



## Committee: Security Council

### Question of: Status of Jerusalem

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#### Introduction:

The ongoing conflict between the nation states of Israel and Palestine has existed longer than the United Nations itself. This persistent dispute primarily concerns holy cities, most notably Jerusalem, that carry extremely important significance, both religiously and symbolically, for both Muslim Arabs (in this case, Palestinians) and Jewish Israelis. Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank since its inception as a nation in 1948 only marked the beginning of an ever-expanding conflict within the region, which was simultaneously occupied and previously controlled by a considerable Arab population. This ongoing matter, however, is not limited in scope to the two countries immediately involved. As with most international quarrels, other countries have found themselves forced to ally themselves with one side, virtually dividing the world in two. The controversial determination of what state Jerusalem belongs to, however, should not merely be considered a political affair: both Israel and Palestine are suffering climbing fatalities and injuries that are beckoning a swift response to the crisis. Because of the inherent complexities that constitute the conflict, the United Nations has been hindered in its attempts to initiate effective and lasting solution on which most nations can agree upon. The goal of this Security Council conference, then, is to compose adequate resolutions that may finally mediate this devastating dispute.

#### The Issue:

##### History and Background on the Status of Jerusalem

To fully understand the question of the status of Jerusalem, it is essential to have a good understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the history of the land being disputed. The Roman Empire conquered the two Jewish kingdoms of Judea and Israel in 135 Common Era (CE), in the process removing Jews from what is today Jerusalem as well as areas in close proximity, with the territory promptly being renamed 'Palestine.' By the 7th century, however, the Arabs conquered Palestine and assimilated its inhabitants into the Muslim religion and the Arab culture, yet minorities of Jewish and Christian people still resided in Jerusalem. Until the formation of the Ottoman Empire in 1516, the area fluctuated in control because of the Crusades, but Arab empires still retained the most power during the time.

As the Zionist movement, a Jewish nationalist movement with the intent of creating and supporting a Jewish national state in Palestine, grew, many Jewish people migrated to the Holy Land and established agricultural settlements. In 1897, Theodor Herzl expanded the Zionist movement and



promoted the creation of such a state through magazines, even holding the first Zionist Congress in Switzerland in 1897. Having been preceded by centuries of anti-Semitism and persecution directed towards Jewish people, the desire for national independence heavily inspired this movement. When the British acquired Palestine from the Ottoman Empire during World War I, Zionism was so prominent that there was the creation of “Mandatory Palestine,” a geopolitical entity established in the aftermath of the war assigned to the followers of this movement by the League of Nations. As Jewish groups encouraged heavy immigration and land purchases within Palestine, the Arab inhabitants began to resist. When the resistance evolved into attacks on immigrants, the Zionists formed a couple of paramilitary organizations, including Haganah, to retaliate and protect their Jewish following. As tensions increased and it became clear that peace was not imminent, Britain resigned control of Palestine to the United Nations so that the body could investigate solutions to the conflict.

In 1947, the United Nations presented what is known as a partition plan to handle the situation in Palestine, which would separate the area into seven distinct parts and bring Bethlehem and Jerusalem under the protection and control of more than one country (a process called “internationalizing”). The Jewish population accepted this proposal, and the Haganah, despite being dismantled under British mandate, sprouted into the primary defence of the group. While Arabs and Palestinians issued a statement rejecting the 1947 Partition Plan, it was ultimately adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in November of 1947. As a result, the conflict only escalated between the two groups and a day after the state of Israel was formally recognized on May 13, 1948, a group of five Arab armies hailing from Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Egypt arranged an attack on the new country. Despite the vast resources of this medley, the Haganah (renamed the Israel Defence Force) was able to stabilize the front lines only three weeks after Israel’s War of Independence was initiated.

By 1949, every Arab nation except Iraq agreed to an armistice agreement in order to end the war. Subsequently, Israel preserved power in much of the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and Jordan, which controlled East Jerusalem and the West Bank while Egypt claimed the Gaza Strip. The city of Jerusalem, however, was carved up into separate spheres, with the Jews being prohibited from the Old City and the Western Wall. Although these were the conditions described by the new terms, significant problems emerged as these two specific sites are regarded as significant keystones of Judaism.

