

Forum: Security Council

Issue: The situation between Israel and the State of Palestine

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Position: President



Introduction

In the broad spectrum of geopolitical tensions, few conflicts have been as long-lasting and complex as the discord between Israel and Palestine. The ceaseless pursuit of enduring peace and a resolution to a problem where agreement seems unattainable has been the subject of numerous discussions across international and national organizations for the past half-century. The conflict has become almost symbolic of the challenges facing the global community in resolving deeply entrenched disputes. Spanning generations, the Israel-Palestine conflict is a mosaic pieced together from intricate panels of territorial claims, identity, religion, and political aspirations. Rooted in a struggle for self-determination and land, its complexities truly echo across decades, permeating the lives of millions and shaping regional dynamics in the Middle East.

This research report will concentrate on the modern conflict between Israel and Palestine, opting to examine more recent history rather than older accounts in the area. Therefore, we will commence with The Balfour Declaration of 1917, progress to the partition plan announced in 1947 (post-World War II), the Arab-Israeli wars, the Intifadas, Oslo Accords, and conclude with the tensions caused by the ongoing settlements. While researching, it is crucial that a balance is found between sources supporting the Israeli side and the Palestinian. The issue is clearly an incredibly sensitive one that has unfortunately caused major strife not only between the citizens of the two countries but also between governments around the world.

Consequently, our aim with this report will be to provide an in-depth analysis of the Palestine-Israeli conflict, in order to best prepare you for the upcoming discourse during THIMUN 2024. This report will chastise the use of unnecessary force, but also underline the successes that have occurred in subsiding the tension between the two countries, as it is paramount to highlight the achievements made when the gears of peace turn so slowly. The United Nations aims to provide the most comfortable and agreeable plan that considers both perspectives. Regarding structure, this research report will start by defining key terms, providing background information about the region and conflict, give a timeline of events, mention pertinent UN resolutions, previous solutions that were attempted, and then conclude with novel solutions that delegates could implement into the resolution that will be written in session.

It is critical to keep in mind that the viewpoints of both parties are firmly anchored in historical, cultural, and religious settings as you conduct study and engage in debate on this matter in the Security Council. There is a great sense of longing for peace and security in both Israeli and Palestinian narratives. We hope that a route to a peaceful conclusion can be discovered via communication, empathy, and understanding. We firmly think that by gaining information and insight, we can support the continuous initiatives aimed at establishing a fair and enduring peace in the area.

Definition of Key Terms

Zionism

Zionism is defined as a nationalist movement that promotes the establishment and upkeep of a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel (World Zionist Organization 1). It was founded in the latter half of the 1800s throughout eastern and central Europe with the intention of establishing and defending a Jewish national state in Palestine, the ancestral home of the Jewish people. The word "Zion," which refers to Jerusalem in Hebrew, is the source of the name. Throughout history, Jews have considered certain areas in Israel sacred. The fundamental philosophies of the Zionist movement have existed for hundreds of years, but modern activists believe that the Jewish population could not survive if they did not have a nation of its own (Britannica).

Two-State Solution

The two-state solution is a proposed frame for solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by establishing two states for two peoples: Israel for the Jewish people and Palestine for the Palestinian people (Vox). The idea would be to have an Israeli state next to a Palestinian state, existing side by side in peace. The boundary between the two states is still subject to dispute and negotiation but is mainly based on the 1967 lines (Britannica)

One-State Solution

The one-state solution is another proposed approach to resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict, in which one state would be established between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean. This solution advocates for a single state in Israel, the West, and the Gaza Strip. The term "one-state reality" describes the belief that the current situation in Israel/Palestine is de facto a single state. It is sometimes also called a bi-national state, as the state would be homeland for both Jews and Palestinians. Various models have been proposed for implementing the one-state solution, including a unitary state with a single government on the entire territory with citizenship and equal rights for all residents, regardless of their ethnicity or religion (Vox).

