

**The World's Most Enduring Conflict:
Israel and Palestine**

**A Topic Proposal for the
National Federation of High Schools
Topic Selection Committee**

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Introduction

Like Richard O'Connell, a former World War I soldier, seeking the fame and glory in the lost tombs of Egyptian kings in *The Mummy (1999)*, this topic proposal is sure to provide suspense, intrigue, horror, challenges, corruption, curses, and violence. We embark on a journey to find a plausible solution to the present day social and political division known as the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. The answers lie at a strange crossroads, somewhere between humanity's fear of the unknown and the effects of colonialism, conquest, and the consequences of tampering in the wrong domain. It is clear that like O'Connell and his quest for the city of Hamunaptra, the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict road has been fraught with numerous dangers and untold deaths.

Today, we are no closer to a much needed resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict than we were twenty years ago. In fact, one could argue that things are worse now than ever before. With the United Nations and other peacekeeping organizations hesitant to intervene, the two countries dispute what both sides consider to be theirs due to centuries of religious and cultural significance. Both Israel and Palestine believe Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip belong to them. While there is no easy resolution to this long-standing conflict, we believe that this topic presents a broad platform on which to argue why or why not the conflict could or should be solved by outside parties such as the United States.

As O'Connell had to partner with the librarian and Egyptologist, Evie Carnahan, to embark on a quest, the United States must now create a global partnership to help successfully solve this long-standing conflict or face the very real threat of another unwanted war in the Middle East or worse, nuclear conflict. Unlike the humorous moments in the movie, *The Mummy*, the loss of thousands of lives that have resulted from this conflict are no joking matter.

This topic involves many key aspects such as human rights, history, religion, international interest, global conflict, women's rights, child endangerment, environmental impacts, cultural devolution, political upheaval, and much more.

The last four years under President Donald Trump's management have proven to only accelerate the fire in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and has left Biden with not only the consequences of Trump's cultural and religious ignorance concerning the peoples of Israel and Palestine, but also the seemingly insurmountable clean up process left in the wake of the former president's disregard for the historical significance of Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip to both sides. Not only did the former president move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, greenlight an Israeli settlement expansion, close the Palestinian National Authority office to Washington, but he also cut off more than \$200 million in humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians. Biden has been left holding "the bag" so to speak and must now decide what path the U.S. should take.

The U.S. Department of States' most recent statement in June of 2021, "*The U.S. Government remains committed to a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and believes that Israelis and Palestinians alike deserve equal measures of freedom, security and prosperity*" (Bilateral relations fact sheet bureau of near eastern affairs, 2021), shows that Biden is currently planning on taking a somewhat neutral stance on the conflict in the hopes that some of the tensions brought on by the last president will die down. To help promote a more peaceful approach to solving the conflict, the United States sent a diplomatic representative to Jordan, Israel, the West Bank, and Egypt in April of this year.

Office of the Spokesperson, April 19, 2022. *U.S. Department of State*. Retrieved April 25, 2022,

<https://www.state.gov/acting-assistant-secretary-lemperts-travel-to-jordan-israel-the-west-bank-and-egypt/>

Acting Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs Yael Lempert will travel to

Jordan, Israel, the West Bank and Egypt from April 19 to April 26, 2022. She will

engage with senior officials in the region to discuss reducing tensions and ending the

cycle of violence in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

It is highly possible that Biden has already “broken the glass ceiling” concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict when he said, Palestinians deserve “equal measures of freedom, prosperity, and democracy” at a press conference in June of 2021. This statement is more supportive of Palestinians than prior U.S. presidents have been in decades. Instead, prior Administrations have largely stuck to a predictable script of unwavering support for Israel’s right to defend itself.

Just as Imotep’s sarcophagus was incredibly heavy to lift, so are the weightiness of the words used by a U.S. president concerning Israel and Palenstine. Each word can either be weaponized or politically charged depending on how either side and those that support them, decide to weigh those words. ***One single word can change history.***

Timeliness

Not only has the Israeli-Palestinian conflict never been the subject of a national Policy Debate season (despite its saliency throughout the 20th and first part of the 21st centuries), the Middle East as a whole has itself never been explicitly named in the text of a resolution. The unproductive relationship between Israel and Palestine has continued for decades and shows no signs of speedy resolution. In the face of the continually unacceptable and often inhumane actions taken by both sides, these authors present this topic to engage students across the United States.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the world's longest-running and most controversial conflicts. At its heart, it is a struggle between two self-determination movements — the Jewish Zionist project and the Palestinian nationalist project — that lay claim to the same territory. But it is much more complicated than that, with seemingly every fact and historical detail, small and large, litigated by the two sides and their defenders.

Recent airstrikes launched by both sides, such as that that destroyed the offices of the Associated Press, Al-Jazeera, and other leading international news organizations, have only made clear that this conflict has no end in sight and will only continue to impact the lives of thousands. While less overt, the continuing relocation and resettlement of Palestinian territory by the Israeli government only stokes conflict and heightens pressure. Further, the impact of vaccination disparities between Israel and Palestine against COVID-19 (Israelis are 60 times more likely to have a COVID-19 vaccine than Palestinians), climate change, and many other long-term issues will allow debaters to engage in a fluid and evolving topic. Despite this dynamism, debaters will always be able to engage with the complex and well documented history of the region and its people.

Coming into office, the Biden administration was clear that the Middle East would largely take a backseat in its foreign policy agenda. But recent developments have forced the Israeli-Palestinian conflict back into the forefront of international and U.S. attention. U.S. policy on the conflict has long been a point of bipartisan harmony, with more consensus than contention. The Biden administration's emerging policy largely aligns, in general, with past administrations' policies. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not high on President Biden's foreign policy priority list according to Ambassador Youssef, Hesham. "10 Things to Know: Biden's Approach to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *United States Institute of Peace*, 17 Sept. 2021. Former Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton addressed the conflict within the first thirty days in office and former President Donald Trump actually moved the U.S.

Embassy to Jerusalem and removed previous settlements put in place by Obama and Clinton. But can this continued approach advance peace?

Justification

The topic these authors present fulfills the requirements of the NFHS for an annual policy debate topic for its ideological and historical diversity and intellectual depth.

- I. This topic will provide students with the opportunity to access and understand a variety of historical, cultural, and religious issues in depth. The research and understanding that will be required for students to carry-out a successful debate round will prompt a richer understanding of the foreign policy of the United States and other nations, as well as the root causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: religious tension, colonial disruption, and historical realignment.
- II. Students who engage with this topic will be able to debate on both sides of the resolutions elsewhere listed or others created by the NFHS. When debating whether or not US or international involvement should be expanded at all, or disagreeing on which strategies and paths will lead to a decline in hostility and violence, students arguing as either an affirmative or negative will be able to craft robust and complex arguments. Very few arguments that can be made by either side are enumerated herein, but of course differing teams of differing ability may choose any topic or course of action, providing it is topical under the included definitions.

Range

These authors are confident that debaters, whether participating as part of their novice year or competing at the national circuit, will be fully able to debate this topic. Less experienced debaters may choose to explore the role of the United States as a stand alone nation, with simple and established changes in policy. Debaters with multiple years of experience under their belt will be free to fully engage with the complex and lengthy history of the military and political conflicts between Israel and Palestine.

From this examination of the historical record may come Kritiks for negative teams. Further, involvement by international organizations and other nations may be examined which may prompt counterplans and permutation.

Further, the length and popularity of the controversy has led to an abundance of credible sources on the topic, whether they be analyzing the history of the region, the complexities of military action taken by both sides, or the many proposed and possible solutions available to both policymakers and affirmatives alike. Very few pieces of evidence are included herein in order to provide greater depth and clarity to the topic and the positions that may be taken by both sides within a debate round.

Quality

Why should we debate about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict? Most Americans think of it as a fight over a narrow strip of land, by adversaries who each have some legitimate grievances but also some marks against them. It is, therefore, far from obvious why outsiders should be concerned. But this apathy is misguided and by researching and debating this topic, we allow students to dig deep into both sides. The Israeli/Palestinian conflict can be a forbidding, convoluted subject. The aim of this debate topic is to promote respect and empathy among students, especially regarding topics that engender the most passionate debate, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By learning the facts and studying reliable sources, the students benefit. They can study the conflict from a historical perspective as opposed to what they have heard or seen on social media. It allows students to study both Palestinian and Israeli sources and it creates empathy because in the end we are dealing with real human people. When students look at the effects this conflict has had on both sides, they will be moved. We absolutely have to bring controversial subjects, which dominate the news and people's lives, into the debate world to teach students how to create a respectful debate, one that is driven by facts, not fiction or hearsay so

that they can learn how to put across their own point of view in a respectful manner but also how to craft an argument based on information, not emotion.

To the people who say that the debates could get very heated, and are worried that words such as “racists” or “terrorists” will become part of the debate round, we have one question: Did you sit in on a debate round discussing George Floyd or Briana Taylor when the resolution was about criminal justice reform in the United States? Those rounds were highly emotional and controversial depending on what political side a team may have leaned more towards or even what part of the country students were from. Judges were also very involved and sometimes told students they should only be debating “safe” topics and that criminal justice reform was “too heavy” of a topic for teenagers to debate. If students in the United States cannot debate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a topic that most likely does not affect their everyday lives, how will they ever debate such topics like women’s rights that does?

As we all know, every policy debate topic inevitably leads to an argument on terrorism, racism, extinction, and of course, nuclear war. Even with the 2021-2022 topic on waters in the United States, which seems to be a very “safe” and non-controversial topic, all of these arguments entered into the debate rounds. Affirmative kritiks that had nothing to do with the resolution on water were run, negative K’s about racism and gender rights were all part of the strategy to derail affirmative teams who stuck to the provided resolution. We believe that it has been proven that there is no “safe” topic in policy debate. Many people will read the title of this paper and instantly have an opinion on whether this topic should even be considered, and THAT is the exact reason this topic SHOULD be considered. Debate should be educational. Debate should teach students to argue both sides of the topic. There is no other activity that encourages students to look at facts from both sides of the issue.

