



**MBMUN (SUMMER) 2021**  
UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL  
THE ISRAEL - PALESTINE CONFLICT AND THE FUTURE OF JERUSALEM



# **MBMUN (Summer) 2021**

**United Nations Security Council**

Topic: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Future of Jerusalem





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## **Welcome Letter From The President**

Distinguished Delegates,

As the Executive Board of the United Nation Security Council, it is our utmost pleasure to welcome you all to the Summer Edition of MBMUN 2021. In this great conference, the UN Security Council will focus on one motion. It will be the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the future of Jerusalem.

Delegates are highly encouraged to analyze and compare the data provided to the Member States in order to comprehend the full scope of the problem. In order to tackle this international problem, delegates are expected to form effective resolutions by considering all aspects. We highly recommend the delegates to read this document thoroughly and make further research on the issue to be well-prepared for the debates and contribute to the content of the committee in light of their visions. One of the most important things we've learned during the course of our involvement is that although MUN is but a simulation of the real thing, the collective experiences gained from your involvement amount to far more than that of a 'game'. Model UN is a forum for young people like us to discuss and come up with viable solutions to the problems that our world faces today.

We expect you all to research most effectively in order to address the root causes of the problem concerning the agenda. We expect the best from this most prestigious council. This is why we expect a high level of professionalism and respect from you as delegates. We will also ensure that all the Dais members reciprocate the same throughout the entire conference. Most importantly, we want you all to enjoy the proceedings of the council! The quality of the council is mostly dependent on the performance of the delegates. We hope that this council will bring to light some of the many issues we as a global community face today and get you to think critically about how we can address them.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us!

Kind regards,

Waris Aziz Akash, President (Head Chair)



## **Introduction To The Council**

The Security Council is the UN committee responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as responsible for conflict resolution and mediation.

The main objectives of the council are:

- Investigate situations and controversies that could escalate in international conflict,
- Create bespoke solutions and lay out the terms of a potential agreement between involved States,
- Create plans that regulate the proliferation of arms,
- Determine and define the existence of international threats and recommend consequential actions,
- Other administrative functions within the UN, e.g. provide nominations of the judges of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

It is composed of 15 Members and each possesses one vote. Member States are legally obliged to comply with any Security Council decision, as legitimized by the Charter of the United Nations. Of the 15 Members of the Council, 10 rotate in groups of 5 and have a mandate that lasts 2 years.

The 5 permanent members of the Security Council are:

1. Russian Federation
2. United States of America
3. China
4. France
5. United Kingdom

The permanent members also have the Veto Power, according to which a single opposing vote to a resolution results in the resolution not passing.

The Security Council, one of six main organs of the United Nations, enjoys special power and responsibility as the only UN body with the mandate to issue binding decisions. While other UN organizations and agencies can only make recommendations to Member States, the Security Council is allowed to use expressions such as condemns or requires in its resolutions, and all Member States of the UN must accept and implement its rulings. This is understandable in light of the existential interest and purpose of the Security Council. Under



the UN Charter it is obliged to maintain international peace and security and strive to solve international problems while promoting respect for human rights and harmonizing actions of all nations.

A representative of each of its members must be present at UN Headquarters at all times because the Security Council meets whenever peace is threatened. Sometimes its agenda gets interrupted during a meeting by an emergency issue, or crisis, which demands an immediate reaction. The most controversial aspect of the Security Council is the veto power bestowed upon its five permanent members - five victors of the Second World War - China, France, Soviet Union, the UK and the US. Whichever country you represent in the Simulation; you need to closely consider its relationship with these “superpowers”. If any of them votes against a resolution, the document is automatically rejected altogether, no matter how many other countries vote for it. Nobody wants it to happen: remember that the collective scope for your commission is to find the agreement and pass a resolution.

## **History Of The Security Council**

By the mid-20th century, people around the world had tasted two global wars of an unprecedented scale. On one hand, applying industrial methods and sophisticated technology lead to annihilation and damage beyond the imagination of historic warlords. On another hand, the newly emerged mass media has raised people’s awareness of what was going on in every corner of the world and made them feel more connected. One of the most shocking developments was the invention and use of nuclear weapons. Having witnessed their terrible power, individuals and nations understood the new existential stake of waging wars or maintaining peace. A World War III would likely bring an end to human civilization or even to life on Earth.

