

**INTER
MUN**
2024



UNITED NATIONS



UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

BACKGROUND

“HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP DUE TO PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI BELLICOSE CONFLICT”

WELCOME

Greetings Delegates,

It is with great excitement that we welcome you to the Committee of the United Nations Relief Works Agency of the 2024 Jesuit School System's Model United Nations (INTERMUN) presented by Instituto Cultural Tampico 2024.

Congratulations on being selected to represent your college in this experience. The Chair hopes this can be a place of growth and development where you can put in practice all the abilities we know you have.

The Committee Chair expresses extreme gratitude for your valuable participation and your interest in the selected debate topic. We hope that your participation as a delegate will be a pleasing experience so you can join again.

The topic that the Chair chose this year is The Humanitarian Situation in The West Bank and Gaza Strip Due to Palestinian-Israeli Bellicose Conflict.

Throughout the debate and interchange of information, the Chair hopes that the delegates can come up with solutions and agreements for the topic of the Humanitarian Situation in the West Bank and Gaza due to Palestinian-Israeli Bellicose Conflict.

Lastly, the Chair wishes the best of luck to all of you. You will do great things, we are sure of it.

- The United Nations Reliefs and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the
Near East Chair

President: Romina Calderón Lozano
Moderator: Sophia Acosta Turrubiates
Secretary: Ana Sofía Valdéz Franco

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HISTORY OF THE COMMITTEE

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions from UN Member States. UNRWA also receives some funding from the Regular Budget of the United Nations, which is used mostly for international staffing costs.

The Agency's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance, including in times of armed conflict. Following the 1948 War, UNRWA was established by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 to carry out direct relief and work programmes for Palestine refugees. The Agency began operations on 1 May 1950.

In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem, the General Assembly has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate, most recently extending it until 30 June 2023.

UNRWA is unique in terms of its long-standing commitment to one group of refugees. It has contributed to the welfare and human development of four generations of Palestine refugees, defined as "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 War." The descendants of Palestine refugee males, including legally adopted children, are also eligible for registration.

UNRWA services are available to all those living in its areas of operations who meet this definition, who are registered with the Agency and who need assistance. When the Agency began operations in 1950, it was responding to the needs of about 750,000 Palestine refugees. Today, some 5.9 million Palestine refugees are eligible for UNRWA services.

UNRWA is one of the largest United Nations programmes, with over 30,000 personnel working across five areas of operations, and is unique in that it delivers services directly to beneficiaries.

UNRWA Headquarters are located in Amman and in Gaza. The Agency maintains a field office in each of its areas of operations - Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip - and liaison offices in New York, Washington, Brussels and Cairo.

Endorsed by two UN General Assembly resolutions, the Humanitarian Principles guide the work of all actors working in the humanitarian sphere. As an Agency with a humanitarian mandate – namely, to assist and protect Palestine refugees – the Humanitarian Principles not only guide our work, but make it possible. From ensuring the sanctity of our shelters in times of crisis, to maintaining access to the most vulnerable populations, to advocating on behalf of Palestine refugees, the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence are at the heart of all UNRWA operations.

From 2020, the Agency’s priorities for Humanitarian Principles programming will be Centralization, Modernization, and Transparency, to further enhance oversight and integration of these principles so central to our work. Centralization will involve greater focus on more centralized training, policy generation, and the merging and consolidation of data. Modernization also relates to the consolidation of data and the automation of vetting. While transparency relates to the better internal and external reports.

INTRODUCTION

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is beyond catastrophic, and worsening every day. In the three months since the conflict began, Gaza “has become a place of death and despair,” according to United Nations authorities.

Of Gaza’s 2.2 million people, more than 1.9 million have been displaced, including many who have fled multiple times. The carnage has given rise to a public health disaster, even as “medical facilities are under relentless attack”, officials state. The entire population is experiencing crisis-levels of food insecurity or worse, the World Food Programme (WFP) reports, with the risk of famine looming on the horizon.

