

# RENMUN VI

*Finding Solace in Solidarity*



March 6 – 7, 2021

**CHAIR REPORT**

Economic and Social Council

## Chair Introduction

Dear delegates,

Hey there! This is Grace Tai, your head chair for ECOSOC. I am more than honoured to be joined by Heer to be chairing you all for this conference. Apart from engaging in quality debate, I hope we all can truly enjoy ourselves in the process too. So Heer and I are here to help you if you need anything!

Hello! I'm Heer Jhaveri, your deputy chair for RENMUN VI ECOSOC and I am absolutely ecstatic for the fruitful and engaging debate that is to come. I'm hoping to create fond memories and valuable experiences that allow you to fully express your passion for MUN during the conference.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council was established in 1945. 75 years later it's still thriving. ECOSOC focuses on social issues that require effective solutions and the utmost importance. The facilitation of international cultural exchange, educational cooperation, the continuation of respect and the encouraging of those around us help us to lead better lives. This is what ECOSOC is. It's about improving the standard and quality of life. ECOSOC is a committee that strives to create change especially in the economical and social industry.

As chairs, we are looking forward to seeing your placards raised everytime you wish to ask a POI. We are highly anticipating debate that is to come, and we wish for all delegates to actively participate and enjoy committee sessions on the topics we are gathered to discuss. Please do not hesitate and feel free to contact us if you have any questions regarding the conference or the topics we will be debating. Feel free to contact us through email at Grace Tai ([sp20187491@spcc.edu.hk](mailto:sp20187491@spcc.edu.hk)) or Heer Jhaveri ([jhavehl@rchk.edu.hk](mailto:jhavehl@rchk.edu.hk))

## **The Welfare of Palestinian People in the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

The Palestinian population of around ten or eleven million people is divided between historic Palestine and a diaspora, mainly in neighbouring Arab countries. Palestinians number approximately 8 million of which 3.5 million are conflict-displaced refugees living in neighboring countries and 3.2 million are residing in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Over a million Palestinians live in their native towns and villages in present-day Israel (occupied 1948). The majority of the Palestinian people live in the Diaspora. The State of Palestine's HDI value for 2019 is 0.708 – which puts the country in the high human development category – positioning it at 115 out of 189 countries and territories, and GDP per capita in Palestine was approximately 3560 USD in 2020.

The Israeli government has continued to enforce severe and discriminatory restrictions on Palestinians' human rights, restrict the movement of people and goods into and out of the Gaza Strip, and facilitate the transfer of Israeli citizens to settlements in the occupied West Bank, an illegal practice under international humanitarian law.

Israel's twelve-year closure of Gaza, exacerbated by Egyptian restrictions on its border with Gaza, limits access to educational, economic and other opportunities, medical care, clean water and electricity for the nearly 2 million Palestinians who live there. Gaza's unemployment rate stood at 55 percent during the third-quarter of 2018, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and 80 percent of Gaza's people depend on humanitarian aid. In the first eight months of 2018, the army approved only 60 percent of permit applications from Palestinians seeking medical treatment outside Gaza. As of October 31, 2018, 44 percent of "essential" medicines were completely depleted, according to Gaza's Central Drug Store. The Israeli-dominated legal system has also led to near-100 percent conviction rate of Palestinian protesters.

Israel continued to fire live ammunition at demonstrators inside Gaza who posed no imminent threat to life, pursuant to open-fire orders from senior officials that contravene international human rights standards. According to the Palestinian rights groups and Gaza's Health Ministry, Israeli forces have killed and injured

nearly 2000 civilians with live ammunition during these protests in 2019 as of October 31.

Meanwhile, Israeli authorities destroyed Palestinian homes and other structures in 2019, the majority for lacking construction permits. Israel makes it nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain such permits in East Jerusalem or in the 60 percent of the West Bank under its exclusive control.

## Key Terms

Term	Definition
Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT)	<p>Refers to the areas occupied by Israel since 1967, namely the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.</p> 

Area A, Area B, Area C



Palestinian Authority

Also referred to as Palestinian National Authority, is the interim self-government body established following the Gaza-Jericho Agreement to govern Area A and B of West Bank. The Authority uses the name "State of Palestine" on official documents.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)

Established in 1964, it is a broad national front composed of numerous organizations of the resistance movement, political parties, popular organizations, and independent personalities and figures from various sectors. The Arab Summit in 1974 recognized the PLO as the "sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people" and since then the PLO has represented Palestine at the United Nations. The PLO has "municipal authority" over the affairs of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), while the PLO

	takes broader decisions regarding Palestinians worldwide and the status of Palestine, but holds no legal authority over internal local governance.
Zionism	An ideology and nationalist movement among the Jewish people that espouses the re-establishment of and support for a Jewish state in the territory defined as the historic Land of Israel.
Anti-Semitism	Term used to describe the prejudice or discrimination against Jews or Arabs as an ethnic, cultural or religious group. There has been a widespread misconception that the term merely designates discrimination against Jews, and yet the term Semite refers to all groups that speak Semitic languages.
Right to Self-determination	Self-government. Defined by the General Assembly with regards to the Palestinian people as “the right to self-determination without external interference; the right to national independence and sovereignty; and the right of Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they had been displaced and uprooted” - General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX).