We believe that younger people are much better at debating about controversial topics than adults. Students approach it with an open mind and want to learn about both sides. Whereas adults

have most likely already formed their opinion and are not so open-minded. These students are the future leaders of the United States and as such, need to learn how to tackle these controversial topics in a respectful way. The objective of this paper is to help them critically evaluate evidence and construct arguments. These are all skills our future citizens need, especially in today's chaotic and unstructured social media environment.

Affirmative Ground

Affirmatives will have a multitude of avenues to address peacekeeping efforts in Israel and Palestine.

1. Affirmative teams can argue that the U.S. Federal Government could enact policies to punish Israel and Palestine for their human rights violations.
2. Affirmative teams can expand on already existing policies dealing with the conflict on both sides, giving them a wealth of existing information to pull from.
3. Affirmative teams could examine the effects of hard power or soft power. Soft power has been used in the past to help resolve global conflicts; has it been effective in this instance? Or should hard power be brought into the picture?
4. Affirmative teams could implement regulations that would allow for greater generosity towards Palestinians, such as supplying more humanitarian aid and financial assistance for medical care.
5. Affirmative teams could argue for the cooperation of the UN and NATO to create a more hardline approach to resolution of the conflict.
6. Sanctions and Embargoes could give affirmative teams case areas dealing with human rights violations occurring on both sides, especially towards women and children.
7. Affirmative teams could argue that the longstanding costs of the conflict have been detrimental to all countries involved and a resolution would result in a better economic situation for all.

Affirmatives have a number of advantage areas they can claim depending on which path they choose. A peaceful resolution would bring about greater trade, access to healthcare for women and children, and equality in women's rights. It could boost the economies of both sides, repair the United States' recent reputation concerning the conflict, bring about a greater tolerance for cultures and religions around the world, increase western soft power, and possibly defer nuclear war (although we all know that policy debates include some form of nuclear war as the ultimate outcome).

Other affirmative actions can decrease the possibility of World War III by employing stronger peacekeeping missions and taking a more front seat approach to bringing about an actual resolution instead of the status quo as in the past. In addition, a resolution between these two parties would lead to greater global stability as the two countries work towards a common goal of peace and prosperity. A resolution could lead to greater trade opportunities as well as increased tourist traffic once the area has stabilized.

Negative Ground

This particular topic allows for a very broad range of negatives. Teams can take a very diverse set of strategies that encompass both policy and kritikal argumentation. Regardless of the style of debate within the circuit, this resolution will allow students at all levels to easily find and research both literature and arguments for the neg side. This topic will allow not only varsity debaters but novice debaters to develop a broad range of debate skills and knowledge that will only improve their debate game.

In addition, the harms areas create a broad avenue for case debate at all levels. The impact areas allow both offensive and defensive arguments to occur by the negative as a part of a broader in-round strategy. There should be a strong set of arguments as to the ability of the U.S. to significantly impact the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Likewise, the U.S. government and Biden administration's ongoing

response to the conflict will enter into the argument. The amount of literature to be found on this topic is endless.

The negative will have a broad range of counterplan options with these topics, all supported by a vast amount of evidence. Negatives can advocate for counterplans to test the mechanism of the affirmative; agent C.P.s, advantage C.P.s, and reduction C.P.s are strong arguments against the Affirmative. Affirmatives must choose their solvency evidence carefully as research supports a number of negative counterplan approaches that will test the affirmative to the limits. Key negative ground will include a discussion of whether this conflict can even be solved and by whom. Negatives can also articulate that soft power is good and that this would be a major impact of American action in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Negatives can retrieve evidence to support arguments of the U.S. acting alone to solve. Other international organizations such as the United Nations, are better equipped, through their membership and structure, to resolve the conflict. For the kritik debater, access to literature examining the underlying epistemological and ontological realities will be an asset to debating the topic. The authors believe of the importance that teams have access to specific links to a diverse set of kritikal argumentation lending itself to check the breadth of affirmative argumentation. Kritikal teams should be able to link to critical arguments including: Security, Feminism, International Relations, Agamben, Militarism, and Neitzche, to name a few.

Potential Disadvantages

1. **Economy** – The thesis of this disadvantage is that the funding needed to substantially assist in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would disrupt the United States economy. This would lead to the potential impacts of global war and climate change.
2. **Troops** – The thesis of this disadvantage is that the deployment of troops is inherently bad, and that by deploying troops to the area, the affirmative is causing harm.

3. **Overstretch** – The thesis is that aiding in peacekeeping efforts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would overstretch United States troops and ultimately cause more harm to the cause than good. In other words, aiding this effort would negatively affect other global efforts involving the United States.
4. **Peacekeeping is Ineffective** – The thesis is that peacekeeping efforts are more likely to fail than be effective. We can see this with recent United Nations peacekeeping missions which have not had the best success rate. This is impart due to funding and terrorism, along with misconduct on the behalf of the peacekeepers.
5. **UN Relations** – The thesis is that the United States taking more action within the conflict will increase tension within the United Nations, because the United Nations has not taken an active role. The United Nations has not approved or taken a stance on the conflict.
6. **US Relations** – The thesis is that even outside of the United Nations, the United States taking action in the area will disrupt some of the United States' ties with allies.
7. **Soft Power-Hegemony** – The thesis is that strong United States soft power is a good thing and prevents global wars. However, the implementation of the plan will reduce the United States' soft power due to the misconduct of soldiers that has historically been an issue within peacekeeping missions.

Kritiks

1. **Security** - The narrative is that the United States intervening in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is to make the United States feel more safe. However we always feel threatened, and this one action will not make us safer, yet we always have a drive to protect ourselves.
2. **International Relations** – The narrative is that we should not get involved in global affairs and instead stay to ourselves. Getting involved in global affairs leads to more trouble than it is worth.

3. **Agamben** – The narrative with this kritik is that we are making the Israeli-Palestinian conflict out to be a bigger problem than it is, creating more hysteria than the issue deserves or even needs.
4. **Nietzsche** – The narrative with this kritik is that suffering is a good thing, and that the United States interfering in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reduces suffering. However, in reality we cannot reduce suffering, and to keep hoping that we can reduce suffering will instead weaken us.
5. **Militarism** – The narrative is that the Affirmative attempts to use the United States' military might to solve the problem, however the usage of the military is the problem in this situation.
6. **Feminism** – The narrative is that the United States using force to create peace and make things go their way is a male idea, and that we should instead do the more feminist thing of not getting involved in conflicts.

Possible Affirmative Cases and Negative Positions

Aff Cases

U.S. Recognizes Palestine
U.S. Reduces funding to Israel
U.S. International Cooperation
U.S. Funds Palestine
Increase Economic Aid
One or Two-State resolution
UN and NATO Increased cooperation
End Human Rights Violations
Decrease Terrorist Organizations
Resolve Border Disputes
Resolve Claims over the Holy Land
End Settlement Expansion

Neg Positions

UN Counterplan
NATO Counterplan
International Backlash
Military Interference Bad
Status Quo Solves
Hegemony Bad
Econ Impacts
Soft Power
Peacekeeping Ineffective
Overstretch
Troops
Terrorist Organizations Increase
Religious and Historical Perspectives
Multiple Country Involvement Bad
Annexation Bad

Evidence

This evidence is meant to show only a few of the potential arguments on this topic and not the full range of possibilities presented within this topic area. That will be left for the actual debaters to explore.

1. Human Rights Violations

a. Human rights violations have occurred on both sides and will continue without U.S. intervention

According to the United Nations, “Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.”

Both Israel and Palestine are guilty of violating the human rights so clearly laid out by the United Nations. This alone is a call for the United States to become more involved in peacekeeping efforts to support the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to ensure that both sides are held accountable for their actions.

Mekelberg, Yossi. (professor of international relations and an associate fellow of the MENA Program at Chatham House.) July 17, 2021, “Human Rights Offer Way Forward on Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” Online accessed, April, 8, 2022.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1895951#:~:text=In%20the%20triangle%20of%20three,who%20are%20Palestinian%2DArabs%20that> **For too long the approach to the Israeli–Palestinian peace process has been to consider it as either a real estate dispute or a security discourse in its narrowest sense, forgetting that any agreement should put people and their human rights at its center.** The focus has been on sovereignty, land and borders, security arrangements, demilitarized zones and arms control. By this logic the human rights of millions of people, mainly Palestinians, have been considered no more than a derivative of an agreement, and by that held hostage until such an agreement is achieved. **This Gordian knot that perpetuates the victimization of the Palestinian people by Israel and deprives them of the most basic human rights until there is a peace agreement, or until the Palestinian political system gets its act together, must be cut. In doing so the international community, by holding to account those who have perpetrated these violations of human rights and obstructed progress toward peace, can contribute both to ending the suffering of millions and advancing the cause of reconciliation.** But in this asymmetric conflict, instead of peace we have seen a deepening of the

occupation along with periodic violent outbursts of varying intensity. **In the triangle of three governing entities, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, the main victims of human rights abuses at the hands of all three are the Palestinians, but it is Israel's occupation of the West Bank, its blockade of Gaza and its discrimination against its own citizens who are Palestinian-Arabs that constitute the lion's share of these daily violations.**

West Bank and Gaza 2020 Human Rights Report, United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2020
<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/WEST-BANK-AND-GAZA-2020-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf> retrieved April 8, 2022.

With respect to Hamas: reports of unlawful or arbitrary killings, systematic torture, and arbitrary detention by Hamas officials; political prisoners; arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy; serious restrictions on free expression, the press, and the internet, including violence, threats of violence, unjustified arrests and prosecutions against journalists, censorship, site blocking, and the existence of criminal libel and slander laws; substantial interference with the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association; restrictions on political participation, as there has been no national election since 2006; acts of corruption; reports of a lack of investigation of and accountability for violence against women; violence and threats of violence motivated by anti-Semitism; anti-Semitism in school textbooks; unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers; violence and threats of violence targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex persons; and forced or compulsory child labor.