“More aid is urgently needed in Gaza to save lives and stem the torrent of human suffering,” UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem said in recent remarks to the UN Security Council. “Unimpeded access of humanitarian workers and of supplies, including sexual and reproductive health services, is a matter of life and death for women and girls.”

Among Gaza’s population, more than 540,000 people – about one in four – are women and girls of reproductive age. An estimated 5,500 women are due to give birth within the next month, more than 180 delivering every day. An estimated 840 women may experience pregnancy- or birth-related complications. With hospitals overwhelmed by casualties and lacking essential

fuel, medicines and basic supplies, many people will be cut off from safe delivery services. According to the World Health Organization, as of 3 January, only 13 out of Gaza's 36 hospitals are even partially functional – nine in the south and four in the north – while operating at three times their capacity.

Gaza enters 2024 as the deadliest place for civilians in the world. Residents are enduring the brutal consequences of the latest round of hostilities between Israel and Hamas, which is being fought without sufficient regard for the international laws and norms built to protect civilians even in the most dire circumstances.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Israeli forces began airstrikes and ground operations after Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups launched a deadly ground incursion and rocket barrage on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people and taking over 200 hostages. Israeli operations have since caused severe destruction and widespread death and displacement throughout Gaza, particularly in the north, killing over 26,000 people. Diplomatic engagement brought about a temporary truce in late November 2023 and the release of some hostages but violence continues. Gaza is now the deadliest place for civilians in the world.

Since the beginning of the current escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip, the number of internally displaced people has reached 1.4 million, with more than 550,000 seeking refuge in one of the 150 UNRWA schools that are serving as shelters in the central and southern areas of the Gaza Strip. The children and families are living in very crowded and dire conditions with little or no access to basic supplies.

Across the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, children and their families faced death, injury, displacement, disease and malnutrition in 2023 at an unprecedented and unparalleled scale. There were estimated to be 3.1 million people with humanitarian needs across the State of Palestine in 2023, with 2.2 million persons out of which 1 million children affected by the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip alone. The year 2023 was the deadliest one for Palestinians in the West Bank since OCHA began recording casualties 18 years ago with a total of 506 Palestinians killed. It was also the deadliest year for children, with more than three times as many killed as in 2022.

In the West Bank, Palestinians in Area C, East Jerusalem and the H2 area of Hebron city continue to face a coercive environment due to a range of long standing Israeli policies and practices, which have intensified since October 2023. The restrictive and discriminatory planning regime applied in Area C and in East Jerusalem prevents Palestinians from addressing basic housing, livelihoods, and service needs. Further components of the coercive environment of continuing concern are excessive use of force, demolitions, evictions, settlement expansion, and settler-related violence. Combined, they drive insecurity, deprivation of basic human rights and humanitarian needs among Palestinians.

The humanitarian community has been working tirelessly to address the needs of affected Palestinians across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, to alleviate their suffering and strengthen their resilience.

Resurgence of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

The humanitarian impact was marked by the conflict in the Gaza Strip from 7 October 2023 which to the end of the year had led to more than 5,350 children reported killed, over 8,663 children reported injured, and over 1.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs)¹. Over 90 per cent of the population in the Gaza Strip face high levels of acute food insecurity, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report, amounting to about 2.08 million people who were classified in IPC Phase 3 or above (crisis or worse). Risk of famine conditions was heightened due to restricted access to commercial and humanitarian aid across the Gaza Strip, with all children under five – an estimated 335,000 children – projected to be at high risk of malnutrition and preventable death. UN Women estimated that 70 per cent of people killed since 7 October were girls and women in addition to one million being internally displaced. The overcrowding in the shelters had a huge impact on women's access to privacy and basic humanitarian needs including menstrual hygiene items and gender disaggregated facilities.² The conflict from October in Gaza came on top of the May 2023 escalation which lasted for five days, and which resulted in the death of six Palestinian children with a further 64 children injured.