Right of Return

The Palestinian right of return is a political principle asserting that Palestinian refugees, both first generation and their descendants, have a right to return to the property that they or their forebearers left behind or were forced to leave in what is now Israel and the Palestinian territories. This principle was formulated for the first time on 27 June 1948 by United Nations mediator Folke Bernadotte (Palestine Land Society). It is seen as a human right, protected under international law. Those who opt not to return, or for whom return is not feasible, should receive compensation. This principle stands in contract with Israel's law of return, which grants all Jews the right to settle permanently while withholding any comparable right from Palestinians (Human Rights Watch).

Intifada

The term "Intifada" comes from the Arabic word which translates to "shaking off." It alludes to significant Palestinian uprisings against Israeli rule in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The years 1987–1993 saw the First Intifada, and the years 2000–2005 saw the second. Both included multiple assaults on Israeli security personnel and civilians. The goal of these uprisings was to establish an independent Palestinian state and put an end to Israeli occupation of the territories (Britannica).

Oslo Accords

The Oslo Accords, signed in the 1990s, are a set of agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) that started a peace process in order to ease tensions in the area and try to resolve the conflict. The agreements started by discussing the possibility of agreeing to what borders each side would agree to, unfortunately this did not do much to stimulate compromise. The agreements marked the PLO and the State of Israel's first official recognition of one another. The accords granted Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip limited autonomy with the creation of the Palestinian Authority. However, the stated goal of the accords, which was to put an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by 1999, was not achieved (U.S. Department of State).

Haram al-Sharif

The Temple Mount, or Haram al-Sharif, is a hill in Jerusalem's Old City that has been revered for thousands of years as a sacred location by followers of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is the home to a compound of Islamic religious buildings, including the Dome of the Rock, several mosques and prayer halls, madrasas, zawiyas, khalwas, and other domes and religious structures. It is the third-holiest place in Islam and the holiest in Judaism. A Muslim religious foundation called the Islamic Waqf is in charge of overseeing it (Madain Project).

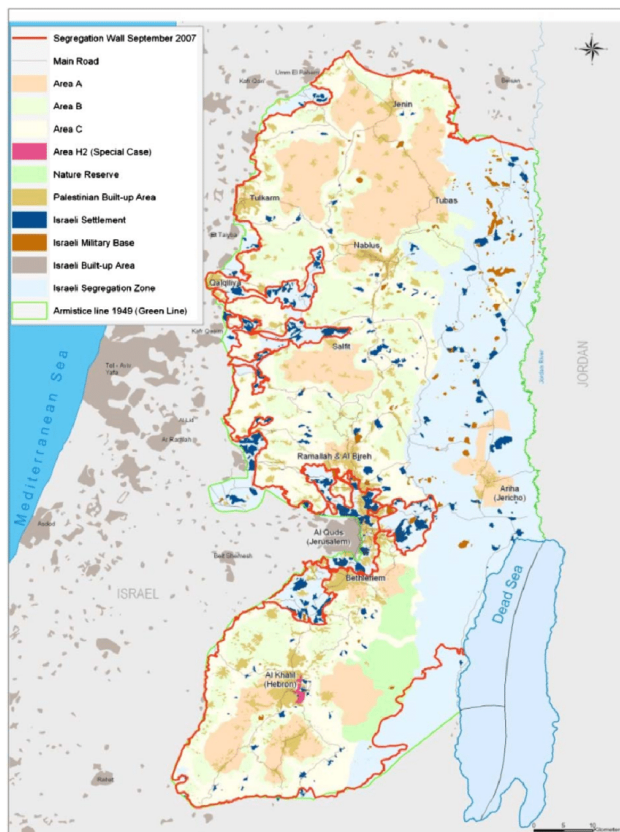
Likud

Likud is the National Liberal Movement which is a major right-wing political party in Israel. It was founded in 1973 by Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon in an alliance with several right-wing parties. The party is centered on the ideology of Revisionist Zionism and is characterized by conservatism and nationalism. It tends to prioritize guarantees of Israeli security in peace negotiations with the

Palestinians. Likud's landslide victory in the 1977 elections marked the first time the left had lost power. After ruling the country for most of the 1980s, the party lost the Knesset election in 1992. However, it has since regained power and has been the leading vote-getter in each subsequent election until April 2019 (Britannica).