## Background Information

### Arab-Israeli War

In November 1947 the United Nations (UN) voted to partition the British mandate of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state (see United Nations Resolution 181). Clashes broke out almost immediately between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. As British troops prepared to withdraw from Palestine, conflict continued to escalate, with both Jewish and Arab forces committing belligerences.

As a result of the war, the State of Israel controlled the area that UN General Assembly Resolution 181 had recommended for the proposed Jewish state, as well as almost 60% of the area of Arab state proposed by the 1947 Partition Plan.

Transjordan took control of the remainder of the former British mandate, which it annexed, and the Egyptian military took control of the Gaza Strip.

The conflict triggered significant demographic change throughout the Middle East. Around 700,000 Palestinian Arabs fled or were expelled from their homes in the area that became Israel, and they became Palestinian refugees. In the three years following the war, about 700,000 Jews emigrated to Israel. Around 260,000 Jews moved to Israel from the Arab world during and immediately after the war.

### **Six-Day War**

The brief war took place from June 5 to June 10, 1967, and was the third of the Arab-Israeli wars. Israel's decisive victory included the capture of the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, Old City of Jerusalem, and Golan Heights; the status of these territories subsequently became a major point of contention in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

### **Camp David Accords**

A series of agreements between Israel and Egypt signed on September 17, 1978, that led in the following year to a peace treaty between those two countries, the first such treaty between Israel and any of its Arab neighbours. Israel agreed to withdraw from Sinai, and Egypt promised to establish normal diplomatic relations between the two countries and open the Suez Canal to Israeli ships (which until then had been banned from the waterway).

However, most Arab countries, rather than following Egypt's lead, ostracized Egypt and expelled it from the Arab League. The Palestine Liberation Organization, professing to speak for the Palestinian people, also rejected the accords.

### **First Intifada**

A spontaneous popular uprising in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, after more than 20 years of military occupation. It was marked by demonstrations, boycotts, tax resistance, strikes and largely unarmed protests. It ended with the signing of the Oslo Accords.

## **Oslo Accords**

Oslo I is formally known as the Declaration of Principles (DOP). The pact established a timetable for the Middle East peace process. It planned for an interim Palestinian government in Gaza and Jericho in the West Bank.

Oslo II, officially called the Israeli–Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza, expanded on Oslo I. It included provisions for the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from six West Bank cities and about 450 towns. Additionally, the pact set a timetable for elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council.

## **Camp David II**

A summit meeting from 11 to 25 July, 2000, held with Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak, Palestinian Authority chairman Yasser Arafat, and United States president Bill Clinton. The summit ended without agreement.

## **Second Intifada**

The second Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation began on September 29 2000, two months after the failure of the Oslo Process (specifically Camp David II) and immediately following Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the politically and religiously charged Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The intifada, starting in Jerusalem and quickly spreading to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, was characterized by large demonstrations, stone-throwing, and ultimately suicide bombings. The riots were met with large-scale repression from Israeli forces, including rubber coated bullets and live ammunition, and soon thereafter, by helicopter gunships and tanks, followed later by targeted assassinations and military incursions into Area A of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

## **Potential Clashes**

### **Right of Return**

Following the 1948 war, thousands of Palestinians fled their homes as refugees, and today there are millions of Palestinians living in refugee camps. Refugees claim that they have a right of return that includes “a claim to citizenship, financial settlement and, in some cases, return to former homes and property in what is today Israel.” However, the Israeli leadership opposes this right of return in order to keep Israel a Jewish state.



## Security and Terrorism

The conflict has created a vicious cycle of fighting by both Israeli and Palestinian sides. The Israeli military occupies parts of Palestine in order to secure its borders and territory taken over the course of the Arab-Israeli wars. However, this also creates tension with Palestinians and leads to insecurity and fighting. Also, groups within Palestine have fired rockets into Israel, and one of Palestine's leading groups, Hamas, is considered a terrorist organization by the United States.

## Violation of Human Rights

Palestinian leaders have accused Israel of violating the human rights of Palestinians, starting with the Israeli occupation of Palestine to Israel's refusal to recognize the right of reply of Palestinian refugees. However, various Palestinian groups have refused to recognize Israel's right to exist. And Israeli leaders believe it is their right to preserve Israel's national security.

