General Assembly 4

Research Report

The Question of:

The annexation of occupied territories by Israel

Throughout the issue, the annexation of the Syrian Golan Heights, the Egyptian-occupied Gaza Strip and the Jordanian-annexed West Bank including East Jerusalem will be discussed

The Committee

The fourth committee of the General Assembly, the Special Political and Decolonisation Committee was formed in 1993, merging two former committees, the Decolonization Committee and the Special Political Committee. Currently, it is dealing with a wide range of issues, such as questions related to decolonisation, effects of atomic radiation, international cooperation for peaceful uses of outer space, special political missions, peacekeeping operations and assistance to Palestine refugees. Being responsible for such various problems, the work of the committee is very diversified.

The committee's achievements in the issue of decolonisation should be highlighted. Since the creation of the United Nations in 1945, 80 former colonies gained independence with the help of the organization. However, the process of decolonisation is still not complete as there are 17 non-self-governing countries.

In the Special Political and Decolonisation Committee, a draft resolution is needed for every issue to be debated and every draft resolution is required to have one or more main submitters and co-submitters.

At this years' LEMUN, this committee is going to deal with 3 issues, such as Migration in Central America, Protecting indigenous women from violence and justice system failures and The annexation of occupied territories by Israel.

Key Terms

Annexation: If you're a big powerful country and you want to take over a smaller country, or a piece of it, you can simply occupy it with your army, a process known as annexation. It must be noted however that annexation implies the incorporation of "something" by "something". However, in the context of geopolitical maneuvers the term is usually a so called "ellipse" for territorial annexation. This refers to the incorporation of new territory into a city, province or state.

Zionism: A jewish ideology, urging for the creation and maintainance of a jewish state. It is the ideological foundation of Isreal's creation.

General Overview

Since it's creation in 1948, Israel has experienced many conflicts, therefore occupation has been a recurring phenomenon throughout it's history. As the 1967 Six Days War ended, Israel occupied territories over three times as large as its home territory. These included the Golan Heights occupied from Syria, the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip occupied from Egypt, and the West Bank occupied from Jordan.
All prominent legal authorities - including the International Court of Justice, the United Nations Security Council and Israel's own Supreme Court -- recognize the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Golan Heights as occupied territories.

West Bank:
Today's Israel was controlled by Great Britain in 1948, However, due to growing tension between Arabs and Jews, the UN cooperated with the Britain in order to split the land into two states; one being Israel for Jews, the other one being Palestine for Arabs. The jews accepted the

designations and declared independence, which led to the creation of Israel in 1948. However, the Arab states declined the UN's plan, as a consequence, they declared war on Israel. Arabs faced a massive defeat in the war with Israel. In the aftermath, Israel pushed well past the borders of the UN plan. A ceasefire line (also known as the green line) was drawn during the peace negotiations. The line was not a border however it designated the section which was being controlled by Jordan, who had taken control of the land during the 1948 Arab-Israel war. The land was named the West Bank after the Jordanians because it was located in the west of the Jordan River. The ceasefire line endured it's existence until the 1967's Six Day War. The war brought massive success to Israel, it's borders blew past the Green Line with the addition of the entire West Bank. Following the victory, Israel had 3 different plans on West Bank:

1. West Bank could be annexed and the citizens of the West Bank could be given an Israeli citizenship and voting rights
2. Israel could give the West Bank back to their enemy, Jordan
3. People of the West Bank could be given the opportunity to create their own Palestinian state

This has become a major debate in Israeli politics, since some Israelis saw this victory as a religious sign, rather than a military victory. They felt that they were meant to return to the place where a massive part of the Jewish history took place; the hills of ancient Judea and Samaria. The hills are located in and also form nearly the entire West Bank. While the government of Israel was debating what to do, Israelis began moving into the West Bank without the knowledge of the government; those civilians were named as the "settlers". They started to establish a Jewish presence in the West Bank. The amount of settlers grew day by day, until the UN issued the Resolution 446 of 22 March 1979, stating that the settlements had no legal validity and were obstructing the peace in the Middle East. Consequently, there were 2 conflicting point of views; the Israelis wanted to move to their considered homelands that they had captured in war, where they felt spiritual and historical connection with, while other countries saw this as a way of colonizing the land. Although it was considered as "illegal", Israel started to support the settler movement. As years followed by, West Bank evolved into an institutionalized part of the Israeli society.

