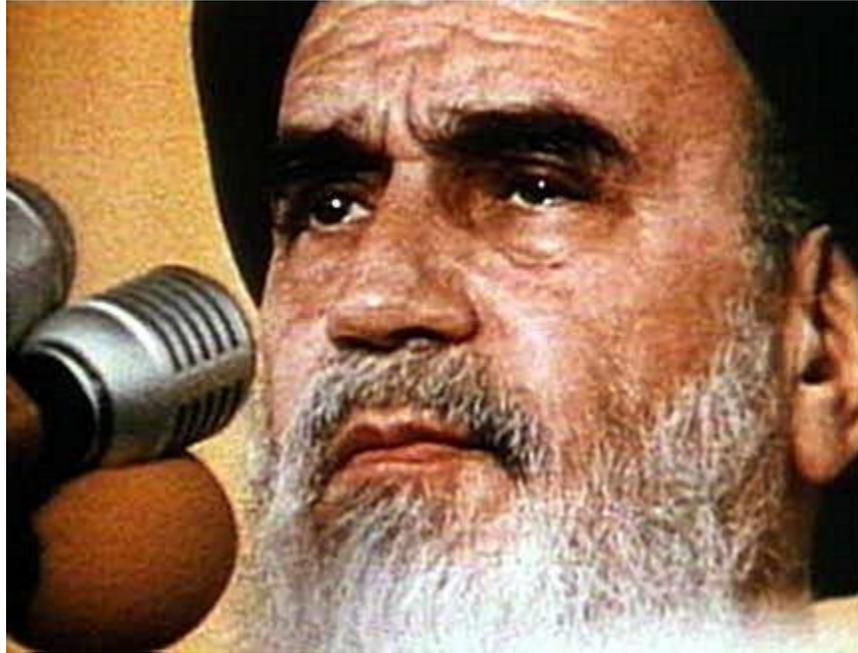
⁵⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/22/us-eu-iran-sanctions-idUSBRE8BL04L20121222>

⁵⁹ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/134544.pdf

⁶⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/19/markets-oil-idUSL4N0BJ1WN20130219>

⁶¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/16/us-iran-turkey-sanctions-idUSBRE91F01F20130216>

THE SHARIA - INTERNATIONAL LAW DEBATE



A long debate has been raging over the inconsistencies of the Shariyat and the International Law Regime. What we must clear first of all is the differences between the two.

While International Law is a codified regime composed of instruments open to *ratification* by the member states of the UN and make up the standards for human rights across the world. This ratification option makes the International Law supreme to all but national matters and national legal systems. In case of a domestic matter, the UN Charter *Article 2 Para 7* grants a country full national jurisdiction. Hence, a country does not necessarily have to conform to the International Standards. This non conformity, when done because of any area not falling under Article 2 (7), are called *violations of International Law* if the country is a party to any instrument which has laid down rules contrary to the actions of the State.

For understanding the *Shariyat*, a basic understanding of its development and history are important. Islam is based on the worship of the Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient deity, *Allah*, who is called God. According to Islam, Allah passes his commandments down through his *Prophets*, who come from time to time bearing the *Word of Allah*. *Torah*, a central concept in *Judaism*, came from *Moses*, and *Christianity* as laid down in the *Bible*, from *Jesus*, both of who were considered as Prophets of Allah. The last Prophet of Allah was *Muhammad* and Islam completed itself in his lifetime. When logically, Judaism would have converted into Christianity and then smoothly transitioned into Islam, became the establishment of three separate religions based upon the lives of 3 Prophets of Allah

according to Islam. Whereas the *Torah* and the *Bible* predate the *Quran*, the documentation of Islamic history is inclusive of all the accounts given in the previous two holy books.

Quran is the Word of God as spoken to Muhammad, his Prophet (PBUH⁶²). The way the Prophet practiced the Word of Allah in his lifetime, came to be known as the *Sunnah*, or the lives and practices of the Prophet. The Shariyat is derived from the Quran and the Sunnah. The fundamental difference between the Sharia laws and the International Laws are that the former is based on the principle of *severe deterrence* whereas the latter on the principle of *redressal*. This is where the punishments for the crimes differ and give rise to the debate on the barbarity of Sharia Laws, including the discrimination between men and women in these laws and many questionable punishments that would fall under torture or other cruel, inhumane degrading punishment.

After the death of Muhammad, majorly two schools of Islam emerged, the *Sunni* and the *Shia*. While the Shia believed that the leadership of Islam passed to *Ali*, the next male successor of the Prophet, the Sunnis still followed the Prophet only as a religious leader but not as a government, which was the *Caliphate*. According to the Sunni, Ali was the fourth Caliph and the documentation on Islam passed down from the three Caliphs before Ali are also regarded as sacred literature on Islam. The interpretation and documentation of the rights and wrongs by the Caliphs (including Ali), based upon their interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah, came to be known as the *Hadiths*, wherein was the concept of *Sahih* (what is right). The Sunni follow the Hadiths by all four Caliphs, whereas the Shia follow the teachings of Muhammad and Ali. Upon this divergence in Islam into many sects such as the Ala'wites, Baha'is, Ibadi, Ahmadiyya, etc. created the establishment of different types of States based upon the type of practice of Islam by the ruling class.

⁶² Peace Be Upon Him, a suffix to taking the name of Prophet