Neither side can say that they have kept their hands clean and treated all human life with dignity. This is why, first and foremost, any moves toward a negotiated peace must concentrate on human rights. Clearly, neither side can reach an agreement on their own, and while multiple countries have tried to help Israel and Palestine work towards a better relationship, all have failed. At this point, the U.S. needs to take an ethical stand and call for the basic human rights of the peoples on both sides to be protected. If the U.S. takes action, other countries will follow.

b. Civilian lives are being claimed as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues

As of November, 2021, over 7,000 Israeli and Palestinian citizens have been killed and over 140,00 have been injured according to OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs). <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>

Cai, Holder, et. al. 2021, “*The Toll of Eight Days of Conflict in Gaza and Israel*”

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/17/world/middleeast/israel-palestine-gaza-conflict-death-toll.html>

A week of fighting has left more than 200 people dead in Israel and the occupied territories, the vast majority of them Palestinians killed by Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip. The violence has intensified over the past eight days as diplomatic efforts have stalled and Israel has scaled up its bombing campaign against Hamas. The war is being fought on multiple fronts. According to the Israeli Air Force, Hamas, the militant group that rules the Gaza Strip, has fired more than 3,300 rockets toward Israeli cities and towns, killing at least 10 people. Israeli forces and settlers have killed 20 Palestinians during unrest in the West Bank, a Palestinian human rights group said. And a wave of mob attacks hit at least one mixed Arab-Jewish city in Israel. But the worst devastation is in Gaza, a densely packed coastal enclave of about two million people. Israeli forces have struck homes, refugee camps, medical facilities and other buildings. Israeli officials have said the assault is aimed at destroying Hamas's ability to make and launch missiles and a network of underground tunnels used by Hamas to move people and equipment. But the strikes have killed at least 212 people, including at least 61 children, according to local health authorities, drawing international condemnation.

c. Conflict has led to thousands being held in prison camps

Haddad, Mohammed, September 13, 2021. “*How many Palestinians are imprisoned by Israel?*”

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/13/infographic-how-many-palestinians-are-imprisoned-by-israel-interactive#:~:text=The%20Israeli%20army%20has%20imprisoned,to%2020%20years%20in%20prison.>

Israel holds some 4,650 Palestinians, including 200 children, 40 women, and 520 administrative detainees, in prisons. According to prisoners' rights group Addameer, there are currently 4,650 Palestinians held in Israeli jails in Israel and the occupied territories. Palestinians view them as political prisoners attempting to end Israel's illegal occupation. Of those: 520 are being held without charge or trial, 200 are children, 40 are women, 544 are serving life sentences, 499 are serving a sentence of more than 20 years. Since the start of 2021, Israeli forces have rounded up more than 5,500 Palestinians, including women and children, according to Palestinian NGOs. The month of May saw the highest number of arrests, with 3,100 Palestinians taken into Israeli custody.

d. What it's like for child prisoners

Haddad, Mohammed, September 13, 2021. “*How many Palestinians are imprisoned by Israel?*”

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/13/infographic-how-many-palestinians-are-imprisoned-by-israel-interactive#:~:text=The%20Israeli%20army%20has%20imprisoned,to%2020%20years%20in%20prison.>

The Israeli army has imprisoned some 12,000 Palestinian children since 2000, according to Addameer. Most of these children were charged with throwing stones, a crime that is punishable under military law by up to 20 years in prison. Israel is the only country in the

world that tries children in military courts, often denying them their basic rights. Currently, 200 Palestinian children remain in detention in Israeli prisons, the majority of whom are in pre-trial detention and have not been convicted of any offence. In 2020, Save the Children [PDF] asked 470 Palestinians from across the West Bank who had been detained by the Israeli military over the past 10 years what conditions were like. They reported: 81 percent suffered physical beatings, 86 percent were subjected to strip searches, 88 percent did not receive adequate and timely healthcare, 89 percent were blindfolded or hooded during detention, 52 percent were threatened with harm to their families, 47 percent were denied contact with a lawyer.

Bilefsky, Dan. November 17, 2001. New York Times, “*What Drove the Israel-Gaza Conflict? Here’s What You Need to Know.*”

<https://www.nytimes.com/article/israel-gaza-what-we-know.html#:~:text=In%202014%2C%20Israel%20invaded%20Gaza,1%2C462%20were%20civilians%2C%20had%20died>. Retrieved April 22, 2022.

But Israel came under increasing international criticism for the growing number of children that were killed in airstrikes on Gaza. Images of children’s bodies circulated on social media, along with a video of a bereft Gaza father comforting his wailing infant — the only one of his five children to survive an Israeli airstrike. Among the deaths were [eight children killed in a single airstrike](#) at a refugee camp. The conflict has fueled a [humanitarian catastrophe](#) that touches nearly every civilian living in Gaza. On the Israeli side, one of the children killed was a 5-year-old Israeli boy who died after a rocket fired from Gaza [made a direct hit on the building next door](#) to his aunt’s apartment, where he was visiting with his mother and older sister.

e. Continued violence against women

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not only a human rights issue, but a women’s rights issue.

Women in Israel and Palestine already face heavy abuse from their own men and that has only been compounded by the conflict. We feel that this topic is timely due to the push all over the world concerning increasing awareness of violence against women.

UN Women, Palestine. 2018. *Facts and Figures: Ending Violence against Women*,

<https://palestine.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>

Early marriage under 18 years old reached 20.5 per cent among females and 1 per cent among males out of the total married population in Palestine [1] **Approximately 15 per cent of married women in Gaza experienced incidents of sexual abuse by husbands over the previous year. More than half of these experienced it repeatedly (3+ times) [2]. 50 per cent of Palestinian women and 63 per cent of Palestinian men agreed that a woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together. [3].**

Hasaneen, Mai Abu, June, 2021. Al-Monitor. “*Violence against women rises in Gaza.*”

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/violence-against-women-rises-gaza>

Palestinian women live with outdated laws dating back to the Ottoman, British, Jordanian and Egyptian eras that many argue are no longer relevant in 2021. Palestine has joined several international agreements on women's rights in the past decade, including the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2014. **Women are being killed at an alarming rate in the Gaza Strip, where a traditional political system still prioritizes political issues over justice and the protection of women's lives. Gaza-based feminist author Hedaya Chamoun told Al-Monitor that the victims should not be reduced to numbers. Each woman who was killed has a story and her life mattered.**

She said that the murder of women should become a social and moral cause not limited to women's rights institutions, as they threaten the Palestinian social fabric that already suffers from devastating economic, political and social crises due to the Israeli occupation.

Human Rights Council, June, 2017. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, on her mission to the Occupied Palestinian Territory/State of Palestine.*

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session35/Documents/A_HRC_35_30_Add_2_EN.docx

It can be said that in this particular context of Israeli Palestinian conflict that violence against women is a phenomenon that occurs across the divide, in both contexts. The Rapporteur will look at violence against women against this backdrop and with the conviction that combating and preventing VAW will ultimately contribute to each society's growth, bridge divided communities and contribute to peace by removing obstacles to full participation women in this process. **The Rapporteur noted that many forms of gender based violence are linked to "honour", including femicides or gender related killings of women, forced marriage, imprisonment, rape, incest, domestic violence, and suicide. She further notes that these patriarchal patterns are reflected also in the legislation, which allows protection of "honour" for such crimes and provides for "pardoning excuses", according to which too often perpetrators get a reduced sentence or do not even get convicted.[1] Often, women and girls who report cases of rape or incest are more likely to incur abuse or even murder by family members because it brings shame to the family reputation. She notes with concern the persistence of Article 308 of the Palestinian Penal Code No. 16 of 1961 which exempts a perpetrator of rape, kidnapping and statutory rape from prosecution and punishment if he marries his victim. Marital rape is not criminalized under the current Palestinian legal framework. The Jordanian Penal Code [1]in force in the West Bank defines rape as sexual intercourse during duress with a female, and does not specify that this woman can be the perpetrator's wife. In cases of incest, both parties are considered guilty, sometimes even in the case of rape by a family member. When the victim of incest is a minor, the charge is filed by a male family member up to the fourth degree of kinship. Existing laws[2] also criminalize abortion, even if the pregnancy is the result of incest or rape, which leads families forcing the victim to marry in order to legitimize the pregnancy.**

OCHA Services, 25 Nov. 2021, "On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Al Mezan demands that duty bearers respect and protect Palestinian women's rights"

<https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/international-day-elimination-violence-against-women-al-1>

Israel's violent actions against women in the oPt continue to escalate. During the large-scale military offensive against the Gaza Strip in May 2021, 38 Palestinian women were killed, 397

were wounded, and 1,603 were forcefully displaced. Further, according to Al Mezan’s documentation, of the 740 residential units that were destroyed, 114 are owned by women. The Israeli offensive also caused significant damages to civilian infrastructure such as water and electricity supplies as well as industrial and commercial facilities, including 31 stores owned by women, who have lost their only source of income. More women have also lost their husbands, fathers, or brothers, who, as is typical in patriarchal societies like that in Palestine, are often the sole breadwinners.

Civilians Must Not Be Used to Shield Homes Against Military Attacks

Human Rights Watch, Press Statement, 15 December 2006. Retrieved 6 March 2015.

In November 2006, 50 veiled Palestinian women responded to a Hamas radio appeal to act as human shields between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian gunmen hiding in a Gaza mosque. Women acted as a cover against Israeli troops allowing armed men occupying the Mosque to escape. 2 of these women were killed by Israeli forces. In two further instances in November 2006, civilians were called to protect sites known to be targeted for attack by the IDF, in one instance by the owner of the targeted home, Mohammedweil Baroud, a commander in the Popular Resistance Committee and by calls broadcast from local Mosques. The Human Rights Watch has condemned this behavior saying, "There is no excuse for calling civilians to the scene of a planned attack...Whether or not the home is a legitimate military target, knowingly asking civilians to stand in harm's way is unlawful." The Palestinian Authority has also been accused of using civilians as human shields and civilian property such as houses as sites for smuggling arms, launching sites for rockets, and factories to produce munitions, thereby exposing them to harm from Israeli Defense Forces military operations.

The fighting in Gaza is over. The humanitarian crisis isn't.

