

Forum: General Assembly

Issue: Israeli Settlements and Claims of Sovereignty in the Occupied Territories

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Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a continuing conflict between Israel and Palestine. Irrespective of the long-term peace process and Israel's overall compromise with Egypt and Jordan, a final peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians has not been reached. Israel has occupied Palestinian territory and currently has settlers living in the area. These areas consist of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. Jordan had previously occupied the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem since the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-49. There are officially 132 settlements and 113 outposts in the West Bank according to Israeli settlement watchdog Peace Now. These settlements were built without permission, and the number of settlements is still rapidly increasing. This has caused Palestinian dissatisfaction and provoked uproar and protests. Formerly, Israel established settlements in the Gaza Strip, a strip of land seized from Egypt during 1967 but when it withdrew from the territory in 2005, it dismantled the settlements. Israel also built settlements on the Sinai Peninsula, which were also seized from Egypt in 1967 but removed as part of a peace agreement with Cairo in 1982.

While built-up settlement areas occupy only about 2 percent of the West Bank, critics have pointed out that settlement-controlled land such as agriculture and transportation further extends and needs a heavy military presence. On the other side, Palestinians demanded that Israel suspend all settlement operations so they could have peace talks. Yet Israel says the Palestinians are simply using the settlement issue to avoid direct talks between the two countries. There are various reasons why Israelis choose to settle in this area, and not elsewhere. The land had been given by God to them according to the Bible. As such, they consider it holy and decide to settle in the city. Moreover, the land provides security from similar attacks to those that took place in 1948 when Israel was occupied by the Arab countries. Finally, the cost of living in the area has been relatively low due to subsidies from the Israeli government. All of these reasons contribute to a strong incentive to settle in the West Bank.

Definition of Key Terms

Zionism

Zionism is a movement in support of a Jewish state in the Palestinian territory. It arose in the late 19th century in Central and Eastern Europe as a national revival movement. The goal is to create a state where the Jews are the majority, rather than the minority.

Area C

Area C comprises 60 percent (about 330,000 hectares) of the West Bank. Israel has maintained almost complete control over this region, including security and all civil matters relating to the land, including land allocation, planning and development, and infrastructure. The international community has seen settlements in Area C as illegal and the UN has consistently upheld the opinion that the establishment of settlements by Israel constitutes a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Great March of Return

The Great Return March is a movement launched on March 30, 2018, demanding that Palestinian refugees and their descendants be allowed to return to the land from which they were expelled into what is now Israel. The demonstrators also called for an end to the Gaza Strip blockade and demonstrated against the United States' recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the relocation of its Israeli embassy to Jerusalem.

Israeli Settlements

Settlements are settlements that Israel founded on land occupied during the Middle East War of 1967. It covers the Golan Heights, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Jordan had previously occupied the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem since the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-49.

British Mandate

It was a mandate for the British Administration of the Palestinian and Transjordanian territories, both issued by the Ottoman Empire after World War I. Civil administration began in Palestine and Transjordan in July 1920 and April 1921, respectively, and the mandate was in effect from September 29, 1923 to May 15, 1948.

Gaza Strip

The Gaza Strip is a Palestinian self-governing region on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea bordering Egypt on the southwest and Israel on the east and north. The Gaza strip is run by a fundamentalist Islamic group called Hamas.

History

Past Disputes between Israel and Palestine



Caption # 1 Map of West Bank & Gaza

Caption # 2 Map of Gaza Strip

1967 War

After Israel seized control of the West Bank from Jordan after the war of 1967, Israeli citizens moved into the region and settled there. Since then, every Israeli government has supported Jewish settlements thus providing subsidies, further encouraging West Bank settlements. Some Israelis believe that settlements help protect against potential attacks of the kind that occurred in 1948 when Arab countries attacked Israel after rejecting a UN plan that partitioned the Holy Land under British rule. The proposal, alongside a Jewish one, would have made the West Bank part of a new Arab state. Israel says the provision does not extend to the West Bank because Jordan, which had occupied the region 19 years before Israel was never recognized as the sovereign power there, and the land was seized in a war of defense. Some settlers believe that modern-day Jews are entitled to the West Bank because it was the center of biblical Israel, but others simply enjoyed the affordable housing. Government subsidies, including preferential mortgages and discounts on the approved state land sales, amount to about \$700 per settler per year. The presence of settlements makes everyday life difficult for

Palestinians. Barriers, fences and buffer zones are built to secure settlers as well as to restrict the freedom, movement, and commerce of Palestinians.

