

**Forum:** Political Committee

**Issue:** Responding to Israeli practices against Arab individuals in the Occupied Territories

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## Introduction

The Israeli control over Palestinian areas (West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip) started after the Six-Day War in 1967 and represents one of the longest military presences in recent history. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) along with the United Nations General Assembly as well as the UN Security Council recognize these areas as occupied under international rules. But Israel questions this label and often calls the West Bank "disputed territories." A difference in terms shows how very divided people remain on this matter.

The Israeli presence causes many effects on Arab residents from building settlements (considered illegal by international rules) next to limiting movement with checkpoints and barriers. These actions impact Palestinians' daily lives in economic as well as social ways. The blockade of Gaza plus home demolitions and forced evictions limits access to basic needs and services.

International law puts clear rules on occupying powers such as the need to keep things unchanged until peace talks succeed. But many see Israel's settlement expansion along with other actions as violations of these rules. The ICJ issued an advisory report in 2024 stating that Israel's occupation was against the law next to demanding its end plus compensation for affected people. The situation stays disputed as Israel points to safety concerns and historical ties to justify its policies.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Fourth Geneva Convention:** An international treaty adopted in 1949 to protect civilians during times of war, including prohibitions on the transfer of the occupying power's population into occupied territory ("Geneva Conventions").

**Belligerent Occupation:** A legal term referring to military control over a foreign territory, governed by international humanitarian law, particularly the Hague Regulations and Geneva Conventions.

**Annexation:** The unilateral incorporation of a territory into a state's sovereignty, often viewed as illegal under international law when applied to occupied territories.

**International Humanitarian Law:** A set of rules designed to limit the effects of armed conflict on

people and property, including the protection of civilians in occupied territories.

**Administrative Detention:** A practice where individuals are detained without formal charges or trial, justified by claims of security concerns.

**Demilitarized Zone (DMZ):** An area where military forces and equipment are prohibited, often established as a buffer zone in conflict regions (Cambridge Dictionary).

**Occupied Territories:** In this context, the occupied refers to the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel consisting of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip—two regions of the former British Mandate for Palestine that have been occupied by Israel since the Six-Day War of 1967 ("Occupied Palestinian Territories.").

## General Overview

The Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza is the longest and most contentious of all in current geopolitics. It began after the Six-Day War in 1967, when Israel took over the reins of the above-mentioned territories with far-reaching implications for the Arab population in the territories concerned. Acts attributed to this occupation have brought sharp legal, humanitarian, and moral issues before the world community, while contention regarding the just cause, sovereignty, and human rights has been relentless.

### Historical and the Legal Perspective

These territories had been captured in the Six-Day War, which restructured the political topography of the Middle East. Ever since, Israel has occupied the territories, with varying degrees of distinction in administration and military occupation. Israeli settlement and settlement expansion have been going on in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and the blockade of Gaza was tightened in 2007. All of these acts are generally viewed as illegal under international law, namely the Fourth Geneva Convention, which forbids the occupying power from transferring its civilian population to the occupied territory and is designed to protect the local population. Their legal status has been disputed. While the International Court of Justice and the United Nations General Assembly treat them as occupied territories, Israel rejects the term, and "disputed territories" is more common in their parlance. The duality reflects a related but somewhat separate problem of trying to force the conflict into the framework of international law and also the challenge of the solution.

### Key Practices and Their Consequences

Israel's policy in Occupied Territory is compiled from policies and practices that have taken direct effect on the lives of Arabs through the expansion of settlements, movement restrictions, house demolitions, and administrative detentions. All these try to make conditions for living worse for Palestinians and increase tensions in the area.

Expansion of Settlements: Physical evidence of occupation, the construction of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem besides being illegal in international law, is all about land and resource grab. An obstacle to the territorial contiguity of the Palestinian society, the settlements are not consistent with the two-state solution.

Limitations to Movement: The separation barrier and the numerous checkpoints seriously impede the mobility of Palestinians. While their presence will make the normally unproblematic tasks of traveling to work, school, or the doctor not straightforward, they will induce a feeling of isolation and paralysis in the people.

House demolitions and evictions: The Israeli military demolishes homes and other structures on the pretext of lacking the required permits. The demolitions render the families homeless and exacerbates the humanitarian crisis in the region.

Administrative detentions are some of the other methods of arresting numerous Palestinians without trial. This is a practice universally condemned as it blatantly disobeys the most fundamental human rights and due process.

### **Humanitarian and Social Consequences**

Taken together, these policies have had a cataclysmic impact on the Arab population under occupation. Pervasive economic impoverishment, restriction of movement and commerce to the extent of strangling the local business and employment opportunities, and denial of access to basic services of health, education, and sanitation are the order of the day, with particular sharpness in Gaza, where the blockade transformed humanitarian conditions into crisis. Equally deep are the psychological effects: the unending violence, displacement, and insecurity have bludgeoned the psyches of Palestinians, especially children. The ever-receding horizon of peace also nurtures frustration and despair, feeding cycles of resentment and resistance.