In the Gaza Strip, basic services were highly impacted with the Education Cluster reporting that 370 schools sustained damage. In the health sector 27 hospitals of the 39 total hospitals across the Gaza Strip sustained damage. Lack of power supply, fuel shortages, and restricted access continued to hamper the provision of critical WASH services to the affected population in the Gaza Strip.

In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the number of children reported killed in 2023 in the West Bank was over three times the number in 2022, and over seven times the rate of 2021. Since 7 October at least 85 Palestinian children were reported killed in conflict-related violence, with nearly 60 percent of incidents in the Jenin, Nablus and Tulkarem governorates of the northern West Bank and nearly one quarter of incidents in the Ramallah and Jerusalem governorates. Military law enforcement operations inside Palestinian communities and camps involving high use of live ammunition, explosive weapons, and aerial strikes, as well as settler violence and movement restrictions, continued to put Palestinian children at higher risk of violence, grave violations, and displacement, and impacted their access to services. From 7 October, at least 2,262 Palestinians including 1,083 children were displaced, mainly in Area C and East Jerusalem, due to settler violence and access restrictions, home demolitions, and destruction of residences during military operations.

The Palestine Ministry of Education reported that 4,156 students and 221 teachers were killed in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank from 7 October 2023 to 2 January 2024. In the same period, 7,818 students were reported injured in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and 708 teachers and administrative personnel injured.

Israeli sources reported that approximately 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals were killed from 7 October 2023 until the end of 2023, mostly in the attacks of 7 October, and more than 7,500 people were reported injured. At least 35 children were reported killed. Around 250 Israelis, including more than 35 children were abducted into the Gaza Strip, of whom 34 were released, with very limited information available on any children remaining in captivity.

Women Situation in this Conflict

UNFPA is focused on getting life-saving reproductive health supplies into Gaza. So far, UNFPA has distributed reproductive health kits to seven hospitals across Gaza; the kits include clean-delivery supplies, pharmaceuticals, medical devices and equipment for emergency obstetric care. UNFPA has also helped supply midwifery kits containing supplies for midwives to continue their life-saving work, as well as dignity kits containing hygiene supplies for women and girls living in shelters. In addition, UNFPA has provided cash assistance to 2,125 vulnerable women, enabling them to purchase essential supplies such as menstrual and hygiene items.

Families and Children Perspective

Children and families have practically no access to water, food and medicines, and the whole Gaza Strip is living with very little or no electricity. With no alternative, families are sleeping in the corridors and classrooms of schools and other facilities provided by the UN for people seeking refuge. Thousands of people have left their homes to take refuge in one of these schools, even though they know there is no safe place in the Gaza Strip.

The water scarcity situation is a grave concern. It is estimated that people in the Gaza Strip have access to less than three liters of water per person per day to drink, cook and wash, far below the minimum emergency threshold of 15 liters per person per day.

The situation poses a significant health risk of epidemics and diseases in a densely populated area like the Gaza Strip. The 2.2 million people living in the Strip, nearly half of them are children, urgently need life-saving humanitarian aid and basic services.

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Where are Palestinian Refugees?

Israel's military operations in response to Hamas's attack have resulted in "colossal human suffering," UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in January. As of February, Israel's retaliation has killed 27,748 people [PDF] and injured more than 66,800 others, according to the Hamas-run Gaza Ministry of Health. (These figures could not be independently verified, but outside sources have also reported similar numbers.) More than 120 journalists and media workers have also been killed, as well as over 150 UN employees, the highest number of aid workers killed in any conflict in UN history.

Israel maintains a complete siege of Gaza, cutting off electricity and water, and supplies of food and medicine remain scarce.

A December report by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, an initiative composed of independent international food security and nutrition experts, warned that an estimated more than 90 percent of Gaza's population is facing crisis levels of food insecurity. Without fuel, meanwhile, Gaza's only power station has gone dark. The lack of electricity has shut down desalination and waste-water treatment plants, further compromising access to safe drinking water.

