

HMUN 2020

Haarlem Model United Nations

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Issue:

The issue of the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people with
a special focus on natural resources

Forum:

General Assembly 2



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Forum:	Second Committee of the General Assembly
Name:	Carlo Martin
Position:	Chair

Introduction

"The challenge of securing safe and plentiful water for all is one of the most daunting challenges faced by the world today [...] Too often, where we need water we find guns." – Ban Ki-moon, former UN Secretary General

The middle east conflict is one of the world's most complex and protracted conflicts in history, relying on religion but mostly being about land. Israel and Palestine have been fighting each other for decades and alarmingly, the victims have always been the population. Nowadays, Israel is in control of the natural resources, speaking of the occupied region. This leads to water shortage and lack of electricity in the area, arising severe humanitarian issues. Solving this issue of implementing Palestinian sovereignty without provoking new violent actions should be the committees main focus, not re-discussing the whole problem of the middle east conflict.

Especially as the United Nations is defining the access to water as a basic human right, it is each and every country's responsibility to productively and actively discuss in order to find a long-term solution. Delegates should carefully read through all the relevant documents and already established treaties regarding the issue as this topic has already been discussed and tried to solve in different ways. Therefore, the resolutions should not just consist of repetitions but furthermore present solutions to implement and protect the already set regulations and guidelines.

We should not only think about solving the political conflict around Palestinian sovereignty, but further minimize the suffering and dying of people who aren't responsible for what happened but need to bear the misery and pain caused by things out of their influence: Humans who need every help they can get.

Definition of Key Terms

Zionism

Zionism is a national movement of Jewish people wanting to re-establish a Jewish homeland in the territory of the historic state of Israel.

Intifada

The word intifada in this context refers to the two Palestinian revolts against the controlling power Israel (see timeline of events).

Gaza Strip

Gaza or the Gaza strip is a self-governing part of the Palestinian Territory on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea bordering Egypt and Israel.

West Bank

The West Bank is a landlocked territory near the Mediterranean coast of western Asia that is partly controlled by Israel and partly by Palestine and which's status has not been finally determined by the involved parties.

General Overview

The history of Palestine

There are only a few conflicts which go back in time like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict does. Originally, Palestine belonged to the Ottoman Empire. Following that, it was reigned by the British Empire and has later been embattled with Israel. The history of Palestine is elaborated in the Timeline of Events.

Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory

From 1967 on, Israel started a project establishing settlements in the Palestinian territory leading to a lot of disputes and tensions as this happened without the agreement by the Palestinian authorities. It was a strategic way to divide the area that is part of Palestine which now leads to conflicts regarding the water. The consequence of the established settlements and how they dissipated Palestine can be seen in Figure 1. These settlements are illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention which prohibits states to move their population to occupied territory. They have been condemned as illegal by numerous international organizations as well as nations. However, Israel has not yet shown any effort to change its settlement policy. Besides the aspect of the issue regarding natural resources, delegates should also focus on the Israeli settlements in general.



Figure 1: Palestine's loss of land

Water issues in Palestine

Since Palestine is divided into two separate areas, the Gaza strip and the West Bank, these need to be observed separately also due to the significant differences of water supply. In general, the water quality is much worse in the area of the Gaza strip compared to the West Bank while the amount of water is less in the West Bank.

Water consumption

Reports of the Palestinian water authority state that the average Israeli water consumption is about four times higher than the average Palestinian consumption. Palestinians consume about 72 lpcd (=liters per capita per day) while Israelis consume about 300 lpcd. Also noteworthy is that the 450,000 Israeli settlements use as much water as the entire 2.3 million Palestinian population.

Infrastructure

According to different sources, about 90% of the Palestinian people are connected to the water grid. Still in the majority of cases the water supply is often interrupted and unreliable for the local people, especially in rural areas where water supply is a much

bigger problem than in urban areas. Because of that almost every Palestinian household has at least one water cistern at their house providing them with water. The lack of water can also make the people relying on irresponsible or corrupt organizations and companies trying to exploit them.

Legal authorities controlling the water network

The general water policies are legally supposed to be the responsibility of the National Water Council, also consisting of Palestine's main ministers and the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA). The Joint Water Committee is also supposed to have influence on the decisions made on water infrastructure and supply. This sometimes worked and was the case but in other cases the Israeli army in the occupied regions mainly controlled the water supply and often suppresses the population or didn't give them enough water. The information sources and statements of the both countries involved are also really contrary so delegates should try to find out which sources and statements their country accepts and believes.

Major Parties Involved

Israel

Israel is the state occupying most of the Palestinian territories and being in constant conflict and tension with Palestine. Its history and views are explained in the report as a whole.