### **International Response and Challenges**

The international community has not stopped insisting on an end to occupation and adherence to international law. United Nations resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 242, have urged Israel to withdraw from occupied territories while serious negotiations go on between the two nations. Efforts at mediation have collapsed due to the political fault lines of not just the region itself, but also among global players. Human rights organizations have documented the abuses and demanded accountability, but nothing has happened. A grass-roots movement, the BDS - Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions - movement, emerged to pressure Israel into compliance with international law; even that, however, has been the focus of an intensely bitter backlash and criticism.

## Major Parties Involved and Their Views

### Arab League

The Arab League over the years has been in support of the Palestinian cause. The body viewed the Israeli occupation as a breach of international law and questioned the sovereignty of Palestinians. There is support for a two-state system based on the pre-1967 border with East Jerusalem to be part of a would-be Palestinian State's capital. The expansion of settlement by the Israelis and the blockage of Gaza among others that violate Palestinian rights are condemned. It has also called for international pressure to be applied to Israel to comply with UN resolutions and supported initiatives such as the Arab Peace Initiative, which offers the potential for normalization of relations with Israel in exchange for an overall peace deal and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

### Israel

The Israeli government looks at its actions in occupied territories through the national security interest prism, considering past conflicts and continuing threats. In fact, Israel regards the West Bank not as occupied, but as a part of the disputed territory, with the settlement movement being the natural manifestation of the Jewish people's historical and religious ties with the territory. Previous administrations have emphasized the strategic and defense rationale for retaining control over certain areas.

### Authority of Palestine

To Palestinians, occupation represents a denial of self-determination and has taken over the very cause of their ongoing oppression. Their dream to come true was to be an independent state on pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. The settlers have always resisted its people to expansion of settlements.

### Jordan

As an immediate neighbor with a significant Palestinian population, Jordan has an interest in the conflict. Jordan is also the guardian of Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem and has played a key role in peace mediation.

### Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, one of the prominent figures of the Arab League and one of the founders of the Arab Peace Initiative, has been in pursuit of comprehensive peace on the basis of a pre-1967 border settlement through a Palestinian state.

**United States**

A major ally of Israel, the U.S. has historically provided diplomatic and military support, often vetoing UN resolutions critical of Israel. Under President Trump’s recent term (re-elected in 2024), he has reiterated a pro-Israel stance, calling in February 2025 for “total victory” over Hamas in Gaza and endorsing settlement expansion as a “rightful claim,” complicating peace efforts.

**Timeline of Events**

May 14, 1948:	The State of Israel is established. Following the Arab-Israeli War, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are displaced, and Israel gains control of additional territory beyond the UN Partition Plan.
June 5 1967	The Six-Day War begins, Israel captures the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights, beginning its occupation of Palestinian and Syrian land.
July 30, 1980	Israel passes the Jerusalem Law, formally annexing East Jerusalem. The move is widely condemned by the international community.
December 14, 1981	Israel annexed the Golan Heights through the Golan Heights Law.
December 8, 1987	The First Intifada begins, marked by widespread Palestinian protests and clashes with Israeli forces.
September 13, 1993	The Oslo Accords are signed in Washington, D.C., creating the Palestinian Authority (PA) and granting limited self-rule in parts of the West Bank and Gaza.
June 14, 2007	Hamas takes full control of Gaza after clashes with Fatah, leading to an Israeli blockade of the territory.
September 15, 2020	The Abraham Accords are signed, normalizing relations between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain, and later other Arab states.

<p>October 7, 2023</p>	<p>Hamas launches a major attack on Israel, sparking a new escalation of violence. Thousands of casualties occur on both sides.</p>
<p>January 10, 2025</p>	<p>A ceasefire is brokered, mediated by Egypt and Qatar. The agreement includes provisions for humanitarian aid to Gaza and steps toward de-escalation.</p>
<p>February 15, 2025:</p>	<p>U.S. President Trump, newly re-elected, declares Gaza a “security priority,” urging Israel to “finish the job” against Hamas and backing settlements as “non-negotiable.”</p>

## UN Involvement

The United Nations has been a central player in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 1948. The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), created in 1949, remains a lifeline for millions, providing food, education, and healthcare to registered Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. In 2024, UNRWA assisted over 5.9 million people, though funding cuts—particularly from the U.S. in 2018 and partial reinstatement in 2021—have strained its operations. The agency’s work in Gaza, where 70% of residents rely on its aid, has been pivotal amid the blockade and recurring wars.

The UN Security Council and General Assembly have issued numerous resolutions on the occupation. Resolution 242 (1967) called for Israel’s withdrawal from territories seized in 1967, laying the groundwork for a “land for peace” framework, yet its vague wording has fueled decades of debate. Resolution 2334 (2016) condemned settlements as a “flagrant violation” of law, passing despite U.S. abstention under Obama. The General Assembly, meanwhile, votes annually on resolutions affirming Palestinian self-determination, though these lack enforcement power. In 2024, the ICJ’s advisory ruling deeming the occupation illegal marked a legal milestone, though Israel dismissed it as biased.

