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Security Council Background Guide 2026

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 National Model United Nations Washington DC Conference (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce you to your committee, the Security Council. Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staffers. This year's committee staff are: Director Smrithi Upadhyayula and Assistant Director Andrew Kirk. Smrithi is a fourth year medical student from Texas, United States of America, who has been involved with NMUN since she was in college. Her interests include science communication, film criticism, and applying emerging technologies to medical education. Andrew is in his third year of university, pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations with minors in Geography and Spanish, and he also works full time at his county's Public Defender's Office. The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretaries-General Kaytlyn Marcotte, Catherine Tomczyk, and Tobias Willms, and Secretary-General, Ashlee Rolheiser.

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict
2. The Situation in Gaza and the West Bank

The Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations which seeks to maintain international peace and security and oversees changes to the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945). Traditionally, the Security Council discusses issues related to conflict, peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions, the protection of human rights, disarmament, and humanitarian crises. However, since 2015, the Security Council has begun to increasingly focus on the intersection between sustainability, peace, and security. The Security Council is composed of five permanent members China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America and 10 non-permanent members which serve two year terms.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation should submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. ET (DC time) on 15 October 2026 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•DC Position Papers website](#).

Two resources, available to download from the NMUN website, serve as essential instruments in preparing for the conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

- The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions.
- The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for this committee, please contact Under-Secretary-General, Catherine Tomczyk, at dcusg.catherine@nmunstaff.org or the Secretary-General, Ashlee Rolheiser, at secgen.dc@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Smrithi Upadhyayula, Director
Andrew Kirk, Assistant Director



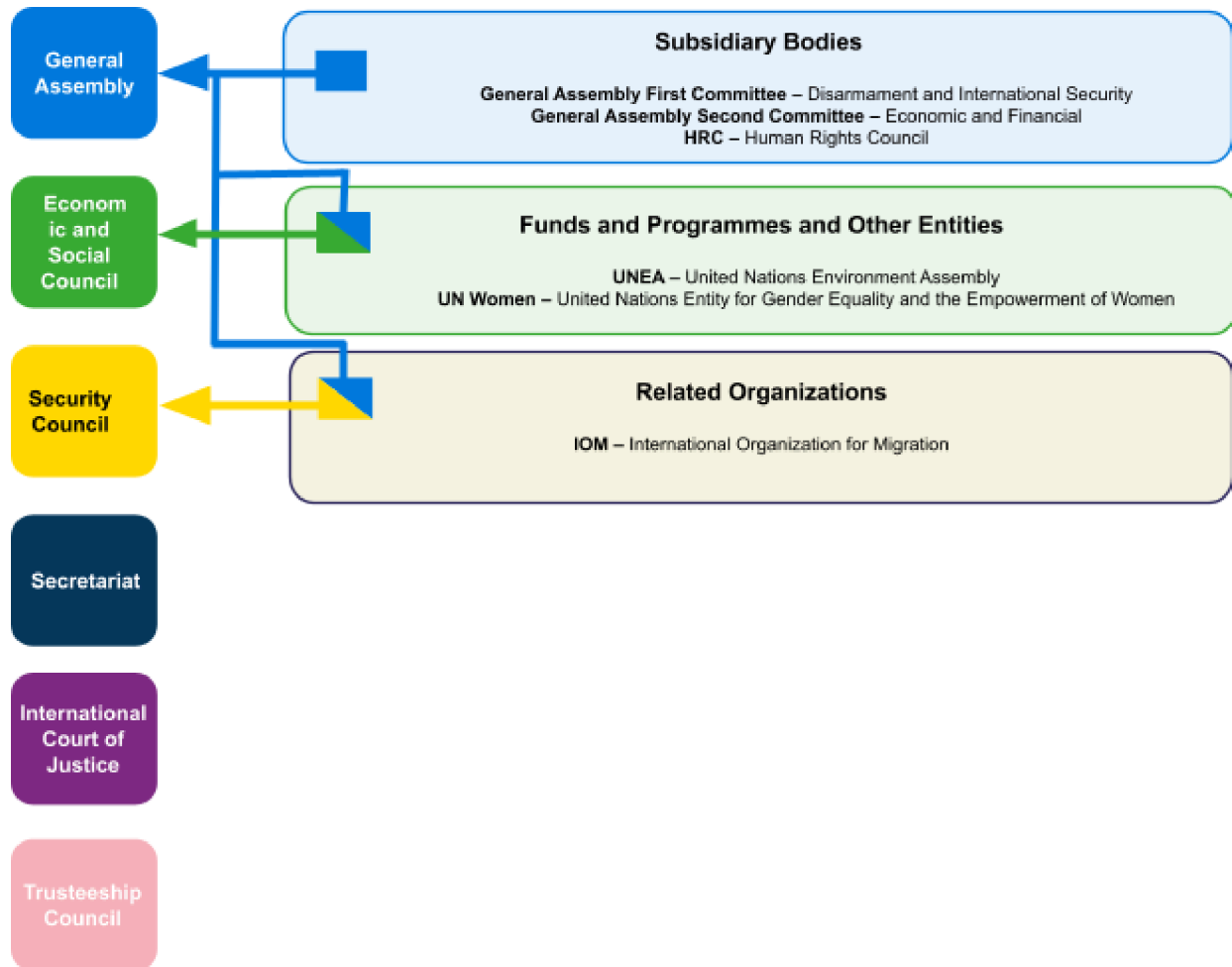
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United Nations System at NMUN•DC

This diagram illustrates the United Nations system simulated at NMUN•DC. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system to demonstrate the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee’s position, purpose, and powers within the United Nations system.