Palestinian Healthcare

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Israel's aerial bombardments have demolished neighborhoods, schools, and mosques; satellite imagery analyzed by the United Nations shows that approximately 30 percent of Gaza's total structures have been destroyed or damaged. (Similar satellite imagery analysis by the BBC puts this number higher, at between 50 and 61 percent.) The Israeli military has said that Hamas has placed portions of its command network and military tunnel system below civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, which Israeli strikes have hit.

Gaza's health system, which was reported to have collapsed in November 2023, remains crippled, with hospitals running extremely low on rationed fuel reserves and medical supplies. Northern Gaza's two major hospitals have long greatly exceeded their capacity, and Nasser Hospital, the largest functioning medical facility in southern Gaza, is now unable to provide critical medical care. Health authorities have also warned of the growing risk of disease outbreaks as health conditions rapidly decline.

Starving Situation

It's projected that the entire 2.22 million population of Gaza is now experiencing food insecurity at crisis levels or above.

This is the highest share of a population facing high food insecurity that has ever been classified by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) anywhere in the world.

53% of Gaza's population, or 1.17 million, are now at emergency levels. This means high levels of malnutrition and people dying.

Sadly, the security situation means delivering a meaningful humanitarian response has become nearly impossible. A regular and unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza is desperately needed.

Organizations like the Palestine Red Crescent Society must be able to safely distribute this aid and have safe access to all areas where people are in need, including the north.

State of Palestine Appeal

An estimated 3.1 million people require humanitarian assistance in the State of Palestine, 2.2 million in the Gaza Strip and 900,000 in the West Bank. The Gaza Strip has tragically witnessed the loss of thousands of children and women, and the escalation of conflict which began on 7 October compounds the protracted protection crisis there.

Following intensive bombardments, according to the Ministry of Health, as of 20 November, 12,700 Palestinians, including 5,350 children, had been killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of hostilities. Among other impacts, this has resulted in an estimated additional 2,056 female-headed households. An additional 30,000 Palestinians are reportedly injured, including more than 8,663 children. The situation of internally displaced people is catastrophic: an estimated 1.8 million internally displaced people are residing in shelters run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and in hospitals, public buildings, non-UNRWA schools and with host families.

The Gaza Strip faces an almost complete electricity blackout. According to the Palestinian Water Authority, the current water production capacity has been reduced to between 4 and 40 percent of the normal daily production, leading people to consume unsafe water and limiting access to WASH services, especially concerning children and adolescent girls.

From 7 October to 28 November, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported 203 health attacks in the Gaza Strip and 224 in the West Bank. Access to essential health services, including emergency obstetric care and newborn care, is severely limited, particularly for women and girls. Before the conflict, the State of Palestine faced a high burden of mental health issues: according to WHO, more than 485,000 people (including children) with severe or moderate mental health disorders were reported in the Gaza Strip. Since the escalation, 625,000 children have been unable to access education, with 246 attacks on schools.

The West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is also experiencing increased violence, particularly in the context of the operations of Israeli forces and resulting confrontations. As of 29 November, at least 232 Palestinians had been reported killed since October 7, including 64 children. Access restrictions have been imposed throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, isolating Palestinian communities and severely limiting their access to essential services. In the West Bank, schools have also been heavily affected by movement restrictions, military operations and settler violence.

Israeli sources report that at least 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed, and according to Israeli authorities, 240 Israelis were abducted into the Gaza Strip, including around 35 children.

UNICEF's Strategy to Help Palestine

Following the activation of the Inter-Agency Contingency Plans in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, UNICEF, with partners, is delivering immediate life-saving responses in the Gaza Strip and scaling up humanitarian preparedness and response in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

In the Gaza Strip, given conflict injuries, the precarious water situation, overcrowding and the risk of disease outbreaks, the priority areas are WASH, health and child protection services. UNICEF is also scaling up nutritional screening and treatment and recreational and learning activities for conflict-affected children. UNICEF is coordinating closely with a wide range of partners to scale up gender-responsive humanitarian responses to meet immediate life-saving needs as well as basic needs, and to bring a sense of normalcy for conflict-affected children, their families and communities.