Golan Heights

The Golan Heights is a strategic plateau located along the border of Israel and Syria overlooking southern Lebanon. It was captured by Israel during the Middle East war of 1967 and subsequently annexed in a move never recognized by the international community. The region is seen as of critical strategic and security importance to the State of Israel. The Golan Heights is a territory in Israel's northeast corner. Fewer than 50,000 people actually live in the area – less than 1 percent of Israel's population. Regardless, the area is well protected due to its unique strategic value (Britannica).



Detailed map showing the western part of the segregation wall in the West Bank

Background Information

Palestine

The area was among the first in the world to experience agricultural communities, civilization, and human residence. Egypt, which governed the region in the late Bronze Age, was one of the surrounding civilizations that affected the Canaanites when they created autonomous city-states

throughout the Bronze Age. The Philistines ruled Palestine's southern coast throughout the Iron Age, while two related Israelite kingdoms, Israel and Judah, ruled over much of the country. As the Roman Empire became Christian in the fourth century, Palestine developed into a major Christian hub that drew scholars, pilgrims, and monks (Adams 150).

Israel

The history shares many similarities with that of Palestine, and vice versa. The ancient Israeli territory covered the Southern Levant which is the geographical location of the modern states of Israel and Palestine. The Levantine corridor witnessed waves of early humans out of Africa. As previously mentioned in the Iron Age two Israelite kingdoms were formed, entities that were central to the origin of the Jewish people (Finkelstein).

Overview

The area has been in the hands of a plethora of ruling bodies leading to modern governments laying claims to land due to their specific historical links with the region. This has naturally heated tensions in the region, causing major disagreements. This overlap in history partially explains the reasons for why such extreme strife, particularly related to territorial and religious, exist in the area.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Israel

Established in 1948, Israel is a nation in the Middle East primarily populated by Jewish inhabitants. Being such a new country, it has vigorously fought for its sovereignty and freedom, naturally facing major backlash from surrounding Arab states, particularly Palestine. It became the homeland of the Jewish people after the Second World War, specifically after the termination of Mandatory British Palestine on the 14th of May 1948, through the Israeli Declaration of Independence (Britannica). This subsequently led to a massive migration of Jews from both Europe and the neighboring Muslim countries.

Palestine

Palestine or the State of Palestine, refers to the Palestinian territories in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Palestinians seek statehood and self-determination within these territories but have faced massive troubles. Founded on the 15th of November 1988 and officially governed by the Palestinian Liberation Organization. The State of Palestine is still only recognized by 139 or 72% of United Nations members. Most member states that do not recognize Palestine because they are still waiting for a two-state solution to be applied in the area and/or a conclusion to the conflict (United Nations).

United States of America

A key proponent of Israel, the United States of America has historically played a significant part in the conflict, providing diplomatic, financial and military support to Israel. The United States financial

strength has allowed it to provide significant sums of money and weaponry to the Israeli government, often turning the tides of many conflicts that have occurred in the region (Vox). Currently, Israel receives around \$3.8 billion from the USA each year for military and defense systems, including the Iron Dome, an anti-rocket system that protects against incoming short-range weapons (Axios). They have proven a valuable ally to Israel, and a mediator for discourse that occurs between opposing sides in the region.

Hamas

A Palestinian Islamist organization controlling the Gaza Strip since 2007 (National Counterterrorism Centre). Hamas is considered a terrorist group by Israel, the U.S., and the European Union, advocating armed resistance against Israel (Dupret 279). Palestine National Authority (PLO). They often employ violent tactics in order to protest the oppression of the Palestinian people in Gaza, which has naturally exacerbated tensions between both sides.