UN peacekeeping efforts, like the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) established in 1948, monitor ceasefires but lack authority in the Occupied Territories. Humanitarian agencies, including OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), document abuses—such as 2024’s 1,200+ demolitions—and coordinate aid, though access restrictions hinder their reach.

## Relevant UN Documents

ISRAELI PRACTICES IN OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, FORM OF APARTHEID FOURTH COMMITTEE TOLD, AS DEBATE CONTINUES, 12 November 2002.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2009/10/israeli-practices-occupied-palestinian-territories-for-m-apartheid-fourth>

Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan, 12 November 2024, (A/C.4/79/L.16).

**Resolution 2334 (2016):** Declares settlements illegal. [Link](#)

**A/C.4/79/L.16 (2024):** Condemns Israeli settlements in Palestinian and Syrian territories.

<https://docs.un.org/en/A/C.4/79/L.16>

## Treaties and Events

GENEVA CONVENTION RELATIVE TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN PERSONS IN TIME OF WAR, 12 AUGUST 1949. The state of Israel has both signed and ratified this convention on 08.12.1949 and 06.07.1951 respectively. Due to the presence of a ratification, Israel is legally bound to abide by the acts presented in the convention.

Hague Convention IV (1907): Governs belligerent occupation; Israel is bound as customary law. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/hague-conv-iv-1907>

Oslo Accords (1993): Framework for Palestinian self-governance. <https://peacemaker.un.org/israel/palestinian/osloaccords93>

## Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been numerous but largely unsuccessful, bogged down by mistrust, violence, and geopolitical rivalries. The Oslo Accords of 1993 promised a breakthrough, establishing the Palestinian Authority and outlining a five-year path to statehood. Yet, settlement expansion continued—rising from 280,000 settlers in 1993 to over 450,000 by 2000—while assassinations (like Rabin's in 1995) and the Second Intifada (2000-2005) derailed progress. By 2025, Oslo's vision lies in tatters, with critics arguing it failed to address core issues like borders and Jerusalem.

The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, proposed by Saudi Arabia, offered Israel normalized relations with 22 Arab states in exchange for withdrawing to 1967 lines and establishing a Palestinian state. Israel welcomed the gesture but balked at the refugee return clause and full withdrawal, while internal

divisions— Hamas rejected it outright—stymied Palestinian support. Subsequent talks, like the 2013-2014 Kerry initiative, collapsed over settlement freezes and prisoner releases, with Netanyahu's government refusing concessions amid U.S. mediation faltering.

The Quartet (UN, U.S., EU, Russia) launched the 2003 Roadmap for Peace, aiming for a two-state solution by 2005. Deadlines slipped as violence flared, and U.S. bias toward Israel—evident in Trump's 2020 "Peace to Prosperity" plan, which endorsed annexation—alienated Palestinians. Grassroots efforts like BDS have gained traction, pressuring Israel economically, but face fierce opposition, including U.S. laws banning participation. Each attempt reveals the same hurdles: irreconcilable demands, external meddling, and a lack of political will.

## Possible Solutions

Given the region's volatility as of March 2025, resolving Israeli practices in the Occupied Territories requires pragmatic, collaborative steps within the General Assembly's non-binding framework. Stability is a prerequisite—without it, aid and talks falter. Here are detailed options:

1. **Humanitarian Corridors and Ceasefire Monitoring:** Establish UN-supervised corridors to deliver food, medicine, and rebuilding supplies to Gaza and the West Bank, paired with an expanded UNTSO presence to enforce the January 2025 ceasefire. This could reduce tensions, allowing space for dialogue, though Israel may resist external oversight.
2. **Settlement Freeze Incentives:** Encourage Israel to halt settlement growth via economic incentives—like trade benefits from the EU or Arab states—while offering Palestinians reconstruction funds. A voluntary freeze respects sovereignty yet nudges progress, though enforcement remains tricky.
3. **Regional Peace Conference:** Convene a summit with Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Arab League, U.S., and Jordan, building on the Arab Peace Initiative. Focus on phased withdrawals and security guarantees, mediated by neutral parties like Norway. Success hinges on Hamas's inclusion and U.S. willingness to pressure Israel.
4. **Rights Monitoring and Accountability:** Deploy a UN fact-finding mission to document demolitions, detentions, and abuses, reporting to the Human Rights Council. Public pressure could deter violations, but Israel's cooperation is uncertain, and findings lack legal teeth in the GA.
5. **Economic Empowerment Projects:** Fund joint Israeli-Palestinian ventures—e.g., tech hubs or water desalination—through international donors, fostering interdependence. This sidesteps political deadlock but risks boycotts from hardliners on both sides.

These solutions prioritize feasibility, respecting territorial integrity while nudging parties toward cooperation. Delegates must balance ambition with realism, crafting resolutions that inspire action without overstepping the GA's advisory role.



## Notes from the Chair

As also mentioned in the prior section of this report, the issue at hand will be discussed in a GA committee and hence solutions will not be binding to the parties. For this reason, the solutions must be feasible in the sense that they should be both applicable and should respect the territorial integrity of the parties involved.

## Bibliography

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