Committee Overview

Introduction

The Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations defined by the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945).¹ The Security Council seeks to maintain international peace and security and oversees changes to the Charter.² As the Security Council is the only United Nations body that can create legally binding decisions for all Member States under Chapter VII of the Charter, it has a unique and impactful mandate to set norms and govern Member State actions.³ Traditionally, the Security Council discusses issues related to conflict, peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions, the protection of human rights, disarmament, and humanitarian crises.⁴ With the 2015 adoption General Assembly resolution 70/1 on “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (2030 Agenda) by the General Assembly, the Security Council has begun to focus increasingly on the intersection between sustainability, peace, and security.⁵

Mandate, Function and Powers

The Security Council's mandate is particularly relevant with respect to the United Nations' four primary purposes, as specified in the Charter: maintaining international peace and security; developing friendly relations among Member States; cooperating in solving international problems; and promoting respect for human rights.⁶ The capabilities of the Security Council are highlighted in Chapters V-VIII of the Charter.⁷ Chapter V establishes the structure, membership, functions, and powers of the Security Council.⁸ Chapters VI and VII specifically address the range of actions that the Security Council can take when settling disputes.⁹ Chapter VI aims to settle disputes through peaceful means, such as negotiation and judicial settlement.¹⁰ Chapter VII explores further actions that can be taken regarding threats to peace, breaches of peace, and acts of aggression.¹¹ This chapter also authorizes the Security Council to implement provisional measures aimed at de-escalating conflict situations, including the deployment of peacekeeping forces and sanctions.¹² Chapter VIII allows the Security Council to call upon other regional agencies or arrangements to enforce appropriate operations and intervene if necessary.¹³

While the following list is not exhaustive, the mandate of the Security Council can be summarized as:

¹ United Nations, Security Council. *About: What is the Security Council?*. N.d.

² Ibid.

³ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. ch. VII.

⁴ Council on Foreign Relations. *The UN Security Council*. 2025; Encyclopedia Britannica. *United Nations Security Council*. 2026.

⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 9.

⁶ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. Art. 1.

⁷ Ibid. ch. V-VIII.

⁸ Ibid. ch. V.

⁹ Ibid. ch. VI-VII.

¹⁰ Ibid. ch. VI.

¹¹ Ibid. ch. VII.

¹² Ibid. ch. VII.

¹³ Ibid. ch. VIII.



- The Security Council **will generally**: make policy recommendations that are conducive to the maintenance of international peace and security; call on Member States to apply economic sanctions and measures not involving the use of force; call for arms embargoes; enforce disarmament; call upon international judicial mechanisms to become active; use diplomatic tools to investigate situations that might lead to aggression (between Member States, non-State groups, and within state territories); authorize military action against states or entities threatening international peace and security.¹⁴
- The Security Council **will not generally**: intervene and enact enforcement measures unless a threat to international peace and security can be determined; encourage the use of force unless it considers that non-military measures already taken have proven inadequate.¹⁵

Governance, Funding and Structure

The Security Council is the only United Nations body that has the power to adopt legally binding resolutions, as Article 25 of the Charter obligates Member States to accept and carry out the Council's decisions.¹⁶ The Security Council also has a variety of other tools to address issues on its agenda.¹⁷ For example, the President of the Security Council, which rotates on a monthly basis, may issue press statements or presidential statements to communicate the Council's position.¹⁸ Although not legally binding, such statements are used to bring attention to important issues and to recommend solutions to ongoing conflicts.¹⁹

The Security Council was initially composed of five permanent members and six non-permanent members.²⁰ In 1965, the number of non-permanent members was increased to 10.²¹ As the body's structure has remained largely unchanged, debates over the Security Council's efficacy and authority as a mediator on issues of international security continue.²² The five permanent members are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, often colloquially referred to as the "P5."²³ Every year, the General Assembly elects five of the 10 non-permanent members for a two-year term.²⁴

Every Member State of the Security Council has one vote.²⁵ Votes on all matters (substantive votes) require affirmative votes of nine Member States rather than a simple majority.²⁶ However, if one of the five permanent members of the Security Council casts a negative vote on a matter of substance, such as a

¹⁴ United Nations, Security Council. *Functions and Powers*. N.d.

¹⁵ United Nations, Security Council. *Actions with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression*. N.d.

¹⁶ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. Art. 25; United Nations, Security Council. *About: What is the Security Council?*. N.d.

¹⁷ Security Council Report. *The UN Security Council Handbook: A User's Guide to Practice and Procedure*. 2019. pp. 36-38.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ United Nations, Security Council. *Voting System*. N.d.

