# Arab league (AL)

*Hosting of Palestinian refugees*

# ***Research Report***

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*"Out of this world"*

**Forum: Arab league (AL)**

**Issue: Hosting of Palestinian refugees**

**Position: Deputy chair**

# Introduction

Since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 the Palestinian people have been in and out of conflict with the Jewish state, with many homes being made inhabitable or destroyed in the process. The establishment of Israel marked the start of the Palestinian diaspora. Over the years millions have fled to neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon, where they are sometimes forced to live in (un)official refugee camps, in less than ideal living conditions. After the attacks that transpired on the 7th of October 2023, which claimed the lives of over a thousand Israeli civilians and hundreds kidnapped, the Israeli government decided on launching a full-scale invasion of the, by Hamas controlled, Gaza-strip. The Israeli defence force (IDF) stated its goals were to "dismantle the Hamas terrorist organisations military and administrative abilities." This however put some two million civilians, living on a strip of land roughly the size of Rotterdam, in jeopardy. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians had to flee their homes to escape fighting and ended up in overcrowded refugee camps inside the Gaza-strip. This current conflict in Gaza is further enlarging the issue of where to host Palestinian refugees.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Gaza-strip:

The Gaza-strip is a small strip of land part of Palestine, currently controlled by Hamas. There is currently heavy fighting in this area and many of its inhabitants are displaced.

### West Bank:

The West-bank is the largest part of the Palestinian territories. Some three million Palestinians reside here. An estimated 871,000 refugees live in the West Bank, with a quarter of them living in 19 refugee camps.

### IDF:

The Israeli defence force (IDF). This is the army of the state of Israel and is currently in conflict with several military factions such as Hamas in the Gaza-strip, Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen.

### Hamas:

The organisation that has military and administrative control over the Gaza-strip. Some countries and organisations have deemed this organisation a terrorist organisation. This organisation is responsible for several rocket attacks on Israel and more recently the October 7th attacks. It also does not recognise the state of Israel.

### October 7th attacks:

On this date Hamas militants crossed the border into Israel and caused more than one thousand casualties and kidnapped hundreds of Israeli civilians. Israel calls this the most murderous day for Israel and the Jewish people since the Holocaust. This day was the justification for the invasion of the Gaza-strip.

### Diaspora:

This entails the spread of a certain people outside of their homeland, sometimes with force.

**British mandate of Palestine:**

Following WWI, the British established rule over the area which is currently home to Israel and Palestine. Another word for this mandate could be an *overseas territory*. It was terminated in 1948 and led to the creation of Israel and later, Palestine.

## General Overview

After the second world war the call for Jewish homeland became louder and louder and so, the newly established United Nations came to the decision to split up the British mandate of Palestine into an independent Jewish state and an independent Arab state, with Jerusalem getting a special international status. Arab leaders however, did not agree to this resolution. This led to the first violent conflict between the newly established Jewish state of Israel and the Arab population that had already called this land home for hundreds of years. Thus began the first flow of refugees escaping this conflict. As many more conflicts between the Arab Palestinian population and the newly established Jewish state erupted, the amount of refugees began to head into the millions.
The Palestinian diaspora now expands to more than six million people worldwide. Some have left Palestine and found a better, safer life abroad in countries spanning from Egypt to Canada. Not everyone in Palestine can afford to leave. That is why many still reside in unsafe and (un)official refugee camps in the countries surrounding Palestine or more recently, even in the combat-zone in the Gaza-strip. The largest share of Palestinians is found in Jordan. So many, that Palestinians now make up one fifth of the population of Jordan.

More recently another conflict broke out between Israel and Hamas inside the Palestinian Gaza-strip and hundreds of thousands are now stuck inside the Gaza-strip with no sign of times changing for the better. The Gaza-strip is a small strip of land with some 2.2 million people living there. It is one of the most densely populated areas in the world with some 6.000 persons per square kilometre. Thus the more worrying that so many lives are brought in danger by the intense urban fighting taking place between the IDF and Hamas. The Gaza-strip is sandwiched between Israel and Egypt. The largest part of that border is shared with

Israel with 59 kilometres of the total 72 kilometres. This poses an issue for the Palestinians inside the Gaza-strip, as Egypt does not officially let Palestinians through its one border crossing. Egypt is citing reasons such as not wanting to facilitate the definite expulsion of Palestinians out of the Gaza-strip and fears of becoming the new base of resistance for Hamas and dragging the war to Egyptian territory. The two border crossings into Israel have become heavily militarised, thus not accessible. The sea is also not a viable option, as Israel has set a maritime blockade.

Due to these means of access being closed it also has been difficult to bring aid to the Gaza-strip and has made this humanitarian crisis even worse. Several attempts have been made to lessen the burden on the crisis by for example, getting both parties to agree to a ceasefire and get lifesaving care to those who need it most. Many countries are trying to get aid to the Gaza-strip, for example the United States who built a pier, or delivering aid by air. Despite these attempts, the humanitarian crisis still continues with many Palestinians having no place to call home for the near future.

## Major Parties Involved

### Israel

Israel is one of the main agitators in this humanitarian crisis. The Israeli army and government are sustaining a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza-strip. The country has close ties to western countries, such as the United States, which is one of its largest weapon suppliers

### Neighbouring countries of Israel

This includes Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. These countries house the largest shares of Palestinian refugees. In Jordan this amounts to one fifth of the population. These countries have often been in conflict with the state of Israel.

### Hamas

This is the second agitator in the war in the Gaza-strip. This organisation has total military and governmental control over the Gaza-strip. They are also responsible for the October 7th

attacks on Israel. Hamas is known to have many tunnels under urban areas, which makes it hard for the IDF to avoid civilian casualties.

### United states of America

Israel's largest ally. Israel relies heavily on the United States for international support, as the United States has veto power in the UN and can block resolutions which are disadvantageous to Israel. The United States is also one of the largest weapons suppliers to Israel.

### NGO's

Non-governmental organisations are, as the name suggests, organisations that function independent of governments. Examples are the United Nations relief and works agency for Palestine refugees in the near east (UNRWA). UNRWA handles several refugee camps near Palestine. More organisations active in the aid for Palestine are Save the Children and multiple divisions of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

## Timeline of Events

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| **May 14th 1948** | Israel declares independence and the subsequent conflict between the Jewish state and Arab population. |
| **1948** | Egypt takes control of the Gaza-strip following the end of the 1948 war. |
| **1967** | Israel captured the Gaza-strip and other territories from Egypt following the Six-day war. |
| **1990s** | The Palestinian territories are given their own government. |
| **2005** | The Israeli military withdraws from the Gaza-strip. |
| **2006-2007** | The Palestinian political party Hamas wins elections and takes office in the Gaza-strip starting a blockade from both Egypt and Israel, to isolate goods and people moving in and out of the Gaza-strip. |
| **Oktober 7th 2023** | Hamas launched an attack into Israel and took some 200 hostages with them to Gaza. Subsequently Israel launched counter-strikes into Gaza. |
| **Oktober 27th 2023** | The IDF started operation Swords of Iron, their ground-invasion into Gaza. |
| **February 3th 2024** | The IDF announced their advancement to the city of Rafah. International pressure, even from the USA, discouraged an attack upon an overcrowded city such as Rafah. |

# Possible Solutions

While many solutions have been put forward since the second world war, none have yet to achieve the goal of peace and stable living conditions for everyone in the area.
One of the first solutions put forward by the United Nations was resolution 181 (II) in 1947. In this resolution the council decided on splitting up the British mandate of Palestine into both an independent Jewish and Arab state, with Jerusalem, being the most important religious city of the world, getting a special international status. Meaning no party will get total control over the city. This would give both people an independent state and hopefully resolve the Humanitarian crisis. This resolution however, while agreed on by the United Nations council, the Arab population and leaders did not agree with. Subsequently, fighting between the newly established Israeli state and the Arab population broke out. This first resolution is referenced a lot in later resolutions.

A new resolution by the UN security council has been passed on the 10th of June 2024, that calls for an immediate ceasefire between Hamas and Israel and the release of Hostages in the Gaza-strip and the safe and effective distribution of humanitarian aid throughout the Gaza-strip. It also urges to stop all hostilities between the two armies. It also emphasises the need for a two state solution.
It is difficult to put these resolution in effect, as both sides often do not adhere to the resolutions made

One solution to which can be put in effect sooner, is for the United Nations to support Neighbouring countries of  Palestine to help with the hosting of Palestinian refugees. For example setting up camps inside Egypt managed by the United Nations, to the example of the official refugee camps which are already inside Jordan. This is not a permanent solution, but will ensure the safety of the refugees for as long as the war may continue.

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