Palestine

Palestine in this report means the Palestinian territories consisting of the Gaza strip and the West Bank. The main representative organ for Palestine is the Palestinian Liberation Organization which is the organization holding non-member-observer state status at the UN. Its history and views are explained in the report as a whole.

The United States of America

The United States of America have largely been the main supporting nation of Israel. They have used their influence mostly uncompromised to back Israel, independently from the international laws that it had broken. In 2017, it recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. It also supplies Israel with billions of dollars in foreign aid and used its veto power in the United Nations Security Council over 40 times in the context of Israel.

The United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

The United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East is a UN organization which currently provides assistance and protection for around 5.5 million Palestinians. Its mandate has recently been renewed until 2023. The organization works to help Palestinians in numerous fields, including education, infrastructure and microfinancing.

Timeline of Key Events

1917	Palestine is being seized from the Ottoman Empire by the British.
November 2 nd 1917	The Balfour Declaration is established by the British, supporting the goal of Zionism to build a national home for the Jewish people, but pointing out that the rights of non-Jewish people should be maintained.
April 1920	San Remo Allied Powers conference grants Palestine to Britain as a mandate.
1922	Transjordan is being separated from mandate Palestine.
1939	Britain government limits Jewish immigration to 10,000 per year.
1940	The holocaust and several other anti-Semitic movements lead to a significant increase of Jewish refugees.
November 29 th 1947	UN General Assembly adopts Resolution 181 (II) also known as the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine (see Relevant UN Treaties and Events).
1947-1948	Civil War in Mandatory Palestine: Jewish and Arab communities' clashes break out after Res 181 (II) is being adopted, around 1000 people were killed, 2000 injured.
May 14 th 1948	Israeli Declaration of Independence, admitted by the UN.
1948-1949	First Arab-Israeli War: Arab armies from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq invade the former Palestinian mandate. As a consequence the State of Israel controls 60% of the area recommended for an Arab state by the Partition Plan and the territory recommended for a Jewish state, 750,000 Arabs fled or were expelled.
1956-1957	Israel together with Britain and the United Kingdom invades Egypt in the context of the Suez Crisis.
1964	Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Palestine Liberation Army is set up.
June 5 th to June 10 th 1967	Six-Day-War: Israel occupies Gaza, the entire area of West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and Sinai, Israeli settlements start getting established in these areas.

1968-1974	Tensions between the two states intensify through several violent conflicts and hostage-taking.
1974	PLO becomes internationally recognized and becomes a member of the Arab League.
1987	After increasing violence, the first Palestinian intifada starts together with the foundation of the extremist terrorist organization Hamas with its center in the Gaza strip.
1992	Israel withdraws from most of Gaza and the West Bank city of Jericho.
2001	Palestinian protest after again growing tensions lead to a new intifada.
June 2003	“Road Map” proposed by several countries, the UN and the EU seeking for an independent Palestinian state.
2006-2007	Due to many political changes and instability the Gaza strip gets under control of the Hamas and is separated from the rest of Palestine controlled by the political party Fatah.
November 2012	Palestine is accepted as a non-member observer state by the UN.
April 2014	Fatah and Hamas rebuild a unity government that had failed before.
2017	Donald Trump, President of the US, recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, leading to rekindling tensions.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

- Resolution A/RES/51/190: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources: This resolution basically tried to tackle the exact same issue by reaffirming the Palestinian people's right over their natural resources and calling for Israel not to exploit, to cause loss and depletion of or to endanger the natural resources. It failed because it was too unspecific and vague to be implemented and because the tensions and conflicts between the two parties basically interrupted the discussions about this topic.
- Generally, the issue remained a problem because the diplomatic attempts regarding it weren't covering both sides' opinion and every aspect and happened on a too regional level.

Possible Solutions

- To tackle the issue of an unequal water distribution system the whole administration of the Palestinian water resources should be re-invented and discussed to establish an institution that is accepted by both parties and that is independent.
- Delegates should also actively follow the political situation in Palestine since especially through the latest events regarding Trump's policy it got more instable again and should therefore also seek for a solution that is able to sustain political changes.
- The aspect of building a stable and loss-free water distribution system and especially its financing should also be covered by establishing funds or a regulation distributing the money that needs to be spent by the countries according to their economic power.

Appendix/Appendices

1. BBC Israel profile – a chronology of events: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29123668>
2. BBC Palestine profile – a chronology of events
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29362505>
3. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Monitoring Program
http://www.phg.org/data/files/monitoringpubs/brochoures/english_Brochure.pdf
4. Website of the Palestinian Bureau for Statistics
<http://pcbs.gov.ps/default.aspx>
5. Website of the Palestinian Water Authority
<http://pwa.ps/english.aspx>

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