²¹ Global Policy Forum. *Background on Security Council Reform*. 2021.

²² Council on Foreign Relations. *The UN Security Council*. 2025.

²³ United Nations, Security Council. *Current Members*. N.d.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. Art. 27.

²⁶ United Nations, Security Council. *Voting System*. N.d.



draft resolution, it does not pass; this is known as a “veto.”²⁷ In the 1950s, Security Council Member States made frequent use of their capacity to veto, but its usage declined in the 1960s, rising again in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁸ In the last decades, the use of the veto power has been comparatively rare and the Security Council has adopted many resolutions by consensus, being divided on relatively few occasions.²⁹ However, the use of the veto power has increased in recent years, suggesting growing division within the Council.³⁰

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Security Council Report. *In Hindsight: The Veto*. 2013; Security Council Report. *The Permanent Members and the Use of the Veto: An Abridged History*. 2013.

²⁹ Ibid.

³³ United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Library. *UN Security Council Meetings & Outcomes Tables: Veto List*. 2026.

³⁰ Ibid.



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United Nations, Security Council. *Voting System*. N.d. Retrieved 3 May 2026 from:
<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/voting-system>



2. The Situation in Gaza and the West Bank

*"The nightmare in Gaza is more than a humanitarian crisis. It is a crisis of humanity."*¹²⁴

Introduction

Sovereignty over the Palestinian territory has been contested since the end of the British Mandate in 1948.¹²⁵ In 1947, General Assembly resolution 181 (II) entitled "Future government of Palestine" proposed dividing the territory of Palestine, bordered by Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt, into a Jewish and an Arab state.¹²⁶ In the 1967 Six-Day War, the State of Israel declared itself as the Jewish state and took control of East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank, which are now referred to as the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT).¹²⁷ Hamas, or the "Islamic Resistance Movement," arose in 1987 after the first Palestinian intifada, or uprising against Israeli control in Gaza, and has since worked toward an independent Palestinian state through managing local administration in Gaza and taking military action against Israel.¹²⁸ In 1988, the State of Palestine declared independence and claimed sovereignty over the OPT.¹²⁹ Since 2012, Palestine has been a non-voting Observer State at the United Nations, recognized by 143 of its 193 Member States.¹³⁰

On 7 October 2023, Hamas launched an attack in southern Israel and took 252 hostages, triggering a war between Israel and Palestine that has significantly worsened the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.¹³¹ Through General Assembly resolution 46/182 (1991) on the "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations," the committee defined humanitarian aid as lifesaving assistance to those affected by crises rooted in the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence.¹³² The day after the Hamas attack, Israel formally declared war against Hamas, intending to dismantle Hamas and return all hostages, citing its right to defend itself under Article 51 of the *Charter of the United Nations*.¹³³ Hamas released some hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners during November 2023 and January 2025 negotiations, but not all hostages were returned until

¹²⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *War in Gaza*. N.d.

¹²⁵ United Nations, Security Council. *The situation in the Middle East: Letter dated 7 November 1967 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Republic addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/8226) (S/RES/242 (1967))*. 1967. p. 8.

¹²⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Future government of Palestine (A/RES/181 (II))*. 1947.

¹²⁷ United Nations, Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. *History of the Question of Palestine*. N.d.

¹²⁸ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *With World Crises Much Different than Past Sessions, Legal Committee Deliberates Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, as Seventy-Ninth Session Begins*. 2024.

¹²⁹ United Nations, General Assembly, Security Council. *Letter dated 16 November 1988 from the Deputy Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/43/827-S/20278)*. 1988.

¹³⁰ United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. *Recognition of Palestine: a long history*. 2025.

¹³¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *7 October: UN experts call for end of violence and accountability after year of human loss and suffering and blatant disregard for international law*. 2024.

¹³² United Nations, General Assembly. *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182)*. 1991. p. 50.

¹³³ Council on Foreign Relations. *Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Timeline*. 2025; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.



October 2025.¹³⁴ Over 100,000 Palestinians have been killed, reported missing, or wounded in connection with this conflict, and over a million have been displaced.¹³⁵

Since the 1990s, Israel has placed security restrictions on the movement of people and goods into the OPT.¹³⁶ The entry of “dual-use” items such as construction and medical supplies and communications equipment that Israel believes could be stolen and repurposed by terror groups is restricted.¹³⁷ These items are formally listed in the *Defense Export Control Order* of 2008.¹³⁸ The list includes 56 items, such as tent poles and medical equipment, that require special approval to enter the OPT, and 61 additional items that are regulated by Israeli security forces upon entry into Gaza.¹³⁹

In the occupied West Bank, Israeli state-backed settler violence targets Bedouin and herding communities.¹⁴⁰ Israeli settlers erect outposts within these communities, restrict the locals’ access to land and water, and conduct attacks of theft, arson, and interpersonal violence to force the locals from their homes.¹⁴¹ The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reports that, since 2023, these attacks have displaced six herding communities comprising 112 families in the north Jordan Valley, and the pace of settlement expansion continues to hasten.¹⁴² Since the inception of this conflict, the Security Council has called for the sustained cessation of hostilities and endorsed a vision for the peaceful coexistence of Israel and a Palestinian state, made explicit in its resolution 1397 (2002), on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.”¹⁴³