Given access constraints and insecurity, UNICEF is utilizing a range of programme delivery strategies, including support to existing health, water and sanitation systems. Strategies include cross-border emergency supply delivery: since 21 October, UNICEF has acted swiftly to procure and distribute life-saving supplies through Egypt, and is among the top five aid organizations moving

supplies from Egypt into Gaza. In addition to these cross-border efforts, UNICEF is utilizing humanitarian cash transfers; social and behavior change; and remote service provision. UNICEF has also mobilized partners – including non-governmental organizations and women-led organizations within the Gaza Strip – to support emergency programme delivery.

In the West Bank, UNICEF is scaling up humanitarian preparedness and response through existing and expanded partnerships and supplies pre-positioned in the West Bank. Further resources are being mobilized to be ready to respond to increasing humanitarian needs in the West Bank due to the escalation in the Gaza Strip.

Gender and disability considerations are prudently integrated throughout UNICEF humanitarian interventions, including the integration of gender-based violence considerations into child protection case management and through partnership with women-led and girl-centered organizations. A tailored Adolescent Girl Humanitarian Package is also being rolled out, and UNICEF supports the inter-agency network for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

UNICEF is an active member of the United Nations Country Team and the Humanitarian Country Team and closely coordinates with other organizations, including local partners. UNICEF also leads the coordination of the WASH and Nutrition Clusters and co-leads the Education Cluster with Save the Children. Within the Protection Cluster, UNICEF leads the Child Protection Area of Responsibility and participates in the Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility. UNICEF is part of the Inter-Cluster Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Technical Working Group. For accountability to affected populations and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, UNICEF works closely with the World Food Programme and a national non-governmental organization to manage community feedback.

OBJECTIVE

The UNRWA's Chair objective is to lead their Delegates to a solution for the frightful conflict in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, always having in mind the millions of diseases due to the war. Quality of life will always be a critical aspect to ponder when talking about humanitarian situations. Delegates must contribute to the debate with questions and proposals to achieve peace in the Near East.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East's duty is to find a solution to the atrocity of life millions of Palestinians have experienced lastly. Since analyzing this conflict by the human lives cost and not the geopolitical nor legal consequences, Delegates will relieve tensions between Palestine and Israel.

By directing our attention toward the harmful consequences inflicted upon the realization of economic, social, and cultural human rights, the objective of the chair is to make more human delegates by the heart touching discussion of Palestinian Refugees and their humanitarian situation.

As we have experienced, Delegates will share valuable information for the resolution of the problem.

In pursuit of this objective, we urge delegates to engage wholeheartedly in dynamic discussions, actively expanding their viewpoints during our deliberative sessions. This collaborative process aims to instill in every delegate a profound sense of responsibility towards the global community and foster a dedicated commitment to effecting positive change.

- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine in the Near East Chair.

COUNTRIES' BACKGROUNDS

State of Israel

On October 7th, armed members of Hamas crossed into Israel from Gaza, resulting in approximately 1,200 casualties, including children, the elderly, and 364 young people at a music festival. Additionally, Hamas fired thousands of rockets and took over 250 people as hostages. Evidence of rape and sexual violence during these attacks has been observed by the BBC. Hamas, which stands for Islamic Resistance Movement, aims to establish an Islamic state, rejecting Israel's right to exist and committing to its destruction. The attack was justified by Hamas as a response to what it deemed as Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people, including security raids on the al-Aqsa Mosque and Jewish settlement activity.

In retaliation, Israel initiated a significant air strike campaign on Gaza, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stating the objectives as the destruction of Hamas and the release of hostages. The broader Israel-Palestinian conflict revolves around challenging issues, including the status of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The internationally supported "two-state solution" proposes an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital, coexisting with Israel. The United States, a crucial ally of Israel, sees the two-state solution as the path forward after the conclusion of the Gaza war.