### [Overview of the Iranian-Palestinian Conflict](#)

Dating back to the end of the nineteenth century, the Iranian-Palestinian conflict has primarily concerned territory disputes. Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, fought between the newly declared State of Israel and a military coalition of Arab states over the control of former British Palestine, the Holy Land was subdivided into three distinct portions: the West Bank (of the Jordan River), the State of Israel, and the Gaza Strip. These initial divisions did not prove permanent, however, and successive wars produced minor changes in borders until October of 1973, during which the Yom Kippur War occurred, when Syria and Egypt launched a surprise attack on Israel because of the country’s occupation of the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula. Ultimately, the war was pacified by the Camp David Accords in 1979, which served as a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. Nevertheless, once this battle seemingly ended, another one arose as uprisings and a surge of violence sprouted from the Palestinians.

The First Intifada, or the First Palestinian Intifada, in was a Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and comprised of hundreds of thousands of people. The insurgency lasted from December 1987 until the Madrid Conference of 1991, although some claim that it continued until 1993, when the conflict was mediated through the Oslo Accords, a set of agreements between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Oslo Accords essentially constructed a framework whereby the Palestinians would be able to govern themselves while maintaining diplomatic relations between the new Palestinian Authority and Israel's established government. The chartered peace proved to be fleeting, and in 2000 the conflict was once again sparked as the Second Intifada, also regarded as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, rose inspired by continuing Palestinian grievances and produced much bloodier results. A subsequent wave of violence between the Palestinians and Israelis that took place in 2015 served as a cataclysmic event that led Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, to announce that Palestinians would no longer abide by the Oslo Accords. Since then, hostilities between the two countries have only swelled.

## Key Events

Event/Date	Explanation
British Mandate (1917-1948)	Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, British control of the area was accompanied by a sizable influx of Jewish settlers, inspired by the Zionist movement, seeking a new homeland and a haven from religious persecution. The Arab population was somewhat in a state of shock, adjusting to a reordering of society and the large migration confronting the Palestinian national movements lead by local aristocracy. Opposition to the migration fuelled several lethal riots. After World War II, in 1947, the United Nations created a partition plan in which both states could exist with Jerusalem being governed by an international body due to its contested status. The Palestinians were granted the Gaza strip and the West Banks; Israel was granted the rest.
Israel declares itself an independent state (1948)	Following the United Nations' decision, Israel accepted its new autonomy. Nevertheless, Palestine did not accept the partition plan and conflict sprouted between Israel and the Arab states of Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Syria. Once the violence was settled with a ceasefire, Israel had conquered much more land than it was originally granted, and the state began

	<p>expelling Arabs from the new territories into refugee camps. The Gaza Strip and West Bank were not controlled by Israel, yet did not receive independence from the Arab states. The former was controlled by Egypt and the latter by Jordan.</p>
<p>The Six Day War (1967)</p>	<p>This war broke out between Israel and a the Arab states of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. The Israelis managed to capture a significant amount of Arab land, including the West Bank (containing East Jerusalem), the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. Once the war ended, the Israelis declared all of Jerusalem their capital while sustaining military occupation in the other areas conquered.</p>
<p>Adoption of Resolution 424 (1967)</p>	<p>The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 242 beckoning Israel to withdraw from the territory it acquired during the war, deeming the areas unlawful. Israel ignored the resolution and more Palestinian territories were captured as their inhabitants were expelled from the lands.</p>
<p>Peace Treaty between Israel and Egypt (1979)</p>	<p>In 1979, Israel signed a peace treaty with Egypt. This treaty exchanged the conquered lands for assured safety and peace in the border regions. Once the Sinai Peninsula was restored under Arab control, Jewish settlements in the area were dismantled by the government.</p>
<p>Adoption of Resolution 446 (1979)</p>	<p>As Israel began establishing more settlements, numbering 43 in the West Bank, the Security Council responded with Resolution 446, stating that the occupation of Palestinian land composes a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and have no legal basis.</p>
<p>Adoption of Resolution 465 (1980)</p>	<p>Another UN Security Council Resolution was passed reconfirming the legal invalidity of Israel's expansion into Arab territories.</p>
<p>The Sharon Plan (1981)</p>	<p>The Israeli Government endorses "The Sharon Plan", named after Minister of Defence, Ariel Sharon, that calls for the annexation of all areas vital to Israel's security. It has not yet acted,</p>