International and Regional Framework

The modern Israeli-Palestinian conflict began in 1947 when Arab states rejected the original borders established in resolution 181 (II), deeming the allocation of more than half the territory to the Jewish minority to be unjust and unaligned with their vision of a unified Palestinian state.¹⁴⁴ In 1948, fighting broke out between Arab and Jewish communities over the proposed partition of the territory, leading to the displacement of 700,000 Palestinians from their homes and the beginning of the Palestinian refugee crisis.¹⁴⁵ Subsequent General Assembly resolutions 194 (III) (1948) on “Palestine - Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator,” and 302 (IV) (1949) on “Assistance to Palestine Refugees” became the basis for Palestinian refugee assistance by creating the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and establishing the principle of “right of return,” which is the Palestinian refugees’ right to reclaim the homes they have fled once it is safe to return.¹⁴⁶ Security Council

¹³⁴ Council on Foreign Relations. *Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Timeline*. 2025.

¹³⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Settler violence drives forced displacement in the West Bank*. 2026.

¹³⁶ Gisha - Legal Center for Freedom of Movement. *Controlled dual-use items – in English*. N.d.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Settler violence drives forced displacement in the West Bank*. 2026.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ United Nations, Security Council. *The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question (S/RES/1397 (2002))*. 2002. p. 1.

¹⁴⁴ United Nations, Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. *History of the Question of Palestine*. N.d.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. *Who We Are*. N.d.



resolution 242 (1967) on “The situation in the Middle East” was adopted after the Six-Day War and became the basis for the so-called “land for peace” diplomacy, a principle that continues to guide peace negotiations in the Middle East today and under which Israel trades occupied territory for acceptance by its Arab neighbors.¹⁴⁷

The 1995 *Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip* (Oslo II Agreement), the most recent agreement on territorial control in the OPT, divided the West Bank into three areas.¹⁴⁸ It was a follow-up to the 1993 Oslo I Declaration of Principles, which created the Palestinian Authority as an interim self-governing body for the West Bank and representative of Palestine as an Observer State at the United Nations.¹⁴⁹ This division was meant to be temporary but remains largely in effect today as “final status” talks in 2000 and 2001 failed to produce a permanent agreement.¹⁵⁰ A report of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process marking the 30th anniversary of Oslo II noted that escalating violence on the ground has stalled any further attempts at final status negotiations.¹⁵¹

The General Assembly and Security Council have adopted several resolutions focused on humanitarian pauses, access, and ceasefires in the recent Gaza war.¹⁵² Security Council resolution 2720 (2023) on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” demands that all parties facilitate aid and that all available border crossings be used for this purpose.¹⁵³ This resolution also established the UN2720 Mechanism, which is the current United Nations framework for ensuring access to essential supplies in Gaza while addressing Israeli security concerns regarding their diversion by Hamas.¹⁵⁴ Security Council resolution 2728 (2024) on the same agenda item explicitly links the cessation of hostilities with humanitarian access, underscoring that a ceasefire is a pathway to ensuring that aid can flow effectively.¹⁵⁵ Between 2023 and 2025, members of the Security Council proposed six draft resolutions calling for an unconditional ceasefire, which were vetoed by the United States, citing a failure to condemn Hamas or recognize Israel’s right to defend itself under Article 51 of the *Charter of the United Nations*.¹⁵⁶ In April 2024, the Security Council considered a draft resolution to grant full United Nations membership to Palestine, which was ultimately vetoed by the United States.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁷ United Nations, Security Council. *The situation in the Middle East: Letter dated 7 November 1967 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Republic addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/8226) (S/RES/242 (1967))*. 1967. p. 8.

¹⁴⁸ *Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip*. 1995. p. 17.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 9.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 8.

¹⁵¹ Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. *Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee - 15 September 2023*. 2023.

¹⁵² United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Security Council Requests UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid in Gaza, Adopting Resolution 2720 (2023) by Recorded Vote*. 2023; United Nations, General Assembly. *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182)*. 1991. p. 3.

¹⁵³ United Nations, Security Council. *The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question (S/RES/2720 (2023))*. 2023. p. 3.

¹⁵⁴ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Security Council Requests UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid in Gaza, Adopting Resolution 2720 (2023) by Recorded Vote*. 2023.

¹⁵⁵ United Nations, Security Council. *The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question (S/RES/2728 (2024))*. 2024. p. 1.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Security Council: US votes against resolution on Gaza ceasefire*. 2025.

¹⁵⁷ United Nations, Security Council. *Algeria: draft resolution (S/2024/312)*. 2024.