Fatah

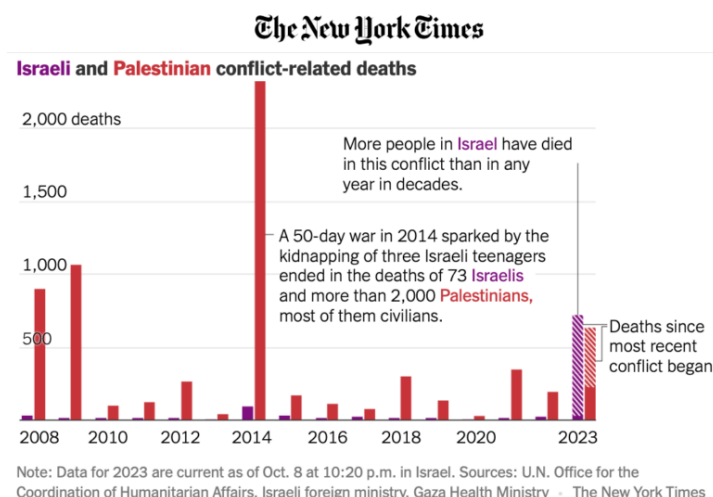
A major Palestinian political party founded by Yasser Arafat in the 1950s. It dominated the Palestinian Authority (PA) and engaged in negotiations with Israel. However, the party lost most of its political relevance and power to Hamas (Britannica).

Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood is a religio-political organization founded in 1928 that advocates for the application of Islamic law in all aspects of society. In the context of Israel-Palestine, the Muslim Brotherhood has been involved in the struggle against Zionism and the State of Israel. The Israeli Islamic Movement, which was established in the 1970s has roots in the Muslim Brotherhood movement (Ghattas). The Southern Branch, represented by the Ra'am Party, is a now part of the Israeli government. Hamas, the Palestinian branch of the Brotherhood promotes Palestinian nationalism in an Islamic context (Swellam).

Arab League

The Arab League is a regional organization of Arab states formed in Cairo in 1945. Since its formation, the Arab League has promoted the Palestinian Arab cause in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including by imposing the Arab League boycott of Israel. The Arab League opposed the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine in 1947. In 2002, the Arab League offered Israel normal relations with all Arab countries in return for a full withdrawal from the lands it took in 1967 Middle East war, the creation of a Palestinian state and a "just solution" for Palestinian refugees (Britannica).



Timeline of Events

Date (start - end)	Name	Description
November 2, 1917	Balfour Declaration	A declaration by the British Government expressing support for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.
November 29, 1947	United Nations' Partition Plan	The United Nations General Assembly adopts Resolution 181, recommending the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states.
May 14, 1948	Israeli Declaration of Independence	The State of Israel is proclaimed, leading to the Arab-Israeli War as neighboring Arab states reject the partition plan and Israel's ability to self-determine.
1948-1949	Nakba (Palestinian Catastrophe)	Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians flee or are expelled from their homes during the Arab Israeli war, leading to the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem.
June 5-10, 1967	Six-Day War	Israel engages in a brief but decisive conflict with Egypt, Jordan, and Syria resulting in Israel's occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, and Golan Heights
November 22, 1967	United Nations Resolution 242	The United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 calls for the Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied during the Six-Day War in exchange for peace and recognition.
October 6 - 25, 1973	The Yom Kippur War	Another Arab-Israeli war, known by various names such as the Yom Kippur War, the Ramadan War, and the October War. It was fought when Egypt, Syria and the United States aided Israel. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries begins an oil embargo on countries that support

		Israel, and the price of oil skyrockets. The fighting ends after an UN-sponsored cease fire is proposed.
September 5-17, 1978	The Camp David Accords	Israel and Egypt sign the accords which establish a basis for a peace treaty between the two countries.
December 8, 1987 – April 16, 1993	First Intifada	The first period of intensified Palestinian-Israeli violence and armed conflict characterized by suicide bombings, shootings, and Israeli military operations. It was started by an Israeli driver killing four Palestinians in a car accident. Over the next six years, roughly 200 Israelis and 1,300 Palestinians were killed.
September 13, 1993	Oslo Accords	Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) sign a series of agreements aimed at establishing Palestinian self-rule in parts of the West Bank and Gaza.
September 29, 2000 - 2005	Second Intifada	The second period of intensified Palestinian-Israeli violence and armed conflict.
August 15, 2005	Gaza Withdrawal	Israel unilaterally withdraws all Israeli civilians and military personnel from the Gaza Strip, ending its direct occupation.
January 25, 2006	Hamas Election Victory	Hamas wins Palestinian legislative elections, leading to tensions between Fatah and Hamas and subsequently a division of governance between Gaza and the West Bank.
June 2007	Gaza Blockade	Israel imposes a blockade on the Gaza Strip, restricting the movement of goods and people in and out of the territory, controlled by Hamas.