Under these circumstances, the Allies who had successfully stopped German, Japanese and Italian fascist aggression gathered to proclaim the new global organization - to unite their strength for maintaining international peace and security; and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest. The representatives of the winning superpowers — China, the Soviet Union, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States — ratified the United Nations Charter and established the Security Council, admitting it the unique right to issue binding decisions, and additionally admitting themselves the unique right to veto resolutions.



The six temporary members were distributed on an equitable geographic basis which rotated every two years primordially. In 1965 the number of temporary members increased to ten: five from Africa and Asia, one from Eastern Europe, two from Latin America and the Caribbean, and two from Western Europe. During the Cold War, the Security Council was strongly limited by the continual disagreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, as both exercised their veto rights to promote national interests at the cost of the Security Council's efficacy. Only when the Soviets decided to boycott the Security Council over the issue of China's UN membership in 1950 did the Council manage to pass a series of resolutions authorizing the use of military force to support South Korea in the Korean War.

The late 1980s and the early 21st century evidenced the growth of Council's power and prestige. A number of peacekeeping operations and observer missions which included those in the Balkans, Angola, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Somalia were legitimised in the late 1980s by the Council. The effectiveness of the Security Council shrunk again in the 21st century in the face of aggression by terrorist organizations - non-State actors who are particularly difficult to engage with through any diplomatic means. However, the Council struggled with disciplining even UN Member States' governments. For example, in 2003 the Sudanese government backed Arab militias who carried out a terror campaign in the Darfur region. In spite of the presence of an African Union peacekeeping force, hundreds of thousands were killed and millions were displaced in what was called the first genocide of the 21st century. The first genocide of the 21st century witnessed hundreds of thousands killings and the display of millions despite the presence of an African Union peacekeeping force.

Apart from that, the United States has often vetoed legislative measures against Israel in the Security Council, and Russia has used its veto power to protect its national interests in "the near abroad"—the territories of the former Soviet Union—and to support the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Taking an active part in the simulation will give you an important insight into the structure of the geopolitical order existing to this day and the challenges of finding agreements amid conflicting national interests.

## **Introduction to the Motion (Agenda)**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been present for decades and is without the doubt one of the fundamental issues in the Middle East. The resolution of the conflict is often viewed as a condition necessary to the peace in the Middle East, e.g. the incumbent Secretary-General of



the United Nations António Guterres stated in February 2020 that the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict “remains key to sustainable peace in the Middle East.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Although both Jews and Arab Muslims date their claims to the land back a couple thousand years, the current political conflict began in the early 20th century. The Arabs resisted the call of the Jews who fled persecution in Europe hoping to establish a national homeland in the then Arab and Muslim-majority territory in the Ottoman and later British Empire. An early United Nations plan to give each group part of the land failed, and Israel and the surrounding Arab nations fought several wars over the territory. Today’s geopolitical border lines largely reflect the outcomes of two of these wars, one waged in 1948 and another in 1967.<sup>[2]</sup>

Today, Israel occupies the West Bank. The territory is formally administered by the Palestinian authority; however, Israel enforces security restrictions on Palestinian movement and activities. In addition, there are Israeli settlements which are mostly considered to be illegal (e.g. the Security Council Resolution S/RES/2334 (2016) considers Israel's settlement activity a "flagrant violation" of international law that has "no legal validity"<sup>[3]</sup>).<sup>[4]</sup> Furthermore, although Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005 and it is since 2007 under the Hamas rule (not Palestinian authority), it is still considered to be an occupied Palestinian territory.<sup>[5]</sup> Israel continues to blockade the Gaza Strip which has sparked international criticism.

The primary approach of the international community toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict settlement is the so-called two-state solution. This would establish an independent Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and most of the West Bank, leaving the rest of the territory to Israel. Despite being clearly defined in theory, the two parties are deeply divided over the concrete form in practice.<sup>[6]</sup>

One of the critical issues in the conflict resolution is the status of Jerusalem. Both sides claim the city as their capital and are unwilling to compromise. Israel since the 1967 war occupied East Jerusalem (Israeli unilateral annexation is not recognized internationally) and deems the entire city as an eternal and indivisible capital. On the other hand, Palestinians claim East Jerusalem for the capital of the independent Palestinian state.<sup>[7]</sup> The international consensus currently is that Jerusalem would have to become a shared capital of both states.<sup>[8]</sup>

Both sides are guilty of committing violence and other unlawful actions against each other. One of the newest upsurges of violence followed the formal US recognition of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, together with moving the US embassy there.<sup>[9]</sup>



The future of Jerusalem will play a crucial role in the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As both sides have been so far unable to reach an agreement on the status of the city, the international community must provide suggestions and solutions to the situation.