	<p>however, but the government continued denying any peace plans that would remove captured lands from the State of Israel.</p>
<p>The Oslo Accords (1993)</p>	<p>The Oslo Accords of 1993 are signed under Yitzhak Rabin, former Prime Minister of Israel, and handled various territorial concerns but fail to address the issue of settlements.</p>
<p>The Oslo II Accords (1995)</p>	<p>The Oslo II Accords are signed in 1995, providing Palestinians with a democratic election and an opportunity to divide the West Bank and Gaza Strip into three regions. These were constituted by Area A (under full Palestinian control), Area B (also under Palestinian control but with added Israeli-Palestinian security), and Area C (with full Israeli control). However, from 1996 to 2001, all Israeli Prime Ministers would express the intention to establish more Palestinian land as Israeli in order to secure the state.</p>
<p>International Court of Justice Opinion (2004)</p>	<p>In 2004, the International Court of Justice published the <i>Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory</i> in response to Israel's construction of a "separation wall" in the West Bank, occupied Palestinian Territory. The Court declared that Israeli settlements in the lands acquired during the Six Day War were a breach of International Law and the 4th Geneva Convention.</p>
<p>Israel Disengages from Gaza Strip (2004)</p>	<p>Under former Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, Israel removed its presence from the Gaza Strip and forcibly removed remaining Jewish settlements.</p>
<p>Effects of the Disengagement Plan (2005)</p>	<p>The Disengagement Plan described above continues being carried out in 2005, as 9,480 Jewish settlers are evacuated from 21 settlements in the Northern West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, outposts established in Palestinian land without government authorization continue to grow in number.</p>
<p>Palestine is granted observer status (2012)</p>	<p>The General Assembly votes for Palestine to be</p>

	<p>granted “observer status” in the United Nations, acting as a non-member state. This is significant since it essentially served as “de facto recognition of the sovereign state of Palestine.” This was in the same year as current Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu authorized the building of more housing units in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.</p>
<p>Israel increases settlements (2013-)</p>	<p>The Israeli government rapidly expands its funding and support for increased settlements, as it claims that Palestine has encouraged violent incitements and terrorist attacks against Israel. Demolitions of Palestinian buildings reach a 5-year high.</p>
<p>The United States moves the Embassy to Jerusalem (2017)</p>	<p>United States President Donald Trump’s administration formally recognized Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel. Because Jerusalem is still contested territory, the decision was not popular in the international community. The UN Security Council held an emergency meeting following the announcement and overwhelmingly passed a resolution condemning the decision.</p>

### Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

The Oslo Accords, first signed on September 13, 1993, were the most comprehensive attempt to answer the question of the status of Jerusalem, despite only being created as an interim peace treaty. The agreement was signed by former Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) negotiator, Mahmoud Abbas. Evidently, both sides sought to achieve different outcomes from the accords. The PLO wanted to recover their control of the territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that they lost during the Six Day War. When they entered negotiations, they were under the impression that the changes would be accompanied by Jewish withdrawal, but they also hoped that it would promote economic development within poverty-stricken Palestine. The current socioeconomic state was far inferior to that of Israel, and the difference was a humiliation to Arabs. On the other hand, both parties desired a strengthened Palestinian Authority; Israel wanted this change in order to be better shielded from Palestinian terrorist attacks from groups like Hamas (which primarily occupies the Gaza strip) and the Islamic Jihad. Fear of these groups is also the reason that Israel was reluctant to return conquered land: perhaps these concessions would only provide terrorists land closer to Israel and enable attacks. Therefore, if they were to sacrifice land, they expected strong Palestinian security in exchange. Initially, the agreement worked well as Israel receded from the Gaza Strip and Jericho. Ultimately, however, the Oslo accords failed. Palestinian Authority was wary of

how willing Israel actually was to relinquish control of the areas, a belief strengthened by Israel's decision to divide the West Bank into three areas and giving Palestine control of only fifty percent rather than the agreed upon 95 percent. Israel was also preoccupied, and their doubts were confirmed. The concessions stemming from Oslo allowed more terrorists to access territory closer to Israel and violence soared as the Palestinian Authority refused to disarm terrorist groups. These events fostered a sense of mistrust between the two countries, and the Oslo Accords, which lacked an enforcement mechanism, were quickly abandoned.

Another notable attempt to resolve the issue was undertaken in 2013, when the United States tried to mediate the peace process between the two countries in the West Bank. Nevertheless, these were thwarted when Fatah, the ruling party in the Palestinian Authority, formed a unity government with its previous rival group, Hamas, in 2014.

### Possible Solutions

- An end to Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestinian territory with steps taken to ensure the safety of Israel in the face of terrorist groups
- The recognition of Palestine as an official member state in the international community as well as the United Nations in order to give the state an equal status to Israel
- International pressure for other countries to implement trade sanctions on Israel and Palestine in order to encourage more diplomatic efforts between the two countries. This may be particularly applicable to countries that have close relations to either state (as the European Union has with Israel and the Russian Federation has with Palestine).

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