Palestine War

The War of Independence, also known as the Palestinian War, was taking place under the British Mandate in the territory of Palestine. It was the first war between Israel and Palestine, and one of the conflicts that took place during the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Palestinian Arabs ended up stateless, displaced either to the Palestinian territories captured by Egypt and Jordan or to the surrounding Arab states; many of them remain stateless and in refugee camps, as well as their descendants. The region under British control before the war was now split between the State of Israel, which captured around 78 percent of the entire territory, the Kingdom of Jordan (then known as Transjordan), which captured and later occupied the land that would become the West Bank, and Egypt, which captured the Gaza Strip, a coastal territory on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Arab-Israeli conflict is a series of disputes and conflicts between Israel and the Arab nations. The conflict revolves essentially around conflicting land claims. The Jewish people regard this as their homeland of ancestors, while the Arab Palestinians regard it as Muslim lands. The Palestinian Jewish-Arab conflict began in the 1920s, escalating into an all-out civil war in 1947 and transforming into the Arab-Israeli war in May 1948, following the Israeli Declaration of Independence.

Large-scale hostilities ended mostly with the cease-fire accords. In 1979, peace agreements were signed between Israel and Egypt, resulting in Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula and the abolition of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip military governance system in favor of Israeli Civil Administration and consequent unilateral annexation of the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem.

First Intifada

The First Intifada was a Palestinian uprising against West Bank and Gaza occupation by Israel. The revolt began in December 1987 and concluded with the Oslo Accords signing in 1993. The rebellion started when an Israeli Defense Force tank crashed into a civilian car, killing four Palestinians. Following the incident, an uprising erupted in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank including demonstrations, boycotts, and Israeli law. The boycott consists of refusing to work in Israeli factories in Israeli settlements, refusing to pay taxes and refusing to use Israeli

licenses to drive cars. In response, Israel mobilized about 80,000 troops and fired live rounds into the crowd, killing several Palestinians and injuring a few others. Roughly 30,000 Palestinian children in the first two years required medical assistance because of violence during the First Intifada.

Second Intifada

The Second Intifada, also known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, was a time of Israeli-Palestinian violence. The Israeli-Palestinian peace process failed to reach consensus. The violence began when Israel's prime minister Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount. This offended and led the Palestinians to throw stones at the police. However, the Israeli army dispersed them using rubber bullets and tear gas. All sides have reported a large number of casualties. Palestinians engaged in suicide bombings, rock throws, and gunfire while the Israelis responded with gunfire, tanks, and airstrikes.

Key Issues

Jewish Settlements

Israelis moving into Palestinian territories controlled by Israel are called settlers, mostly in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. While many Jewish Israelis have chosen to live in settlements for financial reasons, some for religious reasons, and some for wanting to claim Israel for the land. The Israeli government gave exclusive support and subsidized the settlers. Israel's settlement-building in the Palestinian Occupied Territories is considered illegal under international law. Many settlements are towns with thousands of people, many have small communities. With the rising settlements, the settlers are being pursued and guarded by troops, driving Palestinians into their occupied land and separating communities. Thus the Palestinian occupied territory has several hundred thousand illegal settlers.

Security Barriers

The Wall built by the Israelis around the West Bank to prevent terrorists and suicide bombers from entering Israel after the Second Intifada has proven to be effective in preventing terrorism. The actual location of the wall, however, that extends deep into the West Bank beyond the area generally agreed on the frontiers of a future Palestinian state. Israelis consider the wall to be a means of protection, a necessity of security. Its illegality is not relevant to the discussion, the tribunal has never removed the existence of the wall in the Palestinian territory, it

has been overlooked repeatedly. The wall added intensity to the Palestinian economy, obstructing labor access to the Israeli labor market and having trade, business, and investment difficulties. Because of its shelf life, the cap on commercial transport delays crossing and threatens goods such as dairy, poultry, and fish.

Palestinians Refugees

Palestine refugees are defined as people whose normal place of residence was Palestine between 1 June 1946 and 15 May 1948, and who lost both their homes and livelihoods as a result of the 1948 conflict. ' Almost one-third of the registered Palestinian refugees, more than 1.5 million people, live in 58 recognized Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, etc.

The land plots on which the approved camps were built are either state land or, in most instances, land leased from local landowners by the host government. This means that refugees in camps do not ' own' the land on which their shelters were built, but have the right to ' use' the land as their residence. The socio-economic conditions in the camps are generally poor, with a high population density, poor living conditions and inadequate basic infrastructures such as roads and sewers.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United States

From the beginning of his presidency in January 2017, Donald Trump's stance toward settlement activity has been much more accommodating than his predecessor, Barack Obama. Donald Trump is the only president in history who considers the West Bank settlements in Israel as legitimate. The US had described the settlements as ' illegitimate' before Donald Trump took office, refraining from calling them ' illegal' since the Carter administration in 1980. The US now considers the agreement as legitimate. On top of that, Donald Trump has officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. That has resulted in many demonstrations from the region's Palestinians and other Muslims.

Israel

Israel believes the Palestinians are using the settlement issue merely as a pretext to avoid direct talks. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has also gone further than ever by declaring his intention to effectively annex all Jewish settlements in the West Bank, as well as the Jordan Valley and the Northern Dead Sea in eastern West Bank.

Palestine

Palestinians say that the presence of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem-land they are seeking for a future state-makes such a state impossible with the contiguous territory. They have demanded that Israel freeze all settlement activity as a precondition for peace talks to resume. Palestinians ' freedom of movement is also restricted by hundreds of checkpoints, roadblocks and other obstacles used to protect both settlements and Israel from militants. The Palestinians have warned that if Israel extends sovereignty to the settlements, it will kill the peace process.