In 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) concluded that Israel's occupation of the West Bank and related policies, including settlement expansion, "violate international law and must end without delay."¹⁵⁸ According to Article 49 of the *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War* (Fourth Geneva Convention), an occupying power may not transfer portions of its civilian population into occupied territory.¹⁵⁹ The Fourth Geneva Convention also prohibits an occupying power from depriving civilians of food and medical supplies and from destroying their private property, unless necessary for military objectives.¹⁶⁰ The Human Rights Council reaffirmed that Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank are illegal under international law through its resolution 58/28 on "Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan" and that Palestinians have the right to self-determination through resolution 58/27 entitled "Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination" in April 2025.¹⁶¹ Subsequently, the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/23 on the "Admission of new Members to the United Nations," which strengthened Palestine's powers in the General Assembly.¹⁶²

In October 2025, a coalition of Member States negotiated a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip that would allow for greater humanitarian access in the area.¹⁶³ In its resolution 2803 (2025), the Security Council commended this step, established a Board of Peace as a transitional administration to facilitate the demilitarization and redevelopment of Gaza, and endorsed the *Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict*, which involves deploying a temporary International Stabilization Force to facilitate internal security in Gaza and a gradual end to the Israeli occupation.¹⁶⁴ Since the ceasefire, UNRWA reports that Israeli forces have expanded their control to 65% of the Gaza Strip and continue to conduct airstrikes and restrict access to humanitarian aid.¹⁶⁵

Role of the International System

Multiple United Nations bodies are involved in studying, reporting on, and providing aid in the context of the Gaza conflict.¹⁶⁶ The World Health Organization provides fuel, medical supplies, and operational support, coordinating targeted health programs like their routine immunization catch-up campaign in partnership with the Vaccine Alliance.¹⁶⁷ The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) tracks child

¹⁵⁸ International Court of Justice. *Summary of the Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*. 2024.

¹⁵⁹ *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War*. 1949.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (A/HRC/RES/58/27)*. 2025. p. 2.

¹⁶² United Nations, General Assembly. *Admission of new Members to the United Nations (A/RES/ES-10/23)*. 2024. p. 3.

¹⁶³ United Nations, Security Council. *The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question (S/RES/2803 (2025))*. 2025. p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. *UNRWA Situation Report #224 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, Including East Jerusalem*. 2026.

¹⁶⁶ World Health Organization. *WHO operational response and early recovery plan for the occupied Palestinian territory*. 2025; United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Humanitarian Situation Update #355 | Gaza Strip*. 2026.

¹⁶⁷ World Health Organization. *WHO operational response and early recovery plan for the occupied Palestinian territory*. 2025; World Health Organization. *UNICEF and WHO Joint Statement: Second Round of Immunization Catch-up Campaign Begins in the Gaza Strip*. N.d.



casualties and educational losses due to the conflict and has screened approximately 317,000 children for malnutrition to date.¹⁶⁸ UNRWA is the primary provider of medical, educational, and food assistance services to Palestinian refugees, serving 5.9 million registered refugees through initiatives like its shelter repair program, which funds Palestinian efforts to reconstruct their homes.¹⁶⁹ However, there has been tension between UNRWA and Israel due to allegations of UNRWA involvement in the October 2023 Hamas attack, which prompted an internal United Nations investigation that resulted in the termination of ten UNRWA staff members.¹⁷⁰ Since then, Israel has passed numerous laws to ban UNRWA or restrict its activities, hampering the flow of humanitarian aid.¹⁷¹

Several international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch (jointly with Oxfam), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, have also reported on the situation in Palestine and facilitated the release of hostages during ceasefire negotiations.¹⁷² The content of NGO reports usually reaches the Security Council through briefings of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), but the Security Council may choose to invite civil society representatives, often affiliated with an NGO or affected community, to its briefings.¹⁷³ OCHA regularly briefs the Security Council on the current humanitarian and security situation in Gaza and coordinates humanitarian action to prioritize areas of greatest need, such as those affected by famine or winter storms.¹⁷⁴ Pertinent regional bodies include the Arab League, which coordinates unified Arab positions on issues like Gaza and is a strong supporter of Palestinian statehood, UNRWA, and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, which brings together Arab nations, the European Union (EU), and other stakeholders to manage aid flows and reconstruction planning in Gaza.¹⁷⁵

Human Access and Aid Delivery

Many Gazans depend on humanitarian aid to access food, as the cost of a two-pound bag of flour has risen to over \$100 in local markets, but delivery is challenging.¹⁷⁶ OCHA reports that most households in Gaza lack sufficient access to clean water, and 29 displacement sites have experienced communicable disease outbreaks due to a shortage of sanitation supplies.¹⁷⁷ As part of the October 2025 ceasefire deal,

¹⁶⁸ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Humanitarian Situation Update #355 | Gaza Strip*. 2026.

¹⁶⁹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *UN completes investigation on UNRWA staff*. 2024; United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. *Emergency Response*. N.d.

¹⁷⁰ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *UN completes investigation on UNRWA staff*. 2024.

¹⁷¹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Israeli laws blocking UNRWA – devastating humanitarian impact for Palestinians?*. 2024.

¹⁷² The British Red Cross Society. *How is humanitarian aid getting into Gaza?*. 2026; Abdel et al. Institute for Palestine Studies. *How Amnesty and HRW's Reports Accuse Israel of Genocide in Gaza*. 2025.