## **History Of The Topic**

The history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is highly complex and marked by human suffering and violence, but also by tremendous efforts dedicated to the resolution. The conflict has been one of the focal points of Middle Eastern affairs for decades and also influences international politics on a global scale.

Initially in 1947, the General Assembly adopted the Resolution A/RES/181(II) containing the partition plan, which would establish two independent states with Jerusalem under an international mandate. Whereas Jewish representatives accepted the plan, Arabs in Palestine and the neighbouring states rejected it.<sup>[10]</sup>

In 1948, the end of the British mandate and Israeli declaration of independence started a full-scale war between Israel and neighboring Arab states. Israel won the war, defended its independence and extended its territory, whereas the Gaza Strip was annexed by Egypt and the West Bank with East Jerusalem was annexed by Jordan. After the war, a majority of Arab Palestinians were either expelled or emigrated to the surrounding states, establishing a phenomenon of Palestinian refugees existing till this day.

In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established. The aim of the organization is the liberation of Palestine through armed struggle, as well as the defeat of Zionism.<sup>[11]</sup> In 1967, the Six-Day War broke out, resulting in decisive Israeli victory, with Israel occupying Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem, Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights. Israel asserted its sovereignty over the entire city of Jerusalem and the Palestinian residents were granted a permanent residence. The status of Jerusalem and the situation in Gaza and the West Bank pose key issues in the conflict till today.<sup>[12]</sup>

The period after the war is characterized by further violence. At the beginning of 1970s, the PLO and other organizations waged an international terror campaign, culminating in the 1972 Munich massacre, which was met with Israeli retaliation. In 1973, a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel, therefore starting the Yom-Kippur War, which had several consequences. It *inter alia* paved the way for a subsequent peace





process - in 1978 the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel were signed, resulting in a return of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt and the first peaceful recognition of Israel by an Arab country.

In 1974, the PLO adopted the Ten Points Program, which called for the establishment of a national authority "over every part of Palestinian territory that is liberated" with the aim of "completing the liberation of all Palestinian territory". Moreover, this program enabled the PLO to engage through diplomatic channels and introduced a two-state solution.<sup>[13]</sup>

In 1978, Israel launched Operation Litani in response to Palestinian terrorist attack. The operation aimed to take control over southern Lebanon (then PLO's base of operations) up to the Litani river. The intervention forced the PLO to retreat to northern Lebanon. However, after Israeli withdrawal, Fatah resumed rocket attacks on Israel's northern territories. Although the ceasefire was eventually agreed upon, the tensions remained.

In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon as a result of an assassination attempt on Israeli ambassador in the United Kingdom, with aim to prevent terrorist attacks on northern territories in Israel. Israel established a buffer "security zone" in northern Lebanon with limited Israeli presence and Israeli-supported militia.

In December 1987, the First Intifada (uprising) broke out and lasted till the 1991 Madrid Conference. Despite starting as a rather spontaneous event, the uprising was directed and managed by the PLO since 1988, up until the Oslo Accords in 1993, when it ended. The uprising was characterized by terrorist attacks and demonstrations, together with Israeli efforts to suppress it. Furthermore, the PLO in 1988 declared the establishment of the Palestinian state. The declaration is generally interpreted to have recognized Israel within its pre-1967 boundaries, and it's right to exist. Following this declaration, the United States and many other countries recognized the PLO.<sup>[14]</sup>

After the Gulf War in 1991, the United States and Russia initiated the Madrid Peace Conference. The conference was an early attempt by the international community to start a peace process through negotiations involving Israel and the Palestinians, as well as Arab countries including Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.<sup>[15]</sup>

In 1993, the Oslo peace process started as Israel and PLO entered into negotiations in Oslo, Norway. Key documents of the Oslo peace process include:



1. Israel-PLO Letters of Recognition (1993)<sup>[16]</sup> - mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO;
2. The Oslo I Accord (1993)<sup>[17]</sup> - Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements - a declaration of the aim of the negotiations and setting forth the framework for the interim period.
3. The Cairo Agreement (1994)<sup>[18]</sup> - establishment of the Palestinian Authority (interim self-governance body), partial Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip at the start of the five-year transitional period (Article V of *Oslo I*), transfer of a limited power to the Palestinian Authority;
4. Oslo II Accord (1995)<sup>[19]</sup> - fragmentation of the West Bank into three areas:
  - a. **A** - under full civil and security control of the Palestinian Authority;
  - b. **B** - under Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control;
  - c. **C** - under full civil and security Israeli control),
  - d. redeployment of Israeli troops from Area A and from other areas, election of the Palestinian Legislative Council, deployment of Palestinian Police replacing Israeli military forces in Area A, safe passage between West Bank and Gaza.

The Oslo II Accord also contains provisions on the start of negotiations on a final settlement of remaining issues, which should have been concluded before 4 May 1999. However, the Oslo peace process ultimately failed to create an independent Palestinian state.

The start of the new millennium was marked by the eruption of the Second Intifada, which was ignited after the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon conflict in spring 2000 and failure of the Camp David Summit to reach a final agreement on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in July 2000. The violence broke out after Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's visit to Temple Mount, which was considered as highly provocative by Palestinians.<sup>[20]</sup>

Moreover, Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, granting the Palestinian Authority control over the territory, with exception of its borders, airspace and territorial waters.<sup>[21]</sup> Since the 2006 inter-Palestinian war, Gaza has been governed by Hamas, which does not recognize the Palestinian Authority, which remained in control of the West Bank. Although the reconciliation process between Gaza and the West Bank has been ongoing for several years, so far the two entities remain de facto split.<sup>[22]</sup>

In 2012, the General Assembly passed Resolution A/RES/67/19, upgrading Palestine from an "observer entity" to a "non-member observer state" within the United Nations system, which was described as recognition of the PLO's sovereignty, or independence.<sup>[23]</sup> The UN has



additionally permitted Palestine to title its representative office to the UN as "The Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations".<sup>[24]</sup>

Furthermore in 2012, UN Chief of Protocol stated that "the designation of 'State of Palestine' shall be used by the Secretariat in all official United Nations documents", thus recognising the title 'State of Palestine' as the state's official name for all UN purposes.<sup>[25]</sup> Currently, 137 states recognize the State of Palestine.<sup>[26]</sup>

## **Status Of Jerusalem**

As briefly laid out in the introduction, the status of Jerusalem remains one of the most serious points of dispute within the entire conflict and peace process. Both Israel and Palestine claim Jerusalem as their capital and both have so far been unwilling to compromise in this regard.

The UN considers East Jerusalem to be part of the occupied Palestinian territories. The General Assembly Resolution A/RES/181 (II) of 1947 states that the city of Jerusalem shall be established as a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations.<sup>[27]</sup> The resolution received the consent of the Jewish leadership in Palestine, but it was rejected by the Arabs.<sup>[28]</sup>

However there is an inconsistency within the United Nations on the status of Jerusalem. As presented above, General Assembly promotes Jerusalem being under international administration, whereas e.g. Secretary-General of the United Nations stated, that both sides should share Jerusalem as a capital in the framework of two-state solution.<sup>[29]</sup>

Israel in 1980 enacted the Basic Jerusalem Law, which declared Jerusalem an eternal and indivisible capital. The Israeli Supreme Court chose to interpret the text of this law as an expression of intent regarding the annexation of Jerusalem, although the Knesset (national legislature) did not actually clarify this. The international community does not recognize Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem, as affirmed by numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Security Council has adopted a total of seven resolutions on the status of Jerusalem, including e.g. the Resolution S/RES/478 (1980), which designates Israel's Basic Jerusalem Law to be in violation of international law.<sup>[30]</sup>

As for the General Assembly, international community also does not recognize Jerusalem as an exclusive capital of Israel, as reflected in the Resolution A/RES/63/30 stating that "any actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the