The conflict intensifies as both sides remain entrenched in their positions. The violence and humanitarian crises unfolding in the region have garnered international attention and concern. Efforts to broker a ceasefire and initiate peace talks face numerous challenges given the deep-rooted historical, religious, and political complexities of the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

The "two-state solution" remains a focal point for many international peace initiatives. Advocates argue that creating an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel could lead to a more stable and peaceful coexistence. However, achieving consensus on the specific terms of such a solution proves daunting, with issues like borders, refugees, and the status of Jerusalem continuing to be contentious.

Kingdom of Spain

As images of child victims and bombed-out buildings flooded social media, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said given "the footage we are seeing and the growing numbers of children dying, I have serious doubts [Israel] is complying with international humanitarian law".

“What we are seeing in Gaza is not acceptable,” he added. Sanchez’s words prompted a swift response from Israel, which reprimanded the Spanish ambassador to Jerusalem and withdrew its own diplomat from Madrid.

The Spanish leader, who has also condemned Hamas for its assault, is the highest-ranking and most well-known European official to condemn Israel, joined only by politicians in Ireland and Belgium.

Spain has been historically close to the Arab world and, as such, the nation is actively trying to push a line more favorable to Palestinian aspirations within the European Union.

In 2014, under a conservative government, the Spanish Parliament adopted a resolution calling for the recognition of the Palestinian state, supported by all political parties.

Major donors to UNRWA, including the United States and Germany, suspended funding after allegations emerged that around 12 of its tens of thousands of Palestinian employees were suspected of involvement in the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel by Hamas.

"UNRWA's situation is desperate and there is a serious risk that its humanitarian activities will be paralyzed in Gaza within a few weeks," Albares told lawmakers. Madrid contributed 18.5 million euros directly to UNRWA in 2023, including 10 million euros approved in December following the decision to triple development and humanitarian aid to the Palestinian territories.

Republic of Yemen

With an informal ceasefire holding inside Yemen, and after months of private talks mainly mediated in Oman, on 14 September a Houthi delegation flew to Riyadh, where they met Prince Khalid bin Salman, the defense minister and brother of the crown prince.

Major differences remained to be settled, but it seemed as if, after decades of various forms of fighting, peace was to come to the country, and largely on the terms dictated by a group that did not really exist as a political force inside Yemen until the early 2000s.

Yemen’s Houthis will not halt attacks on ships linked to Israel in the Red Sea, despite the United States announcing a new maritime protection force to counter them, a spokesperson for the rebel group said.

In a country of nuance, two factors are adding to the complexity of a region riven by conflict: the Houthis' support for the Palestinian cause, and the way Yemen's geography helps shape political dynamics. As the writer Iona Craig observes, Yemen is a quintessential example of geopolitics – the place where geography and politics come together.

Yemen itself may be relatively impoverished, but the often unprotected fruits of western globalization temptingly pass by its shores day and night. Nearly 15% of goods imported into Europe, the Middle East and North Africa are shipped from Asia and the Gulf by sea. Nearly 21.5% of refined oil and more than 13% of crude oil go through the waterways. Asian imports and exports account for about a quarter of Israel's total foreign trade and transit mainly via Red Sea routes.

Arab Republic of Egypt

Furthermore, Egypt's initiative aims to address the longstanding conflict in Gaza by advocating for a comprehensive ceasefire. The proposal underscores the importance of Israel's complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, a move that is intended to pave the way for stability and peace in the region. Additionally, the plan calls for the release of captives held by Hamas, a gesture aimed at fostering goodwill and building trust between the conflicting parties.

One of the key components of Egypt's proposal is the liberation of numerous Palestinian prisoners, emphasizing a commitment to resolving humanitarian issues and promoting reconciliation. The envisioned united technocratic Palestinian government in the enclave is seen as a crucial step towards fostering governance that represents the interests of the Palestinian people as a whole.