¹⁷³ Security Council Report. *The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question: Briefing and Consultations*. 2025.

¹⁷⁴ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Humanitarian Situation Report | 6 March 2026*. 2026. p. 6.

¹⁷⁵ General Secretariat of the League of Arab States. *The League of Arab States*. N.d.

¹⁷⁶ Frankel. The Associated Press. *Aid flow into Gaza falls short of the ceasefire terms, Israeli figures show*. 2025.

¹⁷⁷ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Humanitarian Situation Report | 5 June 2026*. 2026.



Israel agreed to allow 600 trucks of aid into Gaza a day, but real figures from the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), the Israeli body responsible for aid coordination, have only averaged 459 trucks a day since that time.¹⁷⁸ Roadblocks to access include the destruction of supply lines and infrastructure for supply storage, an unpredictable inspection process for trucks entering Gaza, communications blackouts, and Israeli restrictions on supplies.¹⁷⁹

The Humanitarian Country Team, which consists of the heads of United Nations entities and over 200 NGOs, warned that, even after the October 2025 ceasefire, restrictions on critical materials are one of the most acute problems in Gaza.¹⁸⁰ Materials for shelters such as sandbags and aluminum bars are considered dual-use items under current Israeli regulations, leading to delivery delays that Hamas' civil defense agency claims were the cause of 11 civilian deaths from flooding and cold exposure during Storm Byron in late 2025.¹⁸¹ Bureaucratic barriers, such as a new registration process for international NGOs that revoked the licenses of 37 humanitarian organizations, left millions of dollars worth of food, medical items, hygiene materials, and shelter assistance stuck outside Gaza and unable to reach those in need.¹⁸² Throughout the recent conflict, Israel has taken several steps to prevent essential supplies from being blocked as dual-use items, such as publishing lists of pre-approved items including medical imaging machines, oxygen generators, and wheelchairs in 2023 and 2024.¹⁸³ Yet, NGOs like Physicians for Human Rights note that none of these items were on Israel's original 2008 *Defense Export Control Order* list of dual-use items, highlighting the ambiguity in what could be considered a dual-use item and the resulting difficulty in coordinating aid.¹⁸⁴

Currently, through the UN2720 Mechanism, cargo is submitted for approval by Israeli authorities via a digital platform and assigned a unique code for tracking.¹⁸⁵ UN2720 monitors from the United Nations Office for Project Services are placed at border crossings and inspection points along aid corridors, where they validate the codes to ensure only approved humanitarian cargo enters.¹⁸⁶ Once inside Gaza, UN2720 monitors track trucks to their destination via GPS to identify the sale or theft of humanitarian goods, and any entities found to be in breach of principled humanitarian action are suspended.¹⁸⁷ OCHA

¹⁷⁸ Frankel. The Associated Press. *Aid flow into Gaza falls short of the ceasefire terms, Israeli figures show*. 2025.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *UN agencies and NGOs call for immediate lifting of impediments to humanitarian access and NGO operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. 2025.

¹⁸¹ The Times of Israel. *UN: Gaza-bound shelter materials refused entry leaving displaced masses exposed*. 2025.

¹⁸² United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *UN agencies and NGOs call for immediate lifting of impediments to humanitarian access and NGO operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. 2025.

¹⁸³ Physicians for Human Rights. *FAQs: Access to Health Care Supplies and "Dual Use" Items and Restrictions*. 2025.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Briefing note: UN coordinated Plan to Resume Humanitarian Aid Deliveries to Gaza*. 2025.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.



notes that the UN2720 Mechanism does not address the issue of a physical bottleneck at Kerem Shalom and thus calls for the opening of additional entry sites to increase the rate of aid delivery.¹⁸⁸

Israel has been cooperating with the UN2720 Mechanism, but maintains that enhanced United Nations monitoring cannot come at the expense of its own security inspections.¹⁸⁹ While COGAT has worked with the database and clearance process of the Mechanism, the Israeli-affiliated Institute for National Security Studies argues that the severe tone of recent United Nations alerts on the subject may be aimed at exerting international pressure on Israel rather than providing a data-driven assessment of the humanitarian situation.¹⁹⁰ The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations called UN2720 a “step in the right direction,” but pointed out that a cessation of hostilities is essential to its full implementation.¹⁹¹

OCHA notes that maintaining the safety of aid workers is a critical challenge in Gaza.¹⁹² Multiple Hamas attacks on border crossings, such as the bombing of Kerem Shalom in May 2024 and shooting at the King Hussein crossing in September 2024, have disrupted the flow of humanitarian aid.¹⁹³ In July 2025, civilians approaching a World Food Programme convoy carrying food assistance into Gaza came under fire from Israeli tanks and snipers, endangering those providing and attempting to access aid.¹⁹⁴ According to an OCHA report, the lack of reliable communication near border crossings due to inconsistent cellular network coverage, jammed satellite phones, and outdated radio equipment creates security risks and prevents efficient aid coordination.¹⁹⁵ To mitigate these issues and increase the capacity for aid delivery, OCHA calls for civilian police protection of humanitarian transports, the opening of more border crossings and internal routes for humanitarian access, as well as the lifting of bans on key safety and logistical equipment.¹⁹⁶

OCHA's Humanitarian Assistance Plan for Gaza states that humanitarian aid alone cannot support Gaza's population of over two million, necessitating the return of private sector goods to Gaza's marketplaces.¹⁹⁷ This is supported by the 2026 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report *The cumulative economic cost of occupation for the Palestinian people (2000-2024) and the long road to*

¹⁸⁸ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *UN OCHA Humanitarian Assistance Plan for Gaza: Considerations for the delivery of humanitarian aid during a ceasefire in Gaza*. 2025.