December 27, 2009	Operation Cast Lead	Israel launches a military operation in Gaza in response to rocket attacks by Hamas, resulting in significant casualties and damage.
July 8 – August 26, 2014	Operation Protective Edge	Israel invades the Gaza Strip after countless attacks on Israeli and Palestinian civilians. It lasted for fifty days, killing about two thousand Gazans, sixty-six Israeli soldiers, and five Israeli civilians.
December 6, 2017	United States of America Recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel	Changing long-standing U.S. policy President Donald Trump formally recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.
2021	Israel-Hamas Crisis	Evictions of Palestinians in East Jerusalem and clashes at al-Aqsa Mosque spark conflict between Israel and Hamas.
September, 15 2020	Israel talks with U.S.-Saudi	The Israel-United Arab Emirates normalization agreement, officially called the Abraham Accords Peace Agreement: Treaty of Peace, Diplomatic Relations and Full Normalization Between the United Arab Emirates and the State of Israel. The agreement was mediated by the United States, and was meant to alleviate certain tensions between Israel and surrounding countries. A main point of contention was about Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu wanting to annex parts of the West bank.
October 7, 2023	Hamas launches surprise attack on Israel	Israel faced domestic turmoil, while a rise in violence was occurring in the region. Hamas launched an unprecedented surprise attack on Israel.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine Resolution, 29 November 1947 (A/RES/181(II))
Proposed the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, leading to the creation of Israel.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194, 11 December 1948 (A/RES/194) -
Addresses the Palestinian refugee crisis and affirms the right of return for Palestinian refugees displaced during the 1948 Arab Israeli War.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, 22 November 1967 (A/RES/242) -
Calls for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied during the Six-Day war in exchange for peace and recognition, emphasizing the “land for peace” principle.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 338, 22 October 1973 (A/RES/338(1973)) -
Endorses a ceasefire and calls for negotiations between parties involved in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, aiming to reaffirm Resolution 242.

Geneva Convention IV relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 12 August 1949 – Addresses the protection of civilians in times of war and includes provisions relevant to the treatment of civilians in occupied territories, such as the West Bank and Gaza.

Resolution 1860, 8 January 2009 (S/RES/1860(2009)) – Calls for an immediate ceasefire during the Gaza War in 2008-2009 and emphasizes the need for humanitarian access and the cessation of hostilities.

International Court of Justice (ICJ) Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory – (requested by resolution ES-10/14 adopted on 8 December 2003) – The ICJ issued an advisory opinion stating that the construction of the separation barrier/wall by Israel violates international law.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue.

In this section, this report will discuss previous solutions that have been suggested or implemented in order to abate the situation. The forums where these ideas were proposed may have been already mentioned in the timeline, however this section will specifically speak about the solutions proposed and cover only vaguely contextual details that occurred during each summit, meeting or conference.

Oslo Accords

The first step that was laid out during the several meetings in the 1990s was the idea of a partial Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho. Additionally, Israel was advised to transfer some power and responsibility regarding civil matters to the interim Palestinian Authority. Furthermore, Israeli troops were told to withdraw from populated Palestinian areas to pave the way for Palestinian elections to establish the council. The council would replace the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Civil

Administration in the West Bank would be dissolved (U.S. Department of State) The general aim of the agreement was to initiate peaceful discourse between the Israeli government and the PLO, through demilitarization and the splitting of responsibility in civil matters in the region between both governing bodies.

Camp David Summit

On December 23, President Bill Clinton presented both sides with an outline of the parameters for a final status agreement. Clinton's plan was the following: give the Palestinians 97% of the West Bank, with no cantons, and full control of the Gaza Strip, with a land-link between the two; Israel would have withdrawn from 63 settlements as a result (Shyovtiz). This evidently did not happen, however it steered the conversation in the correct direction – cooperation and compromise.