Beauchamp, Zack. May 26, 2021. Vox. *"In defense of the two-state solution"*

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/22442052/israel-palestine-two-state-solution-gaza-hamas-one> Retrieved April 11, 2022

Life in Gaza today is controlled by Israel in a more indirect way. While Hamas rules inside Gaza, Israel (in partnership with Egypt) tightly controls exit and entry. The stifling Israeli blockade, in theory designed to limit Hamas’s ability to arm itself, has destroyed ordinary Gazans’ ability to build a functional and healthy society. A 2018 UN report estimates that the combination of the blockade and three different wars did damage to Gaza’s economy worth roughly six times its GDP — leading to a poverty rate nearly four times what it would have been otherwise. Israel’s approach to Gaza and the West Bank, together with its rule over heavily Arab East Jerusalem and its treatment of the Arab Israeli minority inside Israel, prompted two leading human rights groups — the Israeli organization B’Tselem and Human Rights Watch — to issue landmark reports this year declaring the current situation a form of “apartheid.”

Medical care is a human right, not a privilege. The United Nations declared that the right to health is a basic human right and should not be denied. Currently, Israel is denying Palestinians the most basic of medical treatments. The World Health Organization has put out warnings that border restrictions are causing the loss of human life concerning both war inflicted wounds and Covid. And yet, little to no effort is being made to provide people with basic medical care.

f. Israel continues to deny basic medical care

Health service under strain

Beauchamp, Zack. May 26, 2021. Vox. *"In defense of the two-state solution"*

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/22442052/israel-palestine-two-state-solution-gaza-hamas-online> Retrieved April 11, 2022

Gaza's public health system is in a precarious state due to various reasons. Ocha says Israel and Egypt's blockade, lower health expenditure from the West Bank-based PA and internal political conflict between the PA - which has responsibility for healthcare in the Palestinian territories - and Hamas are all to blame. The UN helps out by running 22 healthcare facilities. But a number of hospitals and clinics were damaged or destroyed in previous conflicts with Israel. Patients from Gaza needing treatment in West Bank or East Jerusalem hospitals must first get requests approved by the PA and then exit passes approved by the Israeli government - in 2019, the approval rate for patient applications to leave the Gaza Strip was 65%. Over the last few months, the health situation has been exacerbated by coronavirus. In April, a spike in cases saw almost 3,000 a day in Gaza. There have been more than 104,000 cases since the start of the pandemic and more than 946 people have died with the virus. The World Health Organization (WHO) warns that the border restrictions are not only limiting access to life-saving treatment for victims of the hostilities, but they are also hampering the coronavirus response. The WHO says it is affecting the "critical" vaccination programme and increases the risk of spreading the virus as people seek refuge with relatives or in emergency shelters.

Water shortages are routine

Beauchamp, Zack. May 26, 2021. Vox. *"In defense of the two-state solution"*

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/22442052/israel-palestine-two-state-solution-gaza-hamas-online> Retrieved April 11, 2022

Most people in Gaza suffer from a shortage of water. Tap water is salty and polluted and is not fit for drinking. While most Gazan households are on a piped water network, Ocha says families received water for only six-eight hours every four days in 2017 due to insufficient power. This has been reduced still further by the latest attacks. The World Health Organization set the minimum requirement for daily water needs at 100 liters per head - to cover drinking, washing, cooking and bathing. In Gaza average consumption is about 88 liters. Sewage is another problem. Although 78% of households are connected to public sewage networks, treatment plants are overloaded. Ocha says more than a hundred million liters of partially treated and raw sewage is pumped into the Mediterranean daily.

2. Historical Perspectives

There is no shortage of angles in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is a story of two groups of peoples who have legitimate religious and cultural claims over a small piece of land. Each side believes that its claims are more compelling than the other's. Both sides made many mistakes along the way. Those mistakes compounded an already difficult and complex reality. Thus, the history of the conflict is bloody and sad. The longer the conflict lingers, the more blood is shed, and the more difficult it is to bring the conflict to conclusion.

a. **The US has remained involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict throughout several administrations, and will continue to do so.**

The United States has supported a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict for nearly two decades, although the Obama, Trump and Biden administrations have reflected this in significantly different ways. If the United States Federal Government were to increase its support for peacekeeping, it would provide a clear cut answer to many years of confusion and shifting foreign policy. However, the involvement of the US in the conflict also provides negative ground. Currently, President Biden has indicated he is not interested in prioritizing or pursuing peacekeeping negotiations.

Jeremy Pressman, 14 July 2016. E-International Relations. "Obama and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." <https://www.e-ir.info/2016/07/14/obama-and-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict/>

As we near the end of the Obama administration, the president is likely to leave office without solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, just like previous U.S. presidents. Obama could have tried to coerce the sides, especially Israel where the United States has tremendous economic, military, and political leverage. But he did not and so the notion that the United States could pressure Israel into making the necessary concessions for a two-state solution remain untested, just as under previous administrations. Washington also never entertained another radical shift, embracing a one-state solution with equal rights for all people in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank.

Kali Robinson, 27 May 2021. Council on Foreign Relations. “What Is U.S. Policy on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?”

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-us-policy-israeli-palestinian-conflict>

Trump’s plan, dubbed Peace to Prosperity, would have established a Palestinian state but given Israel sovereignty over an essentially undivided Jerusalem, including the Old City and the holy sites, relegating the Palestinian capital to a sliver of East Jerusalem. The plan did not grant Palestinian refugees the right to return to their former lands but promised some \$50 billion worth of investment in a developing Palestinian state. The conceptual map provided in Trump’s plan suggested that the Palestinian territory in the West Bank would shrink to 70 percent as Israel annexed the Jordan Valley and all its settlements there. Critics called the plan—which was created without consulting Palestinian leaders—a win for Israel on all the major final status issues, and the Palestinian Authority (PA) rejected it.

For decades, the United States and most other countries that have relations with Israel kept their embassies in Tel Aviv, so as not to preempt a future peace deal. Although a 1995 U.S. law [PDF] required the relocation of the American embassy to Jerusalem, successive presidents waived the requirement “to protect the national security interests of the United States.” However, Trump declined to do so in 2017, instead moving the embassy to Jerusalem and recognizing the city as Israel’s capital. Supporters of the relocation argued there was no national security imperative prohibiting the move, and that U.S. diplomatic representation to Israel ought to be based at the country’s seat of government. The announcement prompted Palestinian officials to break off relations with the Trump administration. Although President Biden has reestablished these ties, he has said the U.S. embassy will remain in Jerusalem. Biden also announced his intention to reopen the Palestinian mission in Washington and the U.S. consulate in East Jerusalem, both of which Trump closed. However, doing so will be difficult: A 1987 law circumvented by Trump’s predecessors bans the Palestinians from having a mission in the United States, and the Trump administration passed legislation to block future leaders from waiving the restriction.

Ambassador Hesham Youssef, 10 June 2021. United States Institute of Peace. “10 Things to Know: Biden’s Approach to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.”

<https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/06/10-things-know-bidens-approach-israeli-palestinian-conflict>

The Biden administration does not believe that Israeli-Palestinian negotiations are possible now. Blinken divided the administration’s next steps on the conflict into three clear sequential phases that would be a precursor to any efforts to bring the parties back to the negotiating table: Focus on humanitarian and urgent reconstruction needs in Gaza. Address Israeli and Palestinian actions that will reduce tension and minimize or prevent renewed violence. Build on the prior steps, over time, to improve people’s lives and add a sense of dignity and hope. Blinken added his aspiration that these steps might produce a better environment in which a resumed effort to achieve a two-state solution could take place. This reflects a more gradual approach than taken by the prior two administrations in which we saw robust efforts via special envoys and final status negotiations in the case of Obama, and a plan around which negotiations were expected by Trump.

3. Political Perspective

According to Raphael Cohen-Almagor from the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, & World Affairs, “Democracy is not merely a majority rule. Democracy is about majority rule *while respecting the rights of minorities*. Both parts of this definition are necessary, and any part in itself is not sufficient. The second part of the definition is no less important than the first. Democracy should devise mechanisms to protect itself from any form of exploiting power; it should fight against and preempt the formation of any form of tyranny, majority and minority alike. The right of the majority should not be considered as the rightness of the majority, as quantity alone does not make things right. Any form of unjustified discrimination should be opposed, whether the discrimination is based on sheer numbers, on certain beliefs, custom or religion. Individuals should be able to fulfill their capacities and to establish their autonomy.”

(<https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/israel-as-an-ethnic-democracy-palestinian-citizens-and-the-fight-for-equal-rights>)

The international community is increasingly calling for the laying down of weapons and the negotiation of a peaceful solution to be reached. The violence in Israel and Palestine has spread beyond their own borders and now affects over twenty or more countries. This conflict has created a rift between the two major political parties in the United States for many decades. There have been several solutions proposed such as the one or two-state solutions. So far, neither side agrees with either solution. Perhaps a new perspective or angle needs to be taken to find a solution that all involved can compromise on.

a. How has the international community responded to the conflict?

Bilefsky, Dan. November 17, 2001. New York Times, “*What Drove the Israel-Gaza Conflict? Here’s What You Need to Know.*”

<https://www.nytimes.com/article/israel-gaza-what-we-know.html#:~:text=In%202014%2C%20Israel%20>

[20invaded%20Gaza,1%2C462%20were%20civilians%2C%20had%20died](#). Retrieved April 22, 2022.