¹⁸⁹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Security Council adopts key resolution on Gaza crisis; Russia, US abstain*. 2023.

¹⁹⁰ Caner. The Institute for National Security Studies. *Aid Under Fire: Trends and Challenges in Humanitarian Assistance to the Gaza Strip*. 2025.

¹⁹¹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Security Council adopts key resolution on Gaza crisis; Russia, US abstain*. 2023.

¹⁹² United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Considerations for the delivery of humanitarian aid during a ceasefire in Gaza*. N.d.

¹⁹³ CBS News. *Hamas attacks Israel-Gaza border crossing as cease-fire talks appear to fizzle*. 2024; Solyman. Anadolu Press. *Hamas calls Jordan border attack 'normal response' to Israeli 'crimes'*. 2024.

¹⁹⁴ World Food Program USA. *Gaza Convoy Incident WFP Statement*. 2025.

¹⁹⁵ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Considerations for the delivery of humanitarian aid during a ceasefire in Gaza*. N.d.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *UN OCHA Humanitarian Assistance Plan for Gaza: Considerations for the delivery of humanitarian aid during a ceasefire in Gaza*. 2025.



recovery, which highlights the unsustainable Palestinian dependence on foreign aid.¹⁹⁸ Olga Cherevko, OCHA spokesperson, has warned that additional checks for commercial goods entering Gaza may delay the processing of humanitarian aid when it is needed the most.¹⁹⁹ An OCHA proposal to mitigate this concern while maintaining a flow of commercial goods into Gaza is to keep humanitarian aid and private sector access physically separate, with dedicated border crossings for each.²⁰⁰

Settlements and Territorial Control

Israeli settlements are civilian communities established in territories acquired by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War that are not under Israeli sovereignty, and are rapidly expanding.²⁰¹ According to a report from the EU representative to UNRWA, Israeli settlement plans in the West Bank have increased by 250% since 2018, recently expanding into areas under Palestinian jurisdiction per the Oslo II Agreement.²⁰² This expansion has been accompanied by an increase in settler violence against Palestinians, with OCHA reporting a record 1,680 incidents of such violence in 2025.²⁰³ The past year has seen a blurring of the lines between settler and state violence; according to a February 2026 report of OHCHR, Israel has provided vehicles and weapons to so-called “settlement defense squads,” which attack Palestinians, destroy their supplies, and threaten them with further violence if they do not leave the area.²⁰⁴ In its resolution 2334 (2016) on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question,” the Security Council affirmed that Israeli settlements in the OPT have “no legal validity” and demanded that Israel cease all settlement activity.²⁰⁵ The Secretary-General provides regular reports on the implementation of this resolution to the Security Council, noting that, as of December 2025, Israel has taken no steps to comply with resolution 2334 (2016).²⁰⁶

Israel argues that Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention does not apply to its activities in the West Bank as the settlement is voluntary and the West Bank territory is technically considered “disputed,” not “occupied.”²⁰⁷ A 2024 Advisory Opinion of the ICJ addressed this argument by reiterating that Article 49 prohibits any civilian transfer, forcible or otherwise, that is facilitated by the occupying power.²⁰⁸ It additionally noted that the situation in the West Bank and Gaza meets the international legal definition of

¹⁹⁸ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *The cumulative economic cost of occupation for the Palestinian people (2000-2024) and the long road to recovery*. 2026.

¹⁹⁹ The European Sting. *Aid deprioritised as commercial goods flow into Gaza, UN warns*. 2025.

²⁰⁰ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Considerations for the delivery of humanitarian aid during a ceasefire in Gaza*. N.d.

²⁰¹ United Nations, Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. *Israeli Settlements in Gaza and the West Bank (Including Jerusalem): Their Nature and Purpose*. 1982.

²⁰² European Union, Office of the European Union Representative (West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA). *2024 Report on Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem*. 2025; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Israel's settlement expansion drives mass displacement in West Bank – UN report*. 2026.

²⁰³ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Israeli raids and settler attacks deepen humanitarian crisis in West Bank*. 2025.

²⁰⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Occupied Palestinian Territory: reporting on settlements and the occupied Syrian Golan*. 2024.

²⁰⁵ United Nations, Security Council. *The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question (S/RES/2334 (2016))*. 2016.

²⁰⁶ United Nations, Security Council. *Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) - Report of the Secretary-General (S/2025/807)*. 2025.