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date	Description of event
	Independence
1948	Israel declares independence as the British mandate ends, getting admitted to United Nations later on.
	Arab-Israeli War
1949	Armistice arrangements leave Israel, including western Jerusalem, with more territories than envisaged under the Partition Plan. Jordan annexed the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem, and Gaza is controlled by Egypt. Out of their total population of about 1,200,000, about 750,000 Palestinian Arabs either flee or are expelled.
	Suez Crisis
1956	During the Suez Crisis, Israel cooperated with Britain and France to invade Egypt to reopen the Israeli shipping channel and end armed incursions by Palestinians from Sinai.

Six-Day War

1967

After months of tension, including border skirmishes, the expulsion of Egypt from Sinai by the UN buffer force and its closure of the Tiran Straits to Israeli shipping, Israel is launching a pre-emptive attack on Egypt, and Jordan and Syria are joining the war. The war lasts six days, leaving Israel in control of east Jerusalem, the entire West Bank, Gaza, Golan Heights and Sinai. Jewish settlements will be built in all these areas in the coming years with approval from the Government.

Camp David Accord

1977

The right-wing Likud party of Menachem Begin wins surprise election victory, in part by harnessing the resentment of non-European Jews over the political hegemony of Jews of European origin. It launches economic liberalization, brings into mainstream religious Jewish parties, and promotes settlements.

Invasion of Lebanon

1982

Israel invades Lebanon to expel leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) following an assassination attempt on the Israeli ambassador to London by a small Palestinian militant group.

Oslo Declaration

1993

Prime Minister Rabin and Yasser Arafat, leader of the PLO, signed the Declaration of Oslo to plot Palestinian self-government and formally end First Intifada. Violence continues among Palestinian groups which reject the Oslo Declaration.

2000	<p>Pullout from Lebanon</p> <p>Israel withdraws from southern Lebanon, although the status of Shebaa Farms is disputed by Lebanon.</p>
2005	<p>Withdrawal from Gaza</p> <p>Israel withdraws from Gaza all Jewish settlers and military personnel while retaining control of airspace, coastal waters, and border crossings.</p>

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

There have been numerous attempts both from the United Nations as well as outside parties to help resolve this issue. There are numerous resolutions such as the partition plan (resolution 181), the problem of Zionism (resolution 3379), sovereignty territorial integral (resolution 242), cease-fire to be place within twelve hours of implementation of Resolution 242 in which Israel broke off first (resolution 338), Arab-Israeli peace negotiations (394), Israel to cease military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw its forces (resolution 425), numerous death and injuries among the Palestinians (resolution 1322), Assistance to Palestinian refugee (resolution 916), Rights of self-determination and return of rights for Palestinians (resolution 3236), Israel annexation of Jerusalem (resolution 478), Status of Jerusalem (resolution 356), Jewish settlements (resolution 2334) and many more resolutions that has been created since 1948.

There have also been numerous peace treaties, and events attempting to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Examples of these include the Oslo Accords, the Camp David Summit, the Clinton Parameters, the Taba Summit, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Middle East Road Map, the Olmert-Abbas talks within the Annapolis process, the Kerry peace efforts, and others. However, Several years of diplomacy have yet solved the conflict let alone done much to stop the negatively between them.

Possible Solutions

Administrative Autonomy

The land will be governed by an outside authority according to the Administrative Autonomy. It is typically either geographically separate from the rest of the country, or it is populated by a national minority. To such tensions, the decentralization of self-governing powers and duties is a way for a national government to try to use administrative efficiency or to defuse internal conflicts. Self-governance for the Palestinians meant Israel would be responsible for the security and foreign policy while maintaining a territorial claim to the West Bank.

One-State Solution

The one-state solution will fuse Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip into one large country. This solution comes in two ways. The first solution would be to create a single nation that is democratic. This strategy would result in a country where Arab Muslims would be the majority, thus ending Israel as a Jewish state. Palestinians have strongly supported the strategy. The alternative approach would be to annex the West Bank and force the Palestinians out or deny them voting rights. The international committee views this as a human rights violation and therefore opposes this approach.

Two-State Solution

The conventional approach to this problem is the two-state solution. The solution would establish Israel and Palestine apart from each other. Palestinians and Israelis prefer different management of their country from one another. The Israelis want a Jewish state whilst the Palestinians want a Muslim Arab state. A two-state solution divides the Israelis from the Palestinians and allows all sides to govern their states as they wish. Although polls showed that most people in the parties involved favor a two-state solution, all parties have failed to reach consensus on a two-state solution.

Questions A Resolution Must Answer

- How will borders be formed and how will the land be divided?
- How will Palestinian concerns over Israeli settlements in the West Bank be addressed?
- How will concerns on Security concerns over terrorism, safe borders, incitements, violence be addressed?
- What will be the status of Jerusalem? How will the resolution deal with people with strong emotions relating to the conflict on both sides?

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