

# WASAMUN 2023

Friday 20 – Saturday 21 January 2023



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## Security Council

**Topic Guide:** The question of Palestine

### Key Terms

Jewish diaspora – Jews that had been exiled from their kingdoms as far back as 733 BC

Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) - is a Palestinian nationalist political and militant organization founded in 1964 with the initial purpose of establishing Arab unity and statehood over the territory of former Mandatory Palestine. It has now been branded as a terrorist organisation.

### Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict mostly goes back to the early 1900s with two groups of people who both claim the same land. This was caused by the birth of major nationalist movements among Jewish people as well as among Arabs who both aimed to create a sovereign state for their people in the same areas of the Middle East, with members of the Jewish diaspora seeking to create their own state with real borders, rather than being a nation spread globally. After the Second World War the Zionist movement tried to identify a place where Jews could form an independent nation, with the region of Palestine, which had important religious sites such as Jerusalem, being seen by many as the best location.

### History

After having been under Ottoman Rule for centuries after World War One the region became known as British Palestine following the Skyes-Pikot Agreement in 1916. However, after the Second World War following the Holocaust and mass migration of Jews fleeing Europe the support for a Jewish sovereign state grew. In 1947, following increased violence between Arabs and Jews, the UN approved a plan to divide British Palestine into two separate states, one for Jews (Israel) and one for Arabs (Palestine), with Jerusalem becoming a special international zone as several religions had holy sites situated there. Whilst this was accepted by many some Arabs saw this as another European plan to steal their land causing increased tensions in the region. Following this, several Arab states then declared war on Israel in the attempt to establish a unified Arab Palestine where all of British Palestine had been. However, the new state of Israel won this war, and in the process pushed past their borders under the UN plan, taking half of Jerusalem and a lot of land that was previously part of Palestine, as well as expelling large numbers of Palestinians from their homes.

After this, in 1967, Israel and neighbouring Arab states fought another war ending in Israel controlling the West Bank, from Jordan, Golan Heights from Syria, Gaza, and all of Jerusalem. Over the next few decades Arab states gradually made peace with Israel, however, Israel's military still occupied the West Bank and Gaza, meaning there was still conflict between Israel and Palestine. The PLO, which had formed in the 1960s, fought against Israel using many tactics, including through acts of terrorism, and this fighting went on for years. Israeli settlers also moved into Israel-occupied Palestinian territories such as West Bank and Gaza, bringing with them soldiers to guard them, further dividing communities. By the 1980s frustration amongst Palestinians grew into an Intifada (an uprising), beginning with mostly protests but soon leading to violence, with Israel responding with heavy force, causing thousands of deaths on both sides. At this time, a group of Palestinians in Gaza created Hamas, a violent extremist group dedicated to Israel's destruction. By the early 1990s it was clear that peace was needed with both sides signing the Oslo Accords which established Palestinian authority and allowed Palestinians to have increased freedom in some areas. Extremists on both sides opposed this and tried to sabotage the process. Eventually this fighting led to the Second Intifada which was significantly more violent than the first with more deaths. This caused increased

mistrust between the groups, with Israelis building up more defences to control extremist Palestinian's movements. In 2000 Israel withdraw from Gaza leading to Hamas gaining more power and splitting from the Palestinian authority. The fighting has killed many civilians on both sides of the conflict, although there have been many calls for peace internationally, within the region there is little political will for peace from authority.

## Map

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## UN Involvement

The UN is cooperating with regional and international partners in efforts to defuse tensions and advance political negotiations towards a two-state solution to the conflict as well as lasting peace in the Middle East. There have been several resolutions passed aiming to improve the quality of life of both Israelis and Palestinians as well as to stop the human rights violations occurring. Recently one of the most important resolutions passed was the Right of Palestinian People to Self-determination in Human Rights Council earlier in the year.

All the resolutions passed on the issue are included in [this document by the UN](#).

## Further Reading

- [Wikipedia: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#)
  - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian\\_conflict](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict)
- [Global Conflict Tracker: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#)
  - <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>
- [UN News: Israeli Occupation of Palestinian Territory Illegal: UN Rights Commission](#)
  - <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129722#:~:text=20%20October%202022%20Human%20Rights,first%20report%2C%20published%20on%20Thursday.>
- [Amnesty International: Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories](#)
  - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/report-israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/>