A growing chorus of international parties had called on Israel, Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza to lay down their weapons. The cease-fire was mediated by Egypt as neither the United States nor Israel talk directly with Hamas. Egypt has been the interlocutor in concluding rounds of warfare between Israel and Hamas, including the last two big confrontations, in 2008 and 2014. Anger with Israel had spread across the Arab world, with King Abdullah of Jordan on Monday blaming the escalating violence on what he described as Israeli provocations. France had led efforts to call for a cease-fire at the United Nations Security Council. The United States, Israel’s strongest ally in the United Nations and a veto-wielding permanent member of the council, had opposed even a statement condemning the violence, which many other U.N. members blame on Israel. In his public comments, President Biden refused to join the growing calls from world leaders and many of his fellow Democrats for a cease-fire, or express anything short of support for Israel’s right to defend itself.

b. The two-state paradigm for Israel and Palestine

Beauchamp, Zack. May 26, 2021. Vox. *“In defense of the two-state solution”*

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/22442052/israel-palestine-two-state-solution-gaza-hamas-on>
e Retrieved April 11, 2022

Last week, Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire in a conflict that claimed nearly 250 lives. But the underlying status quo makes another round of fighting all but inevitable, and a fundamental solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict seems further away than ever. Worse, the long-running American solution for the problem — a US-mediated peace process aimed at creating a “two-state solution,” with an independent Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank existing alongside Israel — has proven to be a dismal failure. Israel has become more and more entrenched in the West Bank, building new Jewish settlements that make it increasingly difficult to imagine a viable Palestinian state on that land. Meanwhile, the Palestinian leadership remains deeply divided: The militant group Hamas controls Gaza, while Fatah, a secular nationalist political party, nominally administers the West Bank through the Palestinian Authority (with Israel still ultimately in control). This has led to a growing sense among analysts and experts that the two-state solution is no longer possible. Writing in the New York Times last week, the Arab Center’s Yousef Munayyer proclaimed “a growing global consensus” that “the two-state solution is dead. Israel has killed it.” Last year, influential Jewish American writer Peter Beinart declared that “the project to which liberal Zionists like myself have devoted ourselves for decades — a state for Palestinians separated from a state for Jews — has failed.” But while pointing out the failings of the current approach is vital, its critics go too far. As far away as it may seem, the two-state solution is still the best possible option available for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. That’s in large part because the alternatives are even less plausible. A 2020 poll found that a scant 10 percent of Jewish Israelis supported a one-state solution in which Palestinians and Jewish Israelis are equal citizens. And only 13 percent of Israel’s Arab citizens supported such an option. By contrast, 42 percent of Jewish Israelis and 59 percent of Arab Israelis supported two states — with much of the opposition among Jews stemming from a sense that two states were not currently achievable rather than a principled unwillingness to compromise.

Beauchamp, Zack. May 26, 2021. Vox. *“In defense of the two-state solution”*

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/22442052/israel-palestine-two-state-solution-gaza-hamas-on>

e Retrieved April 11, 2022 **The political right, which favors either the status quo or outright annexation of the West Bank, dominates the political scene. The settlement enterprise is primarily driven by the annexationist right, their ever-expanding enclaves planned to make an Israeli withdrawal more logistically difficult and politically costly. Israel’s rightward political drift, the growth of settlements, and waning public support for the two-state solution are all linked and mutually reinforcing — pushing Israel away from any kind of territorial compromise. On the Palestinian side, the biggest problem is political division. During the 1990s peace process, the Palestinians had a unified leadership. The Fatah party controlled both the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, giving its leader, Yasser Arafat, clear authority to negotiate on behalf of Palestinians as a whole. Then, Palestinian elections held in January 2006 delivered a split verdict, with Hamas winning a plurality of seats in the Palestinian parliament. But Hamas and Fatah, now led by Mahmoud Abbas, couldn’t come to terms on how to share power — a disagreement partly fueled by an international community that rejected the idea of a Hamas-led government. Tensions between the two factions ultimately exploded into a brief civil war, which ended with Hamas in control of Gaza and Fatah in charge of the West bank.**

4. Terrorist Organizations

It is suggested by the United States and other countries that condemn militant groups, such as the Hamas, as terrorist organizations, that peacekeeping will reduce terrorism in the region by removing the need for conflict. This could act as affirmative ground. However, when considering terrorism in the Israel-Palestine conflict, the negative team also has ground because the Hamas and other organizations have maintained that peacekeeping efforts from other countries will be rejected violently. It is also worth noting that Israel has condemned many Palestinian organizations as terrorists, which has received strong condemnation from the United Nations.

Major Stuart C. Lankford, USMC, 2005. *“Combatting Terrorism through Jerusalem.”*

<https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=713087>

A mutually acceptable peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will significantly reduce international Islamic terrorism by removing the decadesold source of hatred affecting the general Muslim global population, thereby drastically reducing, or eliminating, the critical support system Islamic terrorists require. It is clear that now is the time to act in order to achieve a lasting peaceful solution. **The United States must eliminate the perception of favoritism towards Israel and enact genuine aid and support programs to benefit the Palestinians.** However, the U.S. must not take a heavy-handed approach and taint the process. It is up to Palestinians and Israelis

to decide what is acceptable. **By taking an indirect approach, the U.S. can encourage international investment in business and economic programs, reducing the Palestinian support base, and show the Muslim world our desires for true peace.**

Zachary Laub and Kali Robinson, 17 Aug 2021. Council on Foreign Relations. *“What is Hamas?”*
<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-hamas>

Hamas is a militant movement and one of the Palestinian territories’ two major political parties. It governs more than two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, but the group is best known for its armed resistance to Israel. Dozens of countries have designated Hamas a terrorist organization, though some apply this label only to its military wing. Iran provides it with material and financial support, and Turkey reportedly harbors some of its top leaders. Its rival party, Fatah, which dominates the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and rules in the West Bank, has renounced violence. The split in Palestinian leadership and Hamas’s unwavering hostility toward Israel have diminished prospects for stability in Gaza.

Associated Press, 16 Feb 2014. *“Hamas Rejects Peacekeepers.”*

<https://www.politico.com/story/2014/02/hamas-peacekeepers-palestine-israel-103566>

A spokesman for Gaza’s Hamas rulers said Sunday that the Islamic militant group will oppose any international force in a future Palestine — adding a new complication to U.S.-brokered peace efforts. Secretary of State John Kerry is trying to arrange security arrangements between Israel and the Palestinians under a final peace deal. Israel has demanded it retain a security presence in parts of the West Bank after a deal, citing security concerns. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas opposes this, but has said he would accept international peacekeepers. **Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said that Hamas will deal with any international force “in the same manner it uses with Israeli occupation forces.” Hamas has killed hundreds of Israelis in years of conflict in suicide bombings and other attacks. While Hamas is not part of the talks, Sunday’s comments underscore its ability to hinder peace efforts.** The Palestinians want their state to include the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, territories Israel captured from Jordan and Egypt in the 1967 war. Israel withdrew its soldiers and settlers from the Gaza Strip in 2005.

UN and Office of the High Commissioner, 25 October, 2021. *“UN experts condemn Israel’s designation of Palestinian human rights defenders as terrorist organisations.”*

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/10/un-experts-condemn-israels-designation-palestinian-human-rights-defenders>

UN human rights experts today strongly and unequivocally condemned the decision by the Israeli Minister of Defence, Benny Gantz, to designate six Palestinian human rights and civil society groups as terrorist organisations. “This designation is a frontal attack on the Palestinian human rights movement, and on human rights everywhere,” said the experts. “Silencing their voices is not what a democracy adhering to well-accepted human rights and humanitarian standards would do. We call upon the international community to defend the defenders.”...This designation would effectively ban the work of these human rights defenders, and allow the Israeli military to arrest their staff, shutter their offices, confiscate their assets and prohibit their activities and human rights work. The experts note their concern that at least for one of these organizations, this decision may have been taken as a form of reprisal for cooperation with UN entities.

5. Border Disputes

a. Israel and Palestine have clashed over claims to the Holy Land for decades.

Multiple U.S. administrations have laid out road maps for possible peace solutions, but to no avail. Some of the solutions implemented by U.S. presidents have led to even more fighting and controversies. It seems that officials are hopping from crisis to crisis and hoping to put out little fires instead of addressing the key issues. Perhaps taking some parallel steps on the part of the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority would help progress towards peace. Understanding the border disputes and the historical significance will help debaters understand why all the proposed peace solutions have not been successful.

Robinson, Kali. May, 2021. *“What is the U.S. Policy on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?”*

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-us-policy-israeli-palestinian-conflict> , retrieved April 8, 2022.

Israelis and Palestinians have clashed over claims to the Holy Land for decades, a conflict that has long been one of the world’s most intractable. Although the United States is a strong supporter of Israel, it has traditionally tried to advance a diplomatic solution that would reconcile the competing claims of the two parties. The notion of having two separate states, one Israeli and the other Palestinian, commonly referred to as the two-state solution, has had significant international support for decades. It would establish a Palestinian state that includes most of the West Bank—with land swaps to compensate it for Israel’s absorption of some Jewish settlements there—and Gaza, which Israel unilaterally withdrew from in 2005. Most international diplomacy promoting a two-state solution favors Israel’s reverting to a version of its pre-1967 borders, but there is no consensus on how doing so could account for Palestinians within those borders and Jewish Israelis living beyond them. Jerusalem. The disputed city straddles the border of Israel and the West Bank. Israel has annexed the whole city as its capital; the Palestinians claim East Jerusalem for the capital of their state. A two-state solution would require a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem.

b. The Jordan Option is not really an option at all.

Jordan has long been caught in the middle of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and while relations have evolved between Israel and Jordan and Palestine and Jordan, there have been no clear solutions. Trump raised the idea of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation but wanted to Israel to be apart of this

confederation. This obviously did not sit well with the three countries. The confederation would not address the needs of all three countries unless the conflict between Israel and Palestine was resolved first. Another key point is that a confederation does not allow Palestine to be self-determining.

Kuttab, Daoud. November 11, 2021. *“The ‘Jordan is Palestine’ Idea Resurfaces Again.”* <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-jordan-is-palestine-idea-resurfaces-again/> Retrieved April 11, 2022.