Annapolis Conference

The conference was facilitated by the United States government, taking place at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. The conference's aims were to revive the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and implement the "Roadmap for Peace" (U.S. Department of State). Once again the main attempt to ameliorate the situation between Israel and Palestine.

A key take-away from all of these attempts to solve the problems is that facilitating communication between the two sides, though difficult, is evidently an effective method of bettering relationships in the region.

Possible Solutions

The first possible way to amend the relationship between the Israeli and Palestinian governments and people would be to establish an optional citizenship exchange program. The initiative would allow for Israelis and Palestinians to live as dual citizens in each other's territories, promoting cultural understanding and empathy. This would require a less strict demarcation of Palestinian and Israeli land as citizens could freely cross each other's borders. To implement the program, government/United Nation funded incentives could be provided to those willing to enter the voluntary program and apply for citizenship in the opposite territory. They would slowly, but surely, facilitate people-to-people interaction. Applying contact theory, the more the citizens of the two countries interact the more likely they are to eventually understand each other's points of views – hopefully resulting in an amelioration of relations.

Another option could be the initiation of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) for joint development. A piece of territory, especially one that is highly contested, could be marked as shared land where both Palestinians and Israelis could collaborate in joint economic ventures, share employment opportunities, and technological innovation. This would foster interdependence and reduce tensions through economic cooperation. Not only would the citizens of each country become more empathetic for one

another's problems (explained through contact theory) the governments would be forced to collaborate as their economies would be more closely intertwined.

Lastly, another option would be to utilize digital platforms to increase cooperation between the two countries. By creating a technologically driven governance platform that transcends physical borders, it would allow Palestinians and Israelis to communicate with each other. They could both vote on matters affecting shared resources, cultural heritage, and local governance. Through the use of advanced encryption and biometric identity verification to ensure security, the platform could be a reliable medium to facilitate fruitful discourse.

Sub-topic 1: ADDRESSING the proper demarcation of Jerusalem as a place of worship

The issue of who has claim to what part of Jerusalem is still an ongoing debate. It is a point of great contention as the problem not only concerns territorial disputes but religious tensions as well. The city, revered by multiple faiths, has become a flashpoint in the Israel-Palestine conflict, with both sides laying claim to it. This friction has exacerbated the conflict, dismantled peace talks and has consequently led to significant human casualties on both sides. Thus, the resolution of this issue is crucial for the attainment of lasting peace in the region. Though it may have become cliché, implementing a two-state solution would be the best way to accommodate both sides when creating borders that both Palestine and Israel agree with. Unfortunately, the two-state solution has been proposed several times, with no real successes. However, improving discussion and communication between the two sides could lead to them being more amenable to compromise in regard to demarcating the area.

Sub-topic 2: DISCUSSING the Israeli settlements in the West Bank

Discussing the status of Palestine and its sovereignty is a crucial task in putting an end to violence in the region. Moreover, the subtopic gives delegates a chance to discuss issues that have been covered less widely by mainstream news sources whose focus is mainly on the Gaza Strip, allowing the discussions in session to take a more holistic approach on the situation between Israel and the State of Palestine. Fixing the issue would involve a myriad of factors and points of conflict being discussed. Firstly, the previously mentioned demarcation of the land would need to take place in order to justify who has the "Right to Return" (Human Rights Watch). Moreover, said right would have to be agreed on by both sides. The PLO promises that Palestinian's will be able to return to the properties they previously owed. Conversely, Israel does not recognize this right. Discussing what compensations the Palestinian people could receive in order to compensate for the loss of land.

Sub-topic 3: DECIDING whether the Palestine National Authority should be the sole legitimate political representation for Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank

There have been a plethora of problems caused because of the division between Hamas and the Palestinian National Authority. Hence, this subtopic is crucial to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine

and has a big impact on regional stability, peace talks, and international acceptance of Palestine. Bringing the representatives of the Palestinian people under one roof will surely facilitate international discussions and perhaps even help to end the conflict. Since Hamas has been the main organization behind violent protests against the Israeli government, some contend that it is unfair to hold the whole Palestinian people accountable for the attacks. By uniting the government, Palestine's acts will be attributed to a single governing authority. This could lower hostilities and lessen aggressive behavior on both sides.

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