This ambitious plan reflects Egypt's dedication to finding a sustainable and inclusive resolution to the conflict, addressing both security concerns and humanitarian considerations. By presenting a comprehensive proposal, Egypt seeks to facilitate dialogue and negotiations among the involved parties, with the ultimate goal of establishing lasting peace and stability in the Gaza region. The success of this initiative would not only impact the immediate situation but also contribute to broader regional peace efforts.

Egypt has put forward an ambitious plan for a ceasefire in Gaza. The proposal, presented to Israel, Hamas, the United States, and European governments, outlines a plan for Israel to fully withdraw from the Gaza Strip, the release of captives held by Hamas, the liberation of many Palestinian prisoners, and the establishment of a united technocratic Palestinian government in the enclave.

State of Palestine

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Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

There are around three million Palestinians in Jordan. The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has registered 2.2 million Palestinians, though the total number is thought to be higher. Palestinians in Jordan are located overwhelmingly in the north-western part of the country, principally in the environs of Amman, Zarqa and Irbid.

The two countries, which flank Israel on opposite sides and share borders with Gaza and the occupied West Bank, respectively, have replied with a staunch refusal. Jordan already has a large Palestinian population.

Their refusal is rooted in fear that Israel wants to force a permanent expulsion of Palestinians into their countries and nullify Palestinian demands for statehood. El-Sissi also said a mass exodus would risk bringing militants into Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, from where they might launch attacks on Israel, endangering the two countries' 40-year-old peace treaty.

In the 1967 Mideast war, when Israel seized the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 300,000 more Palestinians fled, mostly into Jordan.

The refugees and their descendants now number nearly 6 million, most living in camps and communities in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. The diaspora has spread further, with many refugees building lives in Gulf Arab countries or the West.

The largest proportion of Palestinian exiles, however, is in Jordan, on Israel's eastern border. One in five people living in Jordan is Palestinian — more than 2.3 million registered refugees in all, a population slightly larger than that of the Gaza Strip. Most of them have full citizenship. Some, including Jordan's Queen Rania, born to Palestinian parents in Kuwait, have even attained considerable power, but many still reside in Jordan's 10 official United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) refugee camps or three unofficial camps run with some United Nations assistance. The history of these refugees is a narrative of exile and national aspirations, of longing for a homeland — a palimpsest written and rewritten with each new wave of arrivals.

United States of America

Various U.S. administrations have put forward plans outlining a pathway to peace, envisioning two separate states—one Israeli and one Palestinian. Critics argue that President Donald Trump's policies on key aspects of the conflict hindered the prospects of a two-state solution. While the Joe Biden administration has expressed continued support for a two-state resolution, it has selectively reversed some of Trump's measures, leaving others intact. Simultaneously, the level of violence between Israelis and Palestinians has escalated to heights not witnessed since the conclusion of the last Palestinian uprising in 2005.

The Middle East has consistently held significant importance for the United States, with successive administrations pursuing a multifaceted agenda. This has included securing crucial energy resources, countering Soviet and Iranian influence, ensuring the survival and security of Israel and Arab allies, combating terrorism, fostering democracy, and managing refugee flows. Consequently, the U.S. has actively sought to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a major driver of regional dynamics. The approach has aimed at achieving strategic objectives while navigating the delicate balance of supporting Israel and promoting broader stability in the region. The conflict has also been a central concern for the American Jewish community and Christian Evangelicals, both staunch supporters of Israel.

For over half a century, the United States has played a pivotal role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Its involvement began shortly after World War II when it joined the United Kingdom in a 1946 inquiry suggesting the relocation of one hundred thousand Holocaust survivors to Palestine, envisioned as neither a Jewish nor an Arab state. In 1948, the United States became the first country to officially recognize Israel as a sovereign nation.

Syrian Arab Republic

Prior to the outbreak of the civil war, there were over 526,000 Palestinians living in Syria, refugees driven off their land with the establishment of Israel in 1948 and their descendants. Since 2011, over 120,000 Palestinian refugees have fled the country and 280,000 are internally displaced. According to UNRWA, 450,000 Palestinian refugees remained in the country in 2017.