For most Jordanian nationalists, the Palestine-Israel Declaration of Principles in 1993, followed by the Jordan-Israel peace agreement in 1994, lowered their defenses and fears of the “Jordan is Palestine” option. After all, **Israel agreed to the demarcation of the borders and the two countries exchanged ambassadors and became peace partners. But all this did not totally kill various forms of a Jordan option or the idea of a confederation of sorts. US President Donald Trump’s efforts to railroad a peace plan included the revival of the confederation idea.** As reported by *Al-Monitor*, during a meeting on September 2nd, 2018, in Ramallah, “Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas surprised his Israeli guests from the Meretz Party and Peace Now movement on two separate occasions. **The first surprise came when he told them that the members of US President Donald Trump’s peace negotiations team raised the idea of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation. The second surprise was when he told them his response: “He would only be willing to enter such a confederation if Israel is a part of it.”** Indeed, **the concept of Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation sounds good on paper, but in reality the argument of confederation is disingenuous. It is suggested as a solution to help Israel rather than reflect the desires of the peoples of the region, particularly Palestinians and Jordanians. A confederation is an agreement between two sovereign states, like the current situation with the European Union, for instance. Those pushing for a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation—before ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinians territory and the establishment of a genuinely sovereign state of Palestine—are actually talking about a federation in which Jordan would take over the security and political affairs of Palestine and thus negate the very concept of national self-determination, which is an inalienable right to Palestinians.**

- c. **The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not the only border war occurring. Syria and Israel have had their fair share of exchanges.**

As we stated earlier, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict does not only affect those two countries.

Israel and Syria have been at war since 2011. Israel claims they are just trying to target their enemies from Iran, Hezbollah in particular, that are located inside of Syria. Israel has conducted hundreds, if not thousands, of air strikes in Syria since 2013 after Iran and Hezbollah came to the full aid of the Syrian regime in the early years of the civil war. But it goes much deeper than that. Syria has never recognized Israel as a legitimate state and does not accept Israeli passports as legally valid for entry into Syrian

territory; Israel likewise regards Syria as a hostile state. Israel has repeatedly admitted to launching missile strikes in Syria. Israel claims to be targeting Iranian groups, but nonetheless, they are involving yet another bordering country.

Fabian, Emanuel. April 9, 2022. “*Syria accuses Israel of conducting rare daylight strike near Masyaf.*”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/syria-accuses-israel-of-conducting-rare-daylight-strike-near-masyaf/>

Retrieved April 11, 2022.

As a rule, Israel’s military does not comment on specific strikes in Syria, but has admitted to conducting hundreds of sorties against Iran-backed groups attempting to gain a foothold in the country. It says it also attacks arms shipments believed to be bound for those groups. Since the civil war broke out in Syria in 2011, Israel has carried out hundreds of airstrikes inside the country, targeting Iranian forces and Iran-allied terror groups, particularly along the Golan border, such as Lebanon’s Hezbollah, which has fighters deployed in southern Syria.

d. Lebanon and Israel’s maritime dispute further add to tensions between Israel and Palenstine.

Israel is technically still at war with Lebanon and are overstressing themselves. The U.S. has failed in mediation talks and there is no clear solution in sight. The UN has sent over 10,000 peacekeepers to the border and still has failed to keep peace at the maritime border. In addition, Lebanon has yet to recognize Israel and they are not likely to do so anytime soon. To add to the issue, more and more Palestinian refugees are flooding into Lebanon due to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This fact is doing nothing to persuade Lebanon to cease fire and come to a peaceful agreement with Israel. What's more, the vast amount of oil and gas off the Eastern Mediterranean coast has contributed to the dispute between Israel and Lebanon. Both countries claim portions of the Levantine Basin that are rich in both of these natural resources. Resolving this issue would require a settlement that involved multiple Arab countries.

The National World, April 11, 2022. “*Lebanon and Israel’s maritime border dispute explained.*”

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/explained-what-is-lebanon-and-israel-s-maritime-border-dispute-1.1101629> Retrieved April 11, 2022.

Lebanon and Israel, two countries technically still at war, have been holding indirect talks since 2020 to agree on their shared maritime border, though the US-mediated efforts repeatedly stalled in the past years. The fact that there is no clear border is an issue that has lingered for decades. It is still used today by Hezbollah to justify its armed confrontation against Israel that it says occupies Lebanese lands despite retreating amid a bloody insurgency in 2000. Yet the talks are focused not on the land frontier, where over 10,000 UN peacekeepers try to maintain calm, but over the maritime border. The reason these two long-time adversaries have finally sat down? Potential oil and gas. The area of the Eastern Mediterranean off the coast of Israel and Lebanon covers about 860 square kilometers and appears to contain vast reserves of oil and gas. For now, this is unlikely. Speaking on Israeli public TV, Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz remarked: “This isn’t a negotiation for peace and normalization.” Mr Steinitz added that any durable agreement would, however, be “for the benefit of both peoples.” **With strong political pressure in Lebanon against expanding the negotiations to cover other issues, we should not expect further talks to make headway soon. Other points of contention remain unresolved, including a long-running land border dispute following the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon in the early 1980s.** For Beirut, there is also the right of return for the tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees displaced by the creation of Israel who still live in Lebanon. Resolving that requires a settlement to the wider Arab-Israeli conflict. Known as the Levantine Basin, the area overlaps with the territorial waters of Lebanon, Israel, Syria, and Cyprus. While both Israel and Cyprus already have rigs drilling and extracting from the basin, there are — as yet — no proven reserves in Lebanon, but they are starting to look. **Because Lebanon does not recognise Israel and both sides are technically still at war, rival claims for oil and gas exploration have created a fraught political atmosphere. In 2010, the US Geological Survey released a report on the energy reserves in the area, which estimated the Levantine Basin might hold oil reserves totalling 1.7 billion barrels of oil, in addition to 122 trillion cubic feet of gas.**

- e. The ongoing military conflict between Israel and Iran in Syria show no signs of easing despite the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

Both Israel and Iran believe they have interests in Syria that they are not willing to back down from. Israel wants to weaken Iran and Hezbollah in Syria and also Lebanon. Israel is worried particularly about the transportation of arms going through both countries. Meanwhile, Iran wants its military position to be stronger in Syria and their ongoing civil war. Iran believes it gives them more leverage when it comes to the Levantine Basin and the vast amounts of oil and gas it contains.

Iran has made it clear that it has no plans to leave Syria anytime soon. This can be seen by recent activities in eastern Syria. Iran is providing militia identity cards to new recruits and that entitled those recruits to monthly food baskets they so desperately need.

Aftandilian, Gregory, Mar 23, 2022. Arab Center Washington DC. *“Israel-Iran Shadow War in Syria intensifies Amid International Developments.”*

<https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/israel-iran-shadow-war-in-syria-intensifies-amid-international-developments/> Retrieved April 28, 2022.

The ongoing military conflict between Israel and Iran (along with Iran-backed Shia forces like Hezbollah) in Syria show no signs of easing despite the Russia-Ukraine crisis and a possible return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), otherwise known as the Iran nuclear deal. In fact, these major international developments may have provided both Israel and Iran with some opportunities to step up their attacks in recent weeks.

Both Israel and Iran believe they have major interests in Syria that they are keen to pursue. For Israel, this involves weakening Iran and Hezbollah’s role in Syria, and by extension, in Lebanon, particularly concerning the movement of arms between countries and the building of Iranian factories in Syria producing missiles, while Iran wants the opposite, as its entrenched position in Syria—made stronger by its involvement in that country’s civil war—gives it important influence and leverage in the Levant. Israel has conducted hundreds, if not thousands, of air strikes in Syria since 2013 after Iran and Hezbollah came to the full aid of the Syrian regime in the early years of the civil war. These Israeli raids chiefly targeted Hezbollah’s arms depots as well as the movement of weapons from Iran through Syria to Lebanon. There have also been clashes between Israeli and Iran-backed forces near the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. In more recent years, however, the Israeli targets have included Iranian arms and missile factories, usually built in underground sites in Syria, that the Israelis believe are producing precision-guided missiles that could hit their population centers. Building these missiles in Syria is considered by some analysts as less risky than transporting them overland or by air from Iran to Syria.

6. Economic Impacts

Research shows that resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict will contribute to positive economic growth for both Israelis and Palestinians. This is a promising finding, considering that both sides have struggled economically in the wake of COVID-19 and constant conflict, an effect which ripples into other aspects of the population. However, the cost of U.S. involvement carries a cost too.

What will the Israeli and Palestinian economies look like in a few years? If Israel continues to pour its economic resources into the conflict and increase its defense budget, the expenditures will have a negative impact on its GDP. Currently Israel has spent a total of \$22.8 billion on defense alone. There are large costs to be incurred with Israel’s removal of settlers from the West Bank. Meanwhile, Palestine is dealing with the cost of destruction of private property and public infrastructure. Palestine

has spent an estimated \$9.7 billion on these two things alone. The more damage the more the costs will go up. There are several more economic factors to consider; banking regulations, cost of prisoners, boycotts, divestments, loss of tourism, trade, access to water, refugees, and sanctions.

Rand Corporation, 2015. *“The Costs of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.”*

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR740-1.html

A two-state solution provides by far the best economic outcomes for both Israelis and Palestinians. Israelis would gain over two times more than the Palestinians in absolute terms — \$123 billion versus \$50 billion over ten years. But the Palestinians would gain more proportionately, with average per capita income increasing by approximately 36 percent over what it would have been in 2024, versus 5 percent for the average Israeli. A return to violence would have profoundly negative economic consequences for both Palestinians and Israelis; per capita gross domestic product would fall by 46 percent in the West Bank and Gaza and by 10 percent in Israel by 2024. In most scenarios, the value of economic opportunities gained or lost by both parties is much larger than expected changes in direct costs. Unilateral withdrawal by Israel from the West Bank would impose large economic costs on Israelis unless the international community shoulders a substantial portion of the costs of relocating settlers. Intangible factors, such as each party's security and sovereignty aspirations, are critical considerations in understanding and resolving the impasse. Taking advantage of the economic opportunities of a two-state solution would require substantial investments from the public and private sectors of the international community and from both parties.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 10 September 2019. *“Palestinian socioeconomic crisis now at breaking point.”*

<https://unctad.org/news/palestinian-socioeconomic-crisis-now-breaking-point>

The fiscal standoff with Israel may lead to a collapse of Palestinian finances, and environmental degradation is placing a health burden on the population, says new report. Suffering is deepening in Palestine as its economy continues to deteriorate and rising poverty levels and increasing environmental degradation exact a heavy toll, according to the latest UNCTAD report on its assistance to the Palestinian people.

In 2018 and early 2019, the Palestinian economy stagnated, per capita income further fell by 1.7%, unemployment increased, poverty deepened, and the environmental toll of occupation rose in the occupied Palestinian territory (Gaza and the West Bank including East Jerusalem). The short-term economic prospects for Palestine are even grimmer and there are no signs that the negative trends in the key drivers of economic growth will be reversed soon, the report warns. **About one in three Palestinians in the labour market is unemployed. In Gaza, the unemployment rate is above 50% while the poverty level has reached 53%, even though most of the people classified as poor receive aid from the government and international organizations. Gaza is increasingly becoming unliveable under the severe and worsening socioeconomic conditions. In 2018, its local economy contracted by 7%, leading to a 10% decline in its per capita income. According to the report, the reasons behind the near collapse of the Palestinian**

economy are the expansion and tightening grip of occupation, suffocation of Gaza's local economy, a 6% drop in donor support between 2017 and 2018, deterioration of the security situation and lack of confidence as a result of bleak political horizons.

Steven Scheer, 18 May 2021. Reuters. *"Fighting with Hamas, weak Q1 may dent 2021 Israel economic growth."*

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-q1-gdp-slides-annualised-65-spending-drops-2021-05-18/>

Israel's economy contracted by 6.5% in the first quarter, the Central Bureau of Statistics said on Tuesday, as economists warned that renewed fighting between Israel and Palestinian militants could curb its economic recovery from the pandemic. After posting a better-than-expected 2.6% contraction in 2020, Israel's economy was projected to grow between 5% and 7% this year on the heels of a rapid vaccination roll-out that has led to a nearly full reopening of businesses after emerging from a third lockdown in mid-March. But data published on Tuesday showed gross domestic product shrank more than expected in the January-March period from the prior quarter and was in contrast to expectations of 3.6% growth forecast in a Reuters poll of analysts. Consumer and government spending and investment fell in the quarter, while exports rose. At the same time, **Israel's economy -- in which the jobless rate fell below 8% in April and inflation stands at 0.8% -- is losing close to 200 million shekels (\$61 million) a day from a conflict between Israel and Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip that has entered a second week.** Ofer Klein, head of economics and research at Harel Insurance and Finance, after the GDP data cut his 2021 growth estimate to 4.2% from 5%, mainly on lower consumer spending expectations. Liam Peach, emerging markets economist at Capital Economics, is maintaining a 7% estimate for now. **"With the economy starting the year on weak footing and an extended military conflict a growing concern, the risks to our forecast for GDP growth ... this year are skewed firmly to the downside," Peach said. "An extended military conflict weighs on sentiment and disrupts activity in large parts of the economy."**

Note: The following card takes costs to US taxpayers calculated in 2003. Costs have only increased in the last twenty years. This card is merely a demonstration of the economic impact of US involvement.

Thomas R. Stauffer, 23 July 2009. Washington Report on Middle East Affairs. *"The Costs to American Taxpayers of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: \$3 Trillion."*

[https://www.wrmea.org/003-june/the-costs-to-american-taxpayers-of-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict-\\$3-trillion.html](https://www.wrmea.org/003-june/the-costs-to-american-taxpayers-of-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict-$3-trillion.html)

Conflicts in the Middle East have been very costly to the U.S., as well as to the rest of the world. An estimate of the total cost to the U.S. alone of instability and conflict in the region—which emanates from the core, Israeli-Palestinian conflict—amounts to close to \$3 trillion, measured in 2002 dollars. This is an amount almost four times greater than the cost of the Vietnam war, also reckoned in 2002 dollars. Even this figure underestimates the costs because certain classes of expenditure remain unquantified. In particular, no reliable figure is available for the costs of "Project Independence," Washington's lavishly promoted effort to reduce U.S. dependence on oil from the Middle East. That effort, which was subverted early on by diverse local special interests, was designed primarily to insulate Israel from any new "Arab oil weapon" after 1973/74, and may easily have cost \$1 trillion. Even though the outlays were rationalized in the interest of "national security," they contributed little or nothing to reducing U.S. strategic dependence upon imported oil from the Middle East. Similarly, aid to Israel—and thus the regional total—also is understated, since much is outside of the foreign aid appropriation process or implicit in other programs.

Support for Israel comes to \$1.8 trillion, including special trade advantages, preferential contracts, or aid buried in other accounts. In addition to the financial outlay, U.S. aid to Israel costs some 275,000 American jobs each year.

7. Annexation by Israel of West Bank territory

Israel's plan for annexation includes forcing Palestinians from their homes in the West Bank. This proposed annexation could leave many people in territorial enclaves. It could affect almost 110,000 Palestinians. While President Netanyahu promises that the Jordan Valley would remain just Palestinian subjects, they would be living on an island and surrounded by Israeli jurisdiction. This annexation could create a system of "apartheid" in the West Bank. There are worries that this plan would be carried out without much thought to the people it would affect the most. This does not help the already unstable government system of Palestine. The scenario is prime for the militant group Hamas to capitalize on the situation.

a. Ending settlement expansion beyond the wall

Bateman, Tom 2020 (BBC News, Jerusalem). *"Israel annexation: New border plans leave Palestinianians in despair"* BBC News. Retrieved April 25, 2022.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-53139808>

A study by the US think tank the Washington Institute **suggests "full annexation" by Israel of up to 30% of the West Bank could affect almost 110,000 Palestinians.** Mr Netanyahu has said those in the Jordan Valley, for example, would remain "Palestinian subjects". **Critics fear that means they would effectively live in islands of only Palestinian civil control, surrounded by land under full Israeli jurisdiction.** Some fear suspending such coordination, if fully delivered, **could precipitate a collapse of the PA and the potential for a slide into chaos in the West Bank.** Mr Shtayyeh accuses the international community of failing to act. Why doesn't his leadership engage with the US and negotiate, he is asked. He says **annexation would amount to the "destruction" of a future Palestinian state,** and suggests accepting it would leave the PA becoming "a bunch of traitors - and we will not be".

Asharq Al-Awsat, 2019 *"Jordan's King: Israel Annexing SEttlements Would Be a Disaster"* Retrieved April 25, 2022.

<https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/1906836/jordans-king-israel-annexing-settlements-would-be-disaster>

Jordan's King Abdullah II warned Tuesday **if Israel goes ahead with the idea of annexing all the settlements in the West Bank it would be a "disaster" for attempts to find any two-state solution with the Palestinians.** Speaking after talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, he said he was "extremely concerned" about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's vow to annex all the West Bank settlements. He stressed **it will "directly impact" the relationship between Israel and Jordan, and Israel and Egypt, and that "these types of statements are... a disaster to any attempt to move forward to the two-state solution."** Merkel agreed, calling Netanyahu's vow "unhelpful." **"The German government backs an internationally negotiated peace solution in the sense of a two-state solution ... annexations are always detrimental to peace solutions. They do not help and therefore we do not agree,"** she remarked. King Abdullah added: "We are looking on this with tremendous concern." **Scores of outposts, unauthorized by Israeli governments, dot the West Bank, in addition to some 120 settlements that have been built in the area since its capture in the 1967 Middle East war. The Palestinians and many countries consider all Israeli settlements in the West Bank to be illegal under the Geneva Conventions relating to occupied territory.** Israel disputes this, citing security needs and biblical, historical and political connections to the land. Palestinians seek a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Seavon, Fernanda, 2021 *"Israeli blockade on Gaza eases, but residents are not hopeful"* Retrieved April 25, 2022.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/12/israeli-blockade-on-gaza-eases-but-residents-are-not-hopeful>

Although Israel lifted some restrictions, economic analysts say the moves will not lead to real development. For the past couple of weeks, **Palestinians have been protesting against Israel's crippling blockade of Gaza. In response to the building tension, COGAT announced not only the expansion of the fishing zone, but also three other measures.** As of last Wednesday, the water supply to Gaza has increased by an additional 5 million cubic metres (1.3 billion gallons), the quota of Gazan merchants allowed to pass through the Beit Hanoon crossing, known as Erez to Israelis, amounts to 7,000 (up from 2,000), and the Karem Abu Salem crossing, Kerem Shalom to Israelis, is completely open for the passage of equipment and goods. Located at the southernmost point of the border between Gaza and Israel, **Karem Abu Salem is Gaza's main commercial crossing. Farmers, manufacturers and suppliers, who employ thousands of people, depend on the crossing to advance their businesses. However, even with the complete opening, it is Israel that determines what can cross, how much of it, and when. "It seems that nothing will change because it's operating the same capacity as before the war,"** Rabeh Murrar, director of research at the **Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), told Al Jazeera.** According to Murrar, **the crossing has the capacity of 1,000 trucks a day, but, currently, only about 300 trucks circulate.** The researcher said **because of the 11-day war on Gaza in May, the higher unemployment rate, coronavirus pandemic, and the suspension of the money sent from Qatar, the economic life in Gaza is quickly deteriorating. "There's no money in the hands of people to buy the goods they were buying before the war,"** he says. **The expert also warned that materials considered "dual purpose" – that can be used for either civilian or military purposes – are forbidden to enter the Strip. This includes construction materials, such as cement and iron, and other raw supplies. Even though building materials were allowed inside last week, Murrar says they are destined to the private sector and to international organizations, not to the rebuilding of Gaza.**

Lynk, Michael, 2021. United Nations, *"The Question of Palestine"* Retrieved April 25, 2022. <https://www.un.org/unispa/document/israels-collective-punishment-of-palestinians-illegal-and-an-affront-to-justice-special-rapporteur-on-the-situation-of-human-rights-in-the-opt-press-release/>

A UN human rights expert has called on Israel to immediately stop all actions amounting to collective punishment of the Palestinian people, with millions of innocent harmed daily and nothing achieved but deeper tensions and an atmosphere conducive to further violence. "It is an affront to justice and the rule of law to see that such methods continue to be used in the 21st century and that Palestinians collectively continue to be punished for the actions of a few," said Michael Lynk, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967. "These practices entail serious violations against Palestinians including the right to life, freedom of movement, health, adequate shelter and adequate standard of living." In his [report](#) to the 44th session of the Human Rights Council, Lynk said **Israel's strategy to control the Palestinian population violates a foundational rule of virtually every modern legal system:** Only the guilty can be punished for their acts, and only after a fair process. The innocent can never be made to be punished for the deeds of others. **"The extent of the devastating impact of Israel's collective punishment policy can be most strikingly seen in its ongoing 13-year-old closure of Gaza, which now suffers from a completely collapsed economy, devastated infrastructure and a barely functioning social service system,"** the Special Rapporteur said. **"While Israel's justification for imposing the closure on Gaza was to contain Hamas and ensure Israel's security, the actual impact of the closure has been the destruction of Gaza's economy, causing immeasurable suffering to its two million inhabitants,"** the Rapporteur said. **"Collective punishment has been clearly forbidden under international humanitarian law through Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. No exceptions are permitted."** The Special Rapporteur's new report also criticised Israel's continued policy to punitively demolish Palestinian homes. **"Since 1967, Israel has destroyed more than 2,000 Palestinian homes, designed to punish Palestinian families for acts some of their members may have committed, but they themselves did not,"** he said. **"This practice is in clear violation of Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention."** Lynk said it was disheartening that the demolition of Palestinian homes is still viewed by the Israeli political and legal leadership, including the Israeli High Court, as a permissible deterrent. **"In fact, these demolitions only further contribute to an atmosphere of hate and vengeance, as the Israeli security leadership has itself acknowledged."**

Conclusion

“Wrapping up” this topic proposal is not easy. We have only hit on a minute amount of topics that could be addressed in a debate round. Epic novels have been written on this topic so far, and while there is no magic “Book of the Dead” to solve the conflict with one neat spell, there are many options for debaters to consider.

Unfortunately for many, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is deeply ingrained in their daily lives. Many have been left stateless, restricted in movement, harshly policed, degraded, killed, injured, and left trying to provide for their family’s needs now rather than looking towards the future of generations to come. Some of the internal and external conflict within these two countries are so deeply entrenched that they are part of the natural landscape. It hasn’t helped matters that experts are hung up on a one-state or two-state policy and cannot see any other political outcome that will benefit the people they govern. Too many of the solutions being presented are based on decades of sameness and have not taken a new fresh look at what can be done to resolve this deep seated conflict.

Our former president treated the Palestinian leadership as irrelevant and embraced every move made by Israel, even if it was a violation of international law. It seemed that President Trump’s solution was one of “apartheid” as seen in South African ideology that was designed to favor one group of people-rather than to work towards a solution that provided dignity for all involved. And while the White House is now leaning towards a two-state solution, it is equally important to make sure that neither side does something to make that or any other solution almost impossible to conceive. This approach still seems to take a hardened veteran-like hope for a diplomatic solution, but there are flaws. The long term results could deliver the exact opposite of what it promises. The U.S. has written legislation concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict covering over 70 years. This legislation is heavily weighted to favor Israel and discounts Palestine and its basic rights as a country. These outdated

policies need to change. With that comes many challenges that the negative side tends to love, but are not desirable in real life such as; prohibition, loopholes, dead ends, waivers, and workarounds to be found on both sides. Not to mention the surrounding countries that are also deeply involved; Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Russia, etc. While Biden's team seems to be downplaying the conflict and focusing only on superficial fixes, the existing hole will only be dug deeper and the lid to the coffin nailed even tighter. Were the U.S. to recognize the state of Palestine, a multitude of plagues would be released such as the world has never seen unless they had the full support of the international community.

These authors believe that there is a plethora of material discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Access to topical, relevant, and contemporary commentary and analysis of all aspects of the conflict are easily attainable for all debaters. The focus on the U.S. government's policies creates a set of research without the need for expensive academic databases. As the world responds to the conflict in real time, global experts are weighing in daily which creates an enormous database for debaters to access easily. These authors are confident that this topic will enable students to access qualified research and analysis by global experts, which allows them to cross over into multiple disciplines. Students in the Urban Debate Leagues, rural, and small school communities, as well as the national circuit can debate at all levels. Students will be able to engage in discussion of international relations from a perspective other than the U.S.. Debates on this topic will not be limited to certain policy perspectives, but should allow and foster properly scaffolded skills' development to enhance argumentation. While we feel that the topic is broad, the strength is in the balance of the affirmative and negative grounds. The kritiks expanded well beyond any regular studies. Thanks to the expanded availability of free access to online research, and through the efforts of file sharing, debaters can find many alternative perspectives.

With this policy topic, our hope is that debaters will come to understand the long-standing conflict in a new and broader way than ever before. We hope that this will foster a deeper look into the

institutions and practices of our government and its international affairs. And while we know that this decades long conflict cannot be solved and tied up with a nice bow in a ninety minute debate round or a movie like *The Mummy*, where O'Connell was able to defeat Imhotep, who knows? Maybe one of our debaters is a future politician that may come up with a life changing solution that will bring peace, prosperity, and dignity to all those living in Israel and Palestine.

If introducing this topic is considered to be partisan, radical, or unrealistic, that is an indication of how deeply rooted this conflict has become in the international community. It is time to view this conflict with fresh eyes and a new perspective. These deep-seated divisions are not likely to be resolved in a high school debate round since years of diplomacy have failed so epically, but that is all the more reason to tackle this topic and let the newest generation bring their brightest and most capable to the table!

Potential Resolutions

1. Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase its financial support for efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
2. Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase its involvement in diplomatic efforts related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
3. Resolved: The United States Federal Government should increase its military support for efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
4. Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase its peacekeeping operations related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The authors have tried to write resolutions that are topical and will lead to an equal debate on both sides, but are open to any and all suggestions as to what wording will make for a better resolution. We have tried to incorporate all suggestions made previously and hope that the above resolutions reflect that openness.

Definitions

Annexation-the action of annexing something, especially territory. "the annexation of Austria"
Oxford Dictionary. (2022, June 6). Annexation. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from
<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/annexation>

Annexation-the act of annexing something or the state of being annexed : the addition of an area or region to a country, state, etc.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Annexation. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/annexation>

Annexation-something that is annexed

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Annexation. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/annexation>

Anti-Semitism-hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious, ethnic, or racial group
Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Anti-Semitism. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anti-Semitism>

Apartheid- racial segregation, *specifically* : a former policy of segregation and political, social, and economic discrimination against the nonwhite majority in the Republic of South Africa.
Oxford Dictionary. (2022, June 6). Apartheid. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from
<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/apartheid>

Cease fire- a military order to cease firing, a suspension of active hostilities
Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Cease fire. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cease%20fire>

Containment - The action or policy of preventing the expansion of a hostile country or Influence.
Oxford Dictionary. (2019, June 6). Containment. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from
<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/containment>

Containment- The action of keeping something harmful under control or within limits.
Oxford Dictionary. (2019, June 6). Containment. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from
<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/containment>

Containment- The policy, process, or result of preventing the expansion of a hostile power or Ideology.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Containment. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/containment>

Cooperation- The process of working together to the same end.

Oxford Dictionary. (2019, June 6). Cooperation. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/cooperation>

Cooperation - (Oxford) assistance, especially by ready compliance with requests.

Oxford Dictionary. (2019, June 6). Cooperation. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/cooperation>

Democracy- a government by the people. *especially* : rule of the majority

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Democracy. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy>

Democracy-a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Democracy. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy>

Democracy-a political unit that has a democratic government

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Democracy. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy>

Democracy-capitalized : the principles and policies of the Democratic party in the U.S.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Democracy. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy>

Democracy-the common people especially when constituting the source of political authority

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Democracy. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy>

Democracy-the absence of hereditary or arbitrary class distinctions or privileges

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Democracy. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy>

Dignity-formal reserve or seriousness of manner, appearance, or language

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Democracy. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dignity>

Dignity-the quality or state of being worthy, honored, or esteemed

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Democracy. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dignity>

Dignity- high rank, office, or position

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Democracy. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dignity>

Dignity-a legal title of nobility or honor

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Democracy. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dignity>

Diplomacy - (Merriam-Webster) the art and practice of conducting negotiations between nations.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Diplomacy. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diplomacy>

Fatah-Fatah, also spelled Faḥ (Arabic: “Conquest” or “Opening”), inverted [acronym](#) of Ḥarakat al-Taḥrīr al-Waṭanī al-Filasṭīnī (“Palestine National Liberation Movement”), political and military organization of Arab Palestinians, founded in the late 1950s by Yassir Arafat and Khalīl al-Wazīr (Abū Jihād) with the aim of wresting Palestine from Israeli control by waging low-intensity [guerrilla warfare](#). Fatah. In Britannica.com. Retrieved April 18, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Fatah>

Fiscal-of or relating to taxation, public revenues, or public debt, *fiscal* policy, the city's *fiscal* requirements.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Fiscal. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fiscal>

Fiscal-of or relating to financial matters

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Fiscal. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fiscal>

Hamas-a Palestinian Islamic fundamentalist movement engaged in grass-roots organizing and armed resistance and terrorism against Israel.

Dictionary.com. Hamas. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/hamas>

Hezbollah-a radical Shi'ite Muslim organization in Lebanon engaged in guerrilla warfare against Israel. *Dictionary.com*. Hezbollah. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/hezbollah>

Holy Land- the lands roughly equivalent to ancient Palestine and including holy sites of the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Holy Land. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Holy%20Land>

Human rights- rights (such as freedom from unlawful imprisonment, torture, and execution) regarded as belonging fundamentally to all persons.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Human Rights. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/human%20rights>

Jerusalem-city in southwestern Asia northwest of the Dead Sea; divided 1948–67 between Jordan (old city) and Israel (new city); capital of Israel since 1950 and formerly the capital of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah; old city under Israeli control since 1967 *population* 765,000

NOTE: Jerusalem is a holy city for Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Jerusalem. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Jerusalem>

NATO-North Atlantic Treaty Organization: an organization formed in Washington, D.C. (1949), comprising the 12 nations of the Atlantic Pact together with Greece, Turkey, and the Federal Republic of Germany, for the purpose of collective defense against aggression.

Dictionary.com. NATO. Retrieved April 18, 2022, from <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/nato>

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