Holy City of Jerusalem are illegal and therefore null and void and have no validity whatsoever”, and “(the Assembly) calls upon Israel to cease all such illegal and unilateral measures.”<sup>[31]</sup>

The General Assembly reiterated its position in 2011 Resolution A/RES/66/18, which declares Israeli actions null and void, together with maintaining the official position of Jerusalem having international status.<sup>[32]</sup>

Regarding the positions of Israel and Palestine, as already mentioned, Israel has declared Jerusalem an eternal and indivisible capital. In recent years, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government has been maintaining the same position of exclusivity on the issue, stating in 2015 that “Jerusalem has forever been the capital of only the Jewish people and no other nation.”<sup>[33]</sup> The Palestinian official position is that Jerusalem should be an open city with no physical partition, and that Palestinians would be guaranteed freedom of worship, access and the protection of sites of religious significance.<sup>[34]</sup> The Palestinian Authority designated Jerusalem as a capital in 2002.<sup>[35]</sup>

With regards to international politics, the European Union maintains a position in accordance with the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/181(II): “two-state solution with Israel and Palestine side by side in peace and security. A viable state of Palestine in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, on the basis of the 1967 lines. A way must be found to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both Israel and Palestine.”<sup>[36]</sup>

The United States under the Trump administration has been a strong supporter of Israel. In 2017, the United States recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and in 2018 it moved its embassy there.<sup>[37]</sup> This move sparked a wave of criticism from all major actors involved in the peace process, largely because prior to this the USA was seen as a neutral party in the conflict.<sup>[38]</sup> Moreover, the Trump administration in 2020 introduced a Middle East peace plan, which was met mainly with protests and criticism claiming it strongly favours Israel’s interests.<sup>[39]</sup> In 2017, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation proclaimed East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine and invited all countries to recognise the State of Palestine and East Jerusalem as its occupied capital.<sup>[40]</sup>

With regards to Russia, Russia has recognized the State of Palestine and supports the East Jerusalem to become a capital of independent Palestinian state.<sup>[41]</sup>

China recognizes East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. In 2016, president Xi Jinping said that “China firmly supports the Middle East peace process and supports the



establishment of a State of Palestine enjoying full sovereignty on the basis of the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.”<sup>[42]</sup>

## **Important Issues To Be Considered By The Council**

This section consists of issues or questions that could be debated upon in a moderated caucus or the GSL. It is of significant importance to emphasize that the following list of suggestions is not exhaustive and should be considered only as an inspiration for the Committee.

Issue 1: The dispute settlement of Jerusalem is a prerequisite for further progress in the entire peace process.

Issue 2: Should the international community support the status of Jerusalem as a separate international entity (*corpus separatum*) or should the city be a shared capital of both Israel and the State of Palestine?

Issue 3: Can the international community provide any incentives for both sides to persuade them to compromise and/or reach an agreement on Jerusalem?

Issue 4: Israel disrupts the peace process by illegally building settlements in the West Bank, whereas Palestinians commence rocket attacks on Israel (e.g. from Gaza). How can this be negotiated in a peaceful manner?

Issue 5: The statement of Israeli officials introducing a plan to annex the settlements in the West Bank.

Issue 6: The US recognition of Jerusalem as Israeli capital and moving its embassy there.

Issue 7: Quickly deteriorating humanitarian situation Gaza and potential for escalation and further outbreak of violence.

## **Important Questions For Research**

This section consists of important issues or questions regarding a delegate's portfolio. Distinguished delegates are expected to have at least brief knowledge on and to be familiar with the following issues/questions:

- 1) Does your assigned country recognize the Statehood of Israel, Palestine, or both?



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- 2) What is your country's traditional foreign policy orientation, e.g. pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian or neutral?
- 3) How has your country voted on some crucial UN resolutions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the status of Jerusalem?
- 4) Has your country been historically directly or indirectly involved in the conflict or its resolution?
- 5) Does your country cooperate with/oppose any other actor involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (countries, armed groups, etc.)?
- 6) What role could your country play in the dispute settlement over Jerusalem (e.g. mediator, advocate for either side)?
- 7) Would your country benefit from the issue of Jerusalem being settled, thus making progress in the peace process, or would it prefer the status quo?
- 8) Are there any interest groups that might help your country in promoting its agenda, or are there any that could hinder/threaten the peace process altogether?



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