



ODUMUNC 2025 Issue Brief
Fourth Committee, Special Political and Decolonization

The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination

by Jonas Bensah
Old Dominion University Graduate Program in International Studies

Introduction

The right of the Palestinian people to self determination is a deeply rooted issue with many faces that has been a key international issue for many decades. Always at the top of the global agenda, the issue was elevated by the war that began when Hatl a,d.6 (l)-2be 5 bedsling pa.6 36 (l)-6.2 (y of)-3.9 ()10.9 (t)-4.6 (he)-1.7 ()TJ 0 -1.141 TD [(P) history ofthe IsraeliPalestinian conflict, the political and legal assertions of bside, the



The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination

two separate states for Israelis and Palestinians, others are of different views on how peace and stability should be based.

The importance of this issue cannot be overstated. This issue has become very important because the lives of millions of Palestinians. The conflict does not affect just their region. It has a big impact on peace and stability across the Middle East and on international relations. The unresolved status of Palestinian territories undermines the credibility of international law and the UN's ability to mediate conflicts around the world.

The Palestinian issue became more significant because of the revolutionary and colonial legacies fundamental to many UN Member States. For the 120 Member States of the Non Aligned Movement, the UN's dominant voting bloc, rebellion against colonial rule is part of their history. Palestine is a defining issue in a broader struggle against colonialism, and for self-determination.

The Palestinian issue resonates strongly, particularly with nations that have experienced colonization, seen as part of the anti-imperial struggle. This revolutionary and colonial legacy has influenced the stance of many UN Member states, especially those from the Global

South, who see the Palestinian struggle as an extension of their own battles for sovereignty and independence. For them, the Palestinian issue is not just about a single conflict but also about upholding principles that resonate deeply.

The escalation of violence in Israel and Gaza further elevated the importance of resolving the Palestinian issue and underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive and just solution that addresses the root cause of the conflict in the context of international law. The international community has been alarmed by the humanitarian crisis in Gaza that resulted in widespread devastation and loss of life, further elevating the Palestinian issue as a priority for global peace and security.

The United Nations plays a crucial role in resolving this issue through its various bodies, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Human Rights Council. These organizations help by encouraging dialogue, guiding negotiations, and offering humanitarian aid. The UN supports various peace initiatives and works with other international organizations to promote a peaceful resolution to the conflict. However, the effectiveness of the UN's role is limited by political divisions and the complex realities.⁹

⁶ John Bluedorn and Taline Koranchelian, 2023. "Middle East Conflict Risks Reshaping the Region's Economies," IMF, December 1, 2023

<https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2023/12/01/middle-east-conflict-risks-reshaping-the-region-economies>

⁷ Made by History / Jessica Hanser, 2024. "Choosing the Right Historical Lens on the Israel-Hamas War," Time, February 1, 2024. <https://time.com/6588848/israeli-palestinian-conflict-historical-approach/>

Al Jazeera, 2023, "What Has the UN Done and Said on the Israel-Palestine Conflict?" Al Jazeera, October 25, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/25/what-the-un-done-on-the-israel-palestine-conflict>.

⁸ United Nations 2024. "Gaza Crisis: Back Two-State Solution Urges UN Chief, 'once and for All' | UN News," United Nations, January 17, 2024,

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/01/1145607>

⁹ United Nations 2023. "The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination!" United Nations December 22, 2023. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4032442> United Nations, "United Nations Charter (Full Text)," United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/fulltext>.



The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination

Background

The right to national self-determination finds its root in the broader context of decolonization and the principle of self-determination in the UN Charter. Since the 1970s, the UN consistently affirmed the Palestinian right to self-determination. For example, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in December 2023, reaffirming the rights of the Palestinian people and calling for the implementation of

two-state solution¹⁰. The resolution was supported by the majority of member states, which means a broader international agreement on the issue. In January 2024, the UN Secretary General affirmed that the two-state solution is the only way to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict¹¹. The Security Council agrees that Israeli occupation of the territories of the Palestinians, since 1967, poses a great barrier to achieving Palestinian self-determination¹².

¹⁰ United Nations, 2023 "The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination": United Nations, December 22, 2023 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4032442>

¹¹ United Nations, 2024 "Secretary-General Underscores Two-State Solution Only Way to End Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, One-State Formula Inconceivable, in Day-long Debate | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," United

Nations, January 23, 2024

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15569.doc.htm>

¹² United Nations, 2023 "Settlement Expansion in Occupied Palestinian Territory Violates International Law, Must Cease, Many Delegates Tell Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," United Nations, September 27, 2023.

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15424.doc.htm>



The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination

The Human Rights Council plays its role in the conflict. The Council adopted a resolution that underscores the need for other states to support



The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination

fearing the demise of the Jewish state. But it should be acknowledged that resolving this issue is necessary for a peaceful agreement. What should be done?

Leading Actors

Israel: Israel plays a central role as the occupying power in the conflict. And its actions and policies greatly impact the possibility of Palestinians achieving self-determination¹⁹. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his coalition government, Israel refuses to discuss the two-state solution. The government supports creation of new Jewish settlements in the West Bank and relies on military and law enforcement intervention in Palestinian territory to suppress terrorism and violent attacks.

Palestinian Authority and Hamas The PA and Hamas are the main Palestinian political parties. The PA rules the Palestinian parts of the West Bank. Until the attacks that started the war in 2023, Hamas controlled Gaza. It remains politically dominant there. The two represent Palestinian interests. But the internal division poses a significant barrier to the peace process²⁰. Resolving this internal conflict requires coordinated efforts to address the complex issues at the heart of the conflict.