The situation irritated the Palestinians and lead them to protest, mostly with extreme violence. With the situation becoming unsustainable, Oslo Accords were signed in the mid-90's, which is a series of agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. The declaration calls for:

A. - Israel to withdraw from Jericho and Gaza, and eventually the West Bank.
B. - Five years of limited autonomy for Palestinians in those areas.
C. - Election of Palestinian Legislative Council within nine months.
D. - Establishment of a Palestinian police force.

Basically, a Palestinian government was formed and West Bank was split into 3. Only 18% (Section A) of the West Bank was given to full Palestinian administration while 60% (Section C) of the West Bank was under full Israeli control. Furthermore, the remaining 32% (Section B) of the land was controlled by Palestinians, however Israeli army was allowed to be present.
The agreement obstructed Palestinians from growing their own economy since the land under the Israel control was rich in resources. Since the Palestinians cannot reach those resources, they are more likely to depend on external economy. The barrier had many effects on Palestinians including reduced freedoms, road closures, loss of land, increased difficulty in accessing medical and educational services in Israel, restricted access to water sources, and economic effects. Regarding the violation of freedom of Palestinians, in a 2005 report, the United Nations stated that it is difficult to overstate the humanitarian impact of the Barrier.

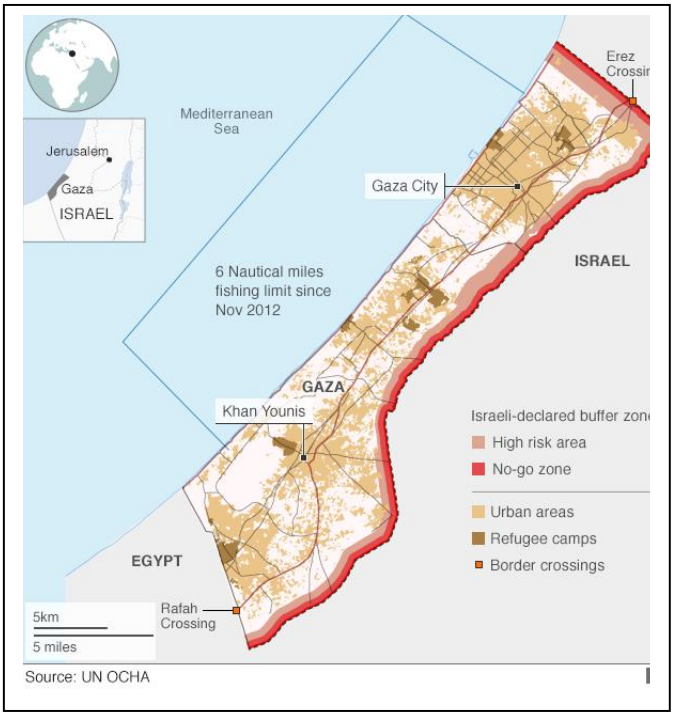
The Golan Heights:
Occupied from Syria, the Golan Heights hold a strategic position to both parties. It belongs to Syria, however Israel has the control of the land.

On its western side the Heights appear as a high cliff overlooking the north-western part of Israel and affording Syria a dominant position over Israeli villages around Lake Kinneret (the Sea of Galilee). The eastern separating line between Israel and Syria on the Golan Heights is a mere 43 km from Syria's capital of Damascus and the hilltops of the Golan Heights afford Israel good intelligence surveillance over Syrian territory. It's land is fertile and rich in water sources as well.

Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War. A ceasefire was signed on 11 June 1967 and the Golan Heights came under Israeli military administration. A ceasefire line, also known as the purple line was drawn. Ever since, it's been serving as the defacto border. Even though Syria rejected the UN Security Council Resolution of 22 November 1967 at first, on 1 May 1968, Israel had accepted Resolution 242 in a speech to the Security Council on 1 May 1968. In March 1972, Syria "conditionally" accepted Resolution 242. However in the 1973 war, Syria unsuccessfully tried to take the Golan Heights back. As a consequence, the UN established a buffer zone along the purple line in order to ensure Israeli and Syrian troops don't come into contact. In the aftermath Agreement on Disengagement between Israel and Syria was signed in May 1974. In 1981, Israel passed a law that effectively annexed it. But that move was never recognized internationally, and a United Nations Security Council resolution that year said that "the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights is null and void and without international legal effect.".
Most of the last 40 years, the Golan Heights hasn't experienced a rough conflict. However, when the Syrian Civil War started, Israel has undertaken dozens of military operations over the border. Throughout the Seven Year War, various opposition groups have been controlling the area near the border. Both of Israel's seizures of the Golan Heights and the West Bank were refused to be recognized by the UN, until President of the US, Donald Trump stated that it was time to recognize Israel's Sovereignty over the Golan Heights. Today, both Syria and Israel are still claiming the land.

Gaza Strip:

Home to 1.9 million people with one of the highest population densities in the world, Gaza is 41km long and 10km wide, an enclave bounded by the Mediterranean Sea, Israel and Egypt. Originally occupied by Egypt, the land was captured by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War. Israel withdrew its troops and settlers in 2005. It is under the Palestinian Authority and between 2007-2014 was ruled by the militant Islamist group Hamas. When Hamas took over in Gaza, Israel swiftly imposed a blockade on the territory, restricting the movement of goods and people in and out. Egypt meanwhile blockaded Gaza's southern border.

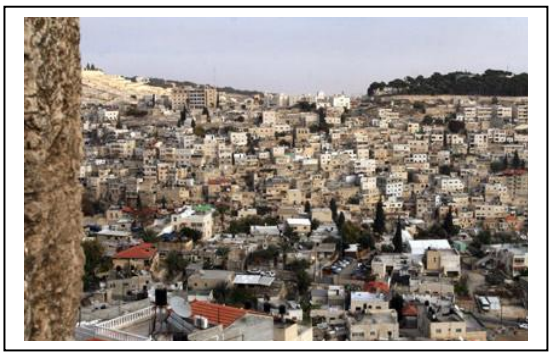


Hamas and Israel fought a brief conflict in 2014, with the Israelis attempting to end rocket fire from Gaza and the militants fighting to end their isolation. The borders has been effectively closed by Egypt since October 2014, opening it for only exceptional occasions. The territory has ben economically affected as well; Gaza is significantly poorer than it was in the 1990s. Its economy grew only 0.5% in 2017 according to a World Bank report. More than a million people in Gaza are classed as "moderately-to-severely food insecure", according to the UN, despite many receiving some form of food aid. Israeli restrictions on access to agricultural land and fishing add to the challenges.

Gazans are not allowed to farm in the Israeli-declared buffer zone. Israeli restrictions does not end here; an average Gazan get only three to six hours of electricity a day. Water resources and sanitary is in inhumane conditions as well. Due to its geographical conditions, Gaza has little rain water and no major water resource in order to replenish its underground water supplies.

East Jerusalem:

Being the capital of Israel ofter the Jerusalem Law of 1980, Jerusalem has created additional issues parallel to the question of whether or not it is occupied territory. It has been contemplated by the 1947 UN Partition Plan that Jerusalem would be an international city for at least ten years, until Jordan captured East Jerusalem including the Old City and Israel captured the West Jerusalem after the 1948 Arab-Israel War. Jordan bilaterally annexed East Jerusalem along with the rest of the West Bank in 1950 as a temporary trustee at the request of a Palestinian delegation,[641] and although the annexation was recognized by only two countries, it was not condemned by the UNSC. The British did not recognize the territory as sovereign to Jordan. Israel captured East Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War. On June 27, As mentioned, Jerusalem was declared as the capital of Israel, however the UNSC declared this action to be "null and void", furthermore the international community did not recognize Israel's sovereignty over East Jerusalem and considered it as an occupied territory.



Major Parties Involved

Israel: The State of Israel was declared in 1948, after Britain withdrew from its mandate of Palestine, the UN proposed partitioning the area into Arab and Jewish states, and Arab armies that rejected the UN plan were defeated. Israel was admitted as a member of the UN in 1949 and saw rapid population growth, primarily due to migration from Europe, Ethiopia and the Middle East, over the following years. It is located in Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Lebanon.

Jordan: Neighboring Israel, Jordan has had a complex relationship with Israel throughout history. Even though both parties signed the **Israel**–**Jordan** peace treaty of 1994, Recently, **relations** have been strained due to the conflict over the Al-Aqsa mosque. The annexation of the West Bank from Jordan is still a concerning and an unsolved issue for Jordan.

Egypt: Israel also annexed the Sinai Peninsula during the Six Day War, which was a huge part of Egypt. the Sinai Peninsula was returned to Egypt in stages beginning in 1979 as part of the Israel–Egypt Peace Treaty. As required by the treaty, Israel evacuated Israeli military installations and civilian settlements prior to the establishment of "normal and friendly relations" between it and Egypt. Since 1982, the Sinai Peninsula has not been regarded as an occupied territory.

USA: The United States has tight relationships with Israel. Long-standing U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation allows the two allies to face common threats, including terrorism and weapons proliferation. Israeli innovation in the defense and homeland security areas has helped protect American soldiers abroad and civilians at home. Former US president Bill Clinton was present

during the signings of the Oslo Accords. The US is the first country ever to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. The Trump administration has led to renewed warmth in the Israeli-American relationship, culminating in Trump's December decision to formally recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

PLO: The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established in 1964 and has been the embodiment of the Palestinian national movement. It is a political organization claiming to represent the world's Palestinians—those Arabs, and their descendants, who lived in mandated Palestine before the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. It was formed in 1964 to centralize the leadership of various Palestinian groups that previously had operated as clandestine resistance movements. It came into prominence only after the Six-Day War of June 1967, however, and engaged in a protracted guerrilla war against Israel during the 1960s, '70s, and '80s before entering into peace negotiations with that country in the 1990s.

Timeline of Events

1948 End of British Mandate (14 May)
1948 State of Israel proclaimed (14 May).
1948 Israel invaded by five Arab states (15 May).
1949 Armistice agreements signed with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon.
1949 Jerusalem divided under Israeli and Jordanian rule.
1949 Israel admitted to United Nations as 59th member.
1956 Sinai Crisis - Egypt's blockade of the Red Sea and nationalization of the Suez Canal spurs an international crisis. Israel invades Gaza and the Sinai.
1964 PLO establishment in order to liberate Palestine from Zionists
1967 Six-Day War, Arab forces build up all around Israel threatening to attack. Israel strikes first, defeats Egypt, Jordan and Syria in six days, the occupation of the Golan Heights, Sinai Peninsula, East Jerusalem, West Bank, Gaza Strip
1967 UN Resolution 242 calls for negotiated solution however Arabs reject negotiations, recognition and peace with Israel.
1979 Peace with Egypt, Israel withdraws from demilitarized Sinai Peninsula
1987-91 Riots break out in Gaza and West Bank, which is named as the FIRST INTIFADA. Israel surpassed the protests
1994 Palestine authority assumes power over some areas in Gaza and West Bank
1995 Oslo Accords
2000 Second Intifada breaks out
2002 Israel constructs barrier on West Bank in order to prevent suicide bombers to reach Israelis
2005 Withdrawal from Gaza
2006 Hamas assumed power when they won the Palestinian elections and attempts to share power with Fatah
2008-9 The Gaza War

Previous attempts to solve the issue

The United States Human Rights Commission established a panel in March 2012 in order to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem. Following the

establishment, the government of Israel ceased cooperating with the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights and boycotted the UN Human Rights Commission. In the aftermath, a report was filed by the United Nations independent "International Fact-Finding Mission on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", stating that human rights of the Palestinian people are being violated due to the settler movement and called for the government of Israel to withdraw all settlers from the West Bank immediately, otherwise it might face a case at the International Criminal Court (ICC)

Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem has not been recognized by any country. The same applies to the annexation of Gaza Strip except the recognition of the United States only.

UN Resolution 242 called for negotiated solution between Arabs and Israelis, however Arabs rejected negotiations, recognition and peace with Israel.

Oslo Accords, which is a series of agreements between Israel and the Palestinians were signed during the mid-90's, which split the West Bank into three sections.

The Future

There are different approaches to the West Bank issue when it comes to solutions. One approach states that an independent state of Palestine should be declared alongside the State of Israel, west of the Jordan River, which is the two-state solution.

The second approach, which is the three-state solution invites the State of Israel to return the control of the Gaza Strip to Egypt and the control of the West Bank to Jordan. The solution actually shares aims with the 1949 Armistice Lines

The third approach implies that Israel should annex the West Bank in its entirely and eliminate any ambition or aim in order to establish an independent Palestine. If we take the current settlers in the West Bank into consideration, Jewish majority in the future is guaranteed.

The mentioned occupied territories have been and will be a controversy for nations, however the situation of these territories are inhumane, unsustainable and desperate. An immediate solution that will satisfy the parties involved should be worked on.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer (Q.A.R.M.A.)

How can we ensure and sustain the rights of the people of the occupied territories?

Throughout history, we can obviously see that negotiation could not work in order to enlighten the issue, in what way can we satisfy both Arabs' and Israelis' aims?

There are some certain approaches in order to solve the West Bank issue, which one is more logical to implement and how can it be implemented?

How are other Middle Eastern Countries handling the conflict?

Further Reading

https://www.vox.com/2018/11/20/18079996/israel-palestine-conflict-guide-explainer

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