²⁰⁷ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Occupied Palestinian Territory: reporting on settlements and the occupied Syrian Golan*. 2024.

²⁰⁸ International Court of Justice. *Summary of the Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*. 2024.



occupation established in Article 42 of the *Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land* that are annexed to the 1907 *Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land*: being under the effective control of a foreign military power.²⁰⁹

According to a UNCTAD report to the General Assembly, movement restrictions on Palestinians have significant economic ramifications, with an estimated cumulative loss of \$50 billion to the West Bank's GDP from 2000 to 2020.²¹⁰ In February 2025, there were 247 checkpoints and 205 road gates obstructing the movement of Palestinians in the West Bank, many of which were initially established by settlers.²¹¹ Meanwhile, the annual contribution of settlements to Israel's economy is estimated at \$41 billion.²¹² The 2024 ICJ Advisory Opinion established that Member States have a legal obligation to avoid trade relations that support Israel's illegal settlements.²¹³ During its tenth emergency special session on "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory" in 2024, the General Assembly called upon Member States to cease importing products originating in Israeli settlements and to avoid arms trade with Israel when there is reasonable suspicion that the weapons would be used in the OPT.²¹⁴

There have been several multilateral efforts to implement the General Assembly's directive against supporting Israeli settlements.²¹⁵ These include an EU requirement to label products imported from Israeli settlements with their actual origin rather than as "made in Israel."²¹⁶ The EU has an arrangement with Israeli customs authorities that prevents settlement-made goods from receiving preferential tariff rates.²¹⁷ In 2024, it enacted targeted sanctions against pro-settlement Israeli ministers, violent settlers, and settler-affiliated entities.²¹⁸ Some Member States have drafted legislation to ban imports from Israeli settlements altogether.²¹⁹ At the 2025 Emergency Conference of the Hague Group, an international coalition established to hold Israel accountable for alleged violations of international law in Palestine, 30 Member States from around the world made a joint commitment to cease all arms trade with Israel and to refrain from business interests that could financially support Israeli settlements.²²⁰ However, according to

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The cost of restrictions in Area C viewed from above*. 2022.

²¹¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Thematic Report: Israel's discriminatory administration of the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem*. 2026.

²¹² United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The cost of restrictions in Area C viewed from above*. 2022.

²¹³ Francavilla. Human Rights Watch. *NGOs, Trade Unions, Call on EU to Ban Trade with Israel's Illegal Settlements*. 2025; International Court of Justice. *Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024: Case 186 - Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*. 2024.

²¹⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legal Consequences Arising from Israel's Policies and Practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Including East Jerusalem, and from the Illegality of Israel's Continued Presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (A/RES/ES-10/24)*. 2024.

²¹⁵ Obedman. Courthouse News Service. *EU acts to suspend Israel trade perks over Gaza*. 2025.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ International Humanitarian Law Centre. *One Year On, The Devastating Cost of Ignoring the ICJ's July 2024 Advisory Opinion*. 2025.

²²⁰ The Hague Group. *Inaugural Joint Statement - The Hague Group, January 31, 2025*. 2025.



a progress report from the International Humanitarian Law Centre, full compliance with the ICJ decision is still far from being a reality as many states continue with business as usual.²²¹

Conclusion

Gaza continues to depend on humanitarian aid for survival, but its delivery faces many logistical and political challenges.²²² Additionally, the expansion of Israel's settlement presence in the West Bank, with associated settler violence, has displaced entire communities in the Jordan Valley.²²³ The international community has attempted to address these issues with the UN2720 Mechanism for effective aid delivery and the 2024 General Assembly call to end economic cooperation with settlements, but the volume of aid entering Gaza remains restricted and settler violence continues at record levels.²²⁴ The October 2025 ceasefire deal saw the establishment of the Board of Peace as a transitional administration and the release of all remaining Israeli hostages, but hundreds of Palestinians have been killed since its implementation, highlighting a need for further diplomatic action to achieve true peace on the ground.²²⁵

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: What is the role of the private sector in getting goods into Gaza and how can it complement humanitarian aid? How can the Security Council increase the safety and efficiency of aid delivery while addressing Israeli security concerns? What mechanisms can be put in place to enforce the ICJ's call for Member States to cease economic cooperation with illegal Israeli settlements? What policies can individual Member States enact to avoid supporting settlement activity?

²²¹ International Humanitarian Law Centre. *One Year On, The Devastating Cost of Ignoring the ICJ's July 2024 Advisory Opinion*. 2025.

²²² Frankel. The Associated Press. *Aid flow into Gaza falls short of the ceasefire terms, Israeli figures show*. 2025.

²²³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Occupied Palestinian Territory: reporting on settlements and the occupied Syrian Golan*. 2024.

²²⁴ Frankel. The Associated Press. *Aid flow into Gaza falls short of the ceasefire terms, Israeli figures show*. 2025.

²²⁵ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Consolidate Gaza Ceasefire, Halt Escalating Violence, Settlement Activity in West Bank, Deputy Special Coordinator Tells Security Council Open Debate*. 2026.



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