Syria's relationship with the Palestinians, and the Hamas group, is long and complicated. In Syria, the Muslim Brotherhood opposed the Assad family's decades-long hold on power. In 1982, while Bashar Assad's father, Hafez, was in power, Syrian troops put down a revolt led by the Muslim Brotherhood in the central Syrian city of Hama, killing between an estimated 10,000 and 30,000 locals.

Later, the Syrian government took pride in supporting the Palestinian cause, one which has always been close to many locals' hearts. Damascus became a refuge for Palestinians fleeing Israel and home to around half a million of them. Syria also hosted one of Hamas' leaders-in-exile, Khaled Mashaal, for years. This was despite the fact that the Assad family often found itself at odds with Hamas, even while it used the group to further its own foreign policy aims.

However in 2012, when the peaceful Syrian revolution began to turn into a bloody civil war, the relationship soured. The Hamas group refused to take sides in the country's uprising and its former leader Mashaal left for Qatar, where he still lives today.

During the civil war, as Syrian activist Kassem pointed out, Syrian government forces deliberately targeted Palestinian civilians in the Yarmouk district, a neighborhood that had evolved from a Palestinian refugee camp to a Palestinian-majority neighborhood. After anti-government rebels took control of Yarmouk, Assad's forces besieged it, preventing food, power, medicine and other supplies from entering. Because of the fact that nobody could get in or out, many called it "Syria's Gaza" at the time.

Republic of Argentina

The 53-year-old economist, Javier Milei, who disrupted traditional politics to secure victory in last year's election, received a warm welcome from Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz at Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv. During his first official visit, excluding a brief appearance at the Davos economic forum in Switzerland, Milei made a significant announcement, stating, "My plan is to move the embassy to West Jerusalem." This confirmation, widely anticipated, garnered approval from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose office expressed a warm welcome to the move.

The meeting between the right-wing Netanyahu and the libertarian Milei, often compared to former US President Donald Trump, is scheduled for Wednesday. The objective of these talks is to enhance and deepen ties between Israel and Argentina. Adding a broader context, Argentina has historically played a role in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Over the years, Argentina has maintained diplomatic relations with both Israel and Palestine. The country recognizes the State of Israel and has engaged in diplomatic efforts to contribute to the resolution of the longstanding conflict.

Milei's announcement, however, drew strong condemnation from the Palestinian group Hamas, which governs Gaza. Hamas expressed strong disapproval, considering the move an infringement on the rights of the Palestinian people to their land and a violation of international law, with Jerusalem regarded as occupied Palestinian territory. This reaction underscores the sensitivity and complexity surrounding decisions related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

West Bank

The landlocked West Bank - the larger of the two Palestinian territories - is home to some three million Palestinians. The West Bank is nearly a Palestinian country. The recognition and prosperity of Palestine could threaten the West Bank as a nation, taking them to unify with the Gaza Strip to form a Palestinian State.

In 1967, Israel fought a war with Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Israel fired the first shot, but claims it was preempting an imminent Egyptian attack; Arabs disagree, casting Israel as an aggressor. In six days, Israel routed the Arab powers, taking the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan.

Israel has controlled the West Bank since the Six-Day War, as it's called. For many Jews, this is wonderful news in theory: the West Bank — which Israel also calls Judea and Samaria — was the heartland of the ancient Jewish state. It's home to many Jewish holy sites, like the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, that Jews were previously cut off from. In practice, Israeli control of the West Bank means military administration of a territory full of Palestinians who chafe under Israeli restrictions. The border between Israel and the West Bank would probably have to change in any peace deal.

There are about 700,000 Jewish settlers living in the West Bank, many of whom live near the border with Israel. In a two-state deal, a significant number of settlers — two years ago, the number was estimated around 185,000, a number that's likely only grown — would have to leave the West Bank, while some border settlements would become Israeli land. In exchange, Israel would give over some of its territory to Palestine. These would be called "land swaps." No set of Israeli and Palestinian leaders have agreed during peace negotiations on where, exactly, the borders should be.

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