## Key Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Involvement with the Issue
Israel	Majority of the Israeli's in Israel still support a two state solution though many fear a wave of violence that would result from Palestine becoming a state near them. They believe that having two states is better in the long run to achieve a lasting peace and security. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the other hand announced that he would not permit a Palestinian state to be created under his watch and promised to go on building settlements. Israel also has to worry about terrorist attacks from Hamas and ISIS which deters the peace process between Palestine because they are constantly intercepting rockets from Gaza.
Palestine	Palestinians believe that Israelis have no interest in a peace agreement as they continue the expansion of the settlements, keep in place the wall on the West Bank territory with its checkpoints, maintain the strict ruling over their land

	<p>and their mosques through the presence of the Israeli troops, and limit their access to vital resources, such as water and electricity. Palestinians believe that it is just a matter of time until Israel would expand in their land to such a degree that the territory would be mostly inhabited by Israelis and very few, or no, Palestinians that wouldn't even count as a minority.</p>
Egypt	<p>Egypt was one of the first countries to support the Palestinian Declaration of Independence, and has publicly defended Israel on several occasions, to "stop the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip" under the president's supervision. It has also provided medical and other humanitarian aid to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Egypt's relationship with Israel is complex and has changed considerably over the years. Egypt refused to recognize the state of Israel until 1979, and the two countries have engaged in four wars. However, the Sisi regime has cooperated with Israel extensively. The country has overseen the import of natural gas from Israel and has cooperated on security issues, specifically in the Sinai Peninsula where Egypt faces a growing insurgency involving the Islamic State and other violent extremists.</p>
Jordan	<p>Jordan also has a peace treaty with Israel, and it is home to the largest concentration of Palestinian refugees. Additionally, it is offering full citizenship rights to Palestinians. However, Palestinians are not completely convinced of Jordan's support, considering that the Palestinians in the refugee camps live in crowded spaces and are generally poorly treated.</p>
United States of America	<p>The United States leans towards supporting Israel, as seen from its previous actions in the international community. The US quit UNESCO, accusing the global institution of "anti-Israel bias", shut down the US Consulate in Jerusalem, and a few days later, dropped the term "Occupied Territories" from its annual human rights report. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo</p>

	even duly declared that the illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem are “not, per se, inconsistent with international law.”
Iran	Iran believes that Israel is an illegitimate state, and has been a huge supporter of anti-Israeli Arab factions. Both Iran and Israel fear each other’s nuclear programs as a direct and existential threat. Throughout the years, Iran has provided military and financial support to the Axis of Resistance, formed by Hezbollah, Hamas, and Syria to oppose Israel and other pro-Israel interests in the Middle East.

## Possible Solutions

Delegates may opt for a solution where the council invites both parties to compromise, which would consist of both sides giving away a certain extent of their control over their control in order for Palestine to become an independent identity, which is temporarily governed by neutral countries. However, although this would guarantee peace and improved civilian welfare in the short term, debate will undoubtedly arise regarding the future developments of the area.

Other more specific measures can include opening borders for civilians to access humanitarian aid and ensure freedom of movement; calling for financial and humanitarian assistance of the reconstruction of infrastructure with the aims of reviving the economy and providing public service to civilians; sending observers to OPT to supervise previous agreements.

## Past Actions

In recent years, the United Nations and other international organizations have actively initiated discussions in attempting to achieve a solution.

### UN Partition Plan of 1947

Divided the land between a Palestinian and a Jewish State, with Palestine getting the totality of the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip through its resolution 181

(A/RES/181). Jerusalem was made international territory under UN jurisdiction. The border described in this plan, known as the 1947 borders, have not been followed by Israel, and are mostly disregarded as an option for peace agreements. Following this, Israel declared itself an independent state, while Palestine did not.

### **Security Council Resolution 446: (S/RES/446) 1979**

Called for an immediate cessation of all action that could change the legal or demographic status of the Arab lands acquired in 1967, determined the illegal nature of Israel's settlements in the Occupied Palestinian territories, asked Israel to abide by the 4th Geneva convention. Wasn't recognized by Israel, as they didn't deem their settlements illegal or applicable to the 4th Geneva Convention

### **Arab Peace Initiative**

The Arab Peace initiative of 2002 was a framework drafted by the Arab League that emphasizes the need for the withdrawal of Israel from all territories acquired during the 1967 war and calls for a just solution to the refugee problem. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, expressed his support of it and asked Israel to keep an open mind towards it. Because it was never accepted by Israel, the Arab Peace Initiative did not lead to a step forward in the process.

### **Quartet Road Map for Peace (2003)**

A framework proposed by the joint cooperation of the United States, the United Nations, the Russian Federation and the European Union (the Quartet) which established the basic steps towards achieving a comprehensive peace solution between Israel and Palestine through a series of gradual phases in which both parties had to take reciprocal measures. The goal of the plan was that by 2005, the parties would arrive at a comprehensive solution and there would be a Palestinian State and an Israeli state living side by side in peace. Despite the acceptance of both parties', the Road Map did not work according to the predicted deadlines, due to the parties' lack of willingness to compromise and Israel's lack of disposition to freeze and retract settlement activity. Nevertheless, it continues to be used as guidelines for potential solutions and provides a backbone for negotiations today.

## Guiding Questions

- What is your government's position on the Israel-Palestine conflict?
- What has your government done to assist either Israelis or Palestinians?
- Do Palestinian refugees live in your country?
- What is ECOSOC's view on Israel being accused of violating human rights?
- Can ECOSOC's decision affect Israel's policies? If yes, in what way?

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