¹⁸ Wikipedia, 2024. "Palestinian Right of Return,"

Wikipedia, edited August 6, 2024

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_right_of_return (i)6 (n(t_6 (r)1.71p 1 0.525 p (n)-4.6 9 0.0n())TJ EMCj E BTSpank <</MC151 9 >>E ttie,u,tetturut0202







The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination

- Membership Resolutions: On 19

December 2023, the UN General Assembly

reaffirms its support for the Palestinian cause and emphasizing the need to end the

Israeli occupation and achieve a two-state

solution based on pre-1967 borders. The

resolution calls for recognition and support

of Palestine as a full member of the UN

The General Assembly held an emergency

special session on 10/15/2023



The Right of the Palestinian People



The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination

Palestinian conflict; however, implementing the resolutions and achieving a lasting peace is a challenge due to the political realities on the ground and political divisions among member states

- Full UN Membership: The UN opens membership to all peace-loving states that accept the obligations of the UN Charter and can carry them out. The process of becoming a member involves a state applying to the UN Secretary-General, including a declaration of acceptance of the UN Charter obligations. The Security Council reviews the application and recommends it for admission with a vote of at least nine affirmative votes from the 15 members. The General Assembly then approves with a two-thirds majority vote⁴⁴
- Full Diplomatic Recognition: This is a formal acknowledgement by one state of another state's existence and sovereignty. This is especially important because it is required for the establishment of diplomatic relations and engaging in international diplomacy. The UN does not grant diplomatic recognition since this is dependent on individual states. However, UN membership often implies a level of recognition by the international community.⁴⁵
- Recognition of Sovereignty: This involves the acknowledgement of a state's supreme authority over its territory and the right to govern without external interference. This is important for a state's participation in international law and global governance.

⁴⁴ United Nations, "About UN Membership," United Nations, n.d.<https://www.un.org/en/about/about>



The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination

the settlement expansion, which it sees as the barrier to peace. The EU offers financial aid to the Palestinian Authority and supports initiatives that promote Palestinian state building and development. The policies and actions of the EU are guided by international law and UN resolutions. However, sometimes there is a divergence among the EU members on how to engage the parties resulting in different levels of support for different UN resolutions⁴⁸.

The Non-Aligned Movement is a strong supporter of the Palestinian self-determination. The NAM agrees with the establishment of a Palestinian state and frequently condemns the Israel occupation, settlement activities, and violation of international law. NAM members have been the vocal voices calling for the Palestinian right to self-determination in international gatherings and as well pushed for resolutions in the General Assembly in favor of the Palestinians. It emphasizes the adherence to international law and the undeniable rights of Palestinians, not excluding the right of return for refugees⁴⁹.

Russia supports the Palestinian self-determination and the creation of a sovereign state. Russia, as a member of the Middle East Quartet, including the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations, has been involved in mediating peace talks between Israel and Palestine. Russia has criticized Israeli

⁴⁸ EEAS, 2024 "The EU and the Middle East Peace Process," EEAS May 2, 2024



The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): The OIC is a group of Muslim majority countries that has been a great supporter of the Palestinian right to self-determination. It often issues statements condemning Israeli policies and actions in the occupied territories. It has called for international action to ensure Palestinian self-determination. The OIC also supports UN resolutions and other diplomatic efforts that affirm Palestinians' independent state.⁵⁴

African Union (AU): The African Union has consistently supported the Palestinian right to self-determination, drawing on its history of anti-colonial struggle and solidarity with people under occupation. The AU supports a two-state solution with a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel and often aligns with the Non-Aligned Movement in international votes. Many countries in Africa provide diplomatic support for Palestine in the UN and other international forums.⁵⁵

Proposals for Action: Guidance for Delegates at ODUMUNC

The UN and the international community have made efforts in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, progress has been disappointing or worse. There is more to be done. As you prepare to deliberate, write and vote on resolutions, below are some proposals and questions to consider:

Assessing the current UN engagement: This evaluates the extent of the current involvement of the UN in addressing Palestine's right-self determination.

Some questions to guide your deliberations: Has the UN already engaged on the issue? What specific actions are being taken by the UN? How effective have these actions been in supporting the Palestinian self-determination? Are there gaps in the current UN approach that need to be addressed?

Stronger questions to guide your deliberations: (e) J6 (n) 10s (

⁵⁴ Organization of Islamic Cooperation Organization of Islamic Cooperation 2022. "OIC Welcomes United Nations Resolutions on the Cause of Palestine," Organization of Islamic Cooperation, December 11, 2022, https://www.oic.org/topic/?t_id=37837&t_ref=26014&lan=en



The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination



The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination

Bibliography

Determinat aelPagiT: 4722ey



The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination



The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination

United Nations, 2022. "Israel's Illegal Occupation of Palestinian Territory, Tantamount to 'Settler



The Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination

Wikipedia, 2024. "Palestinian Self-Determination." Wikipedia, edited June 21, 2024.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_self-determination

Wikipedia, 2024. "Palestinian Right of Return." Wikipedia, edited August 6, 2024.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_right_of_return

Wikipedia, 2024. "Palestinian Authority." Wikipedia, edited August 29, 2024.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_Authority

Wikipedia, 2024. "Two-State Solution." Wikipedia, edited September 3, 2024.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two-state_solution

Wikipedia, 2024. "UNRWA." Wikipedia, edited September 3, 2024.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNRWA>