



2017 - 2018

**Model Arab League
BACKGROUND GUIDE**

Council on Palestinian Affairs

ncusar.org/modelarableague



Original draft by Jessica Meadows, Chair of the Council on Palestinian Affairs at the 2018 National University Model Arab League, with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

Honorable Delegates,

It is my privilege to be the first to welcome you to the 2017-2018 Model Arab League Council on Palestinian Affairs. My name is Jessica Meadows and I will be serving as the Chair of this Council for the National University Model Arab League conference. I am a Political Science major with a concentration in International Affairs with a minor in Arabic at Georgia State University. This will be my third year participating at this Model and my first year as a Chair at the collegiate level. Previously, I have served two terms as a chair at the annual Atlanta High School Model Arab League. I also served as the Head Delegate for the 2016-2017 Georgia State Model Arab League Team.

As a member of the Council on Palestinian Affairs, you will take on the responsibility of addressing the issues concerning the State of Palestine and the situation of the all Palestinians. It may appear at first glance that these issues only affect Palestine, however they do indeed affect the entire region. As this is not a confined issue it poses threats in many capacities to the region, which requires collective decisions and approaches to be made for a holistic resolution. The situation in Palestine is constantly evolving and requires this Council's undivided attention.

With that said, the experience you have in this council begins and ends with you. In order to have a productive council you will need to not only research your country's position in depth, but determine who your allies are on certain stances and be prepared to counter potential points in debate. I expect every delegate to imitate their state to the best of their ability and remain in line with your respective agendas the entire duration of the conference. In order for productive debate to take place, we all must remain respectful and cordial while interacting throughout the conference. I will not tolerate disruptive and disrespectful behavior as this is a mature learning environment.

I hope this background guide serves as an adequate introduction to this year's agenda for the Council for Palestinian Affairs. I wish you all the best as you begin your research and preparation for this year's various conferences and can't wait to meet you all in D.C. at Nationals!

Sincerely,

Jessica Meadows

Topic I: Devising Contingency Plans and Increasing Resiliency to Protect Palestinian Civilians and Infrastructure from Military Actions and Offensives.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

Palestinian civilians and infrastructure have been under attack by foreign military actors since the 1950's. Past efforts on behalf of the United Nations (UN), World Bank (WB) and other international institutions to develop a Palestinian contingency plan have failed to bring about a peaceful end to the conflict, often sacrificing long-term flexibility for short-term improvements which are not compatible with the evolving needs of the Palestinian people and government.

The majority of efforts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are funded by non-League states, which creates a disconnect between the creators of these initiatives and those whom the initiatives affect¹. For example, plans calling for military action disproportionately place military offensives in Gaza and the West Bank regions, which are already systematically targeted by state and sub-state violence. Meanwhile, economy-focused contingency plans tend to ignore the greater fiscal influences of the region.² In order to create a meaningful contingency plan for the Palestinian conflict, it is important that Arab states play a role, as their understanding of the Palestinian people's needs is more intimate than other states.

Finally, the protection of Palestinian civilians is a delicate but crucial issue in light of the current Israeli occupation. There has been a considerable lack of protection for Palestinian civilians since the start of the conflict, and recently the rights of Palestinian civilians have declined rapidly. According to the Human Rights Watch (HRW), an international Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) focused on achieving social justice and human rights worldwide, "Israel enforces severe and discriminatory restrictions on Palestinians' human rights, and it builds and supports unlawful settlements in the occupied West Bank."^{3,4} As such, the constant attacks on Palestine require immediate action on behalf of Palestinians and their allies in the Arab League (AL).

B. History in the Arab World

In order to understand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is important to go back to its beginning. As World War II came to a close, Palestine remained occupied by Britain, whose economy was severely affected by the war. While Jewish nationalism (Zionism) had slowly been developing in the 20th century, the tragedies of World War 2 caused a massive growth in support for the ideology. In the mid-1940s, inspired by God's words to Abraham in the Torah, a group of Zionists headed by David Ben-Gurion bought land in Palestine with the intention of creating a Jewish state. Soon, tens of thousands of Jews had immigrated to the Palestine from across Europe and the Middle East, to the chagrin of the Palestinian community and the British occupation, which were not equipped to stop the flow of immigrants. The Zionists worked to expand their settlements by driving Palestinians out of

¹ Human Rights Watch . "Israel/Palestine: Events of 2016." *Human Rights Watch*, Human Rights Watch , 12 Jan. 2017, www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/israel/palestine#73fccc.

² *Policy | The World Bank*, projects.worldbank.org/P147687?lang=en.

³ *Projects & Operations.* "Projects : Palestinian National Development Plan - Sixth Development

⁴ *Israel/Palestine.* "Human Rights Watch", www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa/israel/palestine

their homes in order to host more Jewish immigrants, and Palestinians responded violently; British forces were not equipped to mediate the conflict.

In 1947, Britain brought the conflict to the General Assembly of the United Nations, hoping for a solution. The UN met with delegates from the Jewish and Arab communities in Palestine, and worked to understand the issue. Eventually, the Council drafted a resolution which allowed Britain to withdraw from the region and Jews to continue to migrate there, and established borders dividing Jewish and Arab territories in the region: A Two-State Solution. As Jews rejoiced at the decision, Arab forces rebelled and a civil war erupted in the region. Zionists organized military attacks which forced hundreds of thousands of Arabs out of their homes in Haifa and Jaffa. On May 14, 1948, the Zionists declared the establishment of the state of Israel.

Following their declaration, The Arab-Israeli war began on 15 May 1948. Officially, the war ended one year after it began, but the reasons for the war remain present. Since 1948, the AL Member States have been heavily involved in the actions occurring in Palestine. The AL mobilized troops in Palestine in 1948, and became one of the few institutions to recognize the All-Palestine Government formed in Gaza as a legitimate governing party. In 1964, the Palestinian Government forces formed the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which is recognized by international bodies today as the governing body for the Palestinian people.

Since then, the conflict has become even more complex. Israel has significantly ratcheted up its military capabilities, thanks in part to help from the United States, and fundamentalist violence has caused even more danger to civilians. Though Palestine has continued to be an ideological priority for the Arab World, the League has not solely focused on protecting infrastructure within Palestine in order for Palestinians to have access to basic necessities, including education, healthcare, sanitation, etc. Due to the lack of attention to these needs, Palestine has often felt betrayed by its Arab allies. In addition, many Arab allies have begun to work with Israel, creating a feeling of betrayal. Egypt closed its border with Gaza and has become increasingly cordial with Israel since the fall of Mohammed Morsi, and the Gulf States have begun to co-operate with security efforts in Israel,⁵ as well as the recently signed peace treaty between and Israel.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

The League has always been passionate about the plight of the Palestinian state and its citizens; however, the League has not had any success in protecting Palestinians from military offensives against needed infrastructure in Gaza and the West Bank. Though Israel has for years, claimed that it only strikes Hamas “terrorist camps,” they have destroyed valuable infrastructure including schools, hospitals and water sanitation. In fact, water in Gaza is no longer sustainable due to the lack of infrastructure⁶. These problems are exacerbated by the continuing Israeli siege on Gaza. In the 2014 war between Israel and Gaza, 17,000 housing units were damaged or destroyed.⁷ During the ceasefire that followed,

⁵ “The Enemy of My Enemies.” *The Economist*, The Economist Newspaper, 23 July 2016, www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21702476-arab-states-warm-israel-palestinians-feel-neglected-enemy-my.

⁶ “The Water Crisis in Gaza Worsens.” *Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine*, 15 May 2017, waterjusticeinpalestine.org/blog/2017/5/15/the-water-crisis-in-gaza-worsens.

⁷ McDuffee, Allen. “Rebuilding Gaza Will Take 20 Years, Housing Group Estimates.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 30 Aug. 2014, www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/08/rebuilding-gaza-will-take-20-years-housing-group-estimates/379417/.

Gaza only received 9 percent of the total needed construction materials to rebuild. They were unable to build 250 schools needed throughout. In the West Bank, attacks on homes, mosques, schools and other Palestinian property continues to occur, as well as the displacement of hundreds of Palestinians for new settlements. In 2015, 601 people including 296 children were displaced when 481 Palestinian homes and buildings were demolished in the West Bank.⁸ These atrocities continue to persist each day for Palestinians throughout and it is time that the League properly addresses them.

This Council must seek ways to address the current issues within Palestine and provide plans for protecting Palestinians against further infrastructure loss. The League must come together to create a strong plan to aid Palestine in rebuilding lost infrastructure as well as a plan to protect it. This Council should create plans both for short-term relief for protection of current infrastructure and Palestinian citizens, as well as a long term plan to provide aid in the rebuilding of infrastructure across the West Bank and Gaza and its protection as well.

D. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How have documents and initiatives, such as the Arab Peace Initiative, failed to provide Palestine with protection from military action?
- Which contributions from the international community have been effective and what can this council take from them as it works towards a resolution?
- Is the situation in Palestine a priority to your state? Why or why not?
- What does your state and sub-region have to gain by helping protect Palestinian citizens and infrastructure from military actions?
- What compromises, if any, is your state willing to make in order to ensure the longevity of the Palestinian state?

E. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Can we utilize past methods and enhance them to resolve current and future situations?
- Is there a solution to the problem that allows member states to develop a relationship with Israel and still advocate for Palestine?
- What method is primary to tackling this issue? Economic, military presence, etc.? Why?
- How much should the League allow the international community to have an input in this decision?

⁸ "Israel/Palestine: Events of 2015." Human Rights Watch. January 27, 2016. Accessed September 12, 2017. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/israel/palestine>

IV. Additional Resources

[Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#)

United Nations optional protocol that address inhuman treatment of all persons and the procedures that should be followed to assess and intervene in such circumstance

[Israel/Palestine](#)

Human Rights Watch produced a report of all the human rights violations that occurred in Palestine in 2016. This page consists of individual briefings and data collection.

[THE 1967 AND 1973 WARS](#)

This is a chapter from a book that discusses the conflict between Israel, Palestine, and other states between the years 1967-1973. It also includes history of how Palestine's current recognized government (the PLO) was formed.

Topic II: Facilitating Cooperation between Fatah and Hamas as a Means of Delivering Humanitarian aid and Assistance to the Gaza Strip

I. Introduction

A. General Background

The history between Hamas and Fatah has always been contentious as they have many fundamentally opposing views. In 2006, Hamas defeated the Fatah party in parliamentary polls creating greater tension among the two groups.⁹ Though talks of unity governments happened over the years, they have never come to fruition. In 2011, 2012 and 2014 unity deals were signed, but they never brought about real change and stability between the two groups.¹⁰ An agreement for a unity government was reached again in January of 2017, but again has not been brought to fruition. It is important that a unity deal be reached, as the last election in which both parties were able to participate was in 2006.¹¹

The conflict between the two parties has put all Palestinian citizens in danger as it has caused violence between the two parties, prevented joint work by elected officials and prevented aid and social services from reaching the people who need it. Due to lack of unity between the two parties, Gaza suffered greatly leading to the blockade established in 2007. Lack of recognition of Hamas as a political party allowed Israel and Egypt to justify blockades on Gaza compromising nearly all routes in and out of the region. The only way to resolve the issue is to foster cooperation between Fatah and Hamas to create a strong Palestinian government representative of all Palestinians voices.

B. History in the Arab World

Hamas's presence in Gaza has always been controversial as their charter and actions toward Israel have been deemed extreme by the international community.¹² Founded in 1987, Hamas emerged as the foremost armed resistance against Israel. In the years following, Hamas employed suicide bombings and other means to fight Israeli occupation of Palestine. They have consistently denounced the Oslo Accords and many other peace agreements as they see the Israel's entire existence as an occupation.¹³

Much like Hamas, Fatah began in the 1950's as a political and military organization under Yasser Arafat and Khalil al-Wazir. In 1964, Fatah conducted its first military operation and continued to gain influence. By the end of the 1960's it took effective control of the PLO and was the largest funded organization of all the Palestinian organizations. Violence between the PLO and Israel continued until the 1993 Oslo Accords were signed and the Palestinian

⁹ "Timeline: Hamas –Fatah Conflict." Al Jazeera English. May 4, 2011. Accessed September 13, 2017. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/05/2011549435141647.html>

¹⁰ Wiener-Brohner, Danielle. "A Brief History of the Fraught Relationship between Fatah and Hamas." The Atlantic. May 14, 2014. Accessed September 13, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/04/a-brief-history-of-the-fraught-relationship-between-fatah-and-hamas/361178/>

¹¹ "Fatah and Hamas to form Unity government." Al Jazeera English. January 18, 2017. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/fatah-hamas-form-unity-government-170118031339203.html>

¹² "Foreign Terrorist Organizations." *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm.

¹³ Laub, Zachary. "Hamas." Council on Foreign Relations. August 1, 2014. Accessed September 14, 2017. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/hamas>

Authority was established.¹⁴ Fatah remained in political power until the January 2006 elections in which Hamas won the majority of the parliamentary seats.¹⁵

Though the two parties came to power under similar circumstances, conflict has erupted between the two due to largely different philosophies on approaches to Israel. In Hamas's 1988 Covenant, it stipulated that the whole of Palestine should be returned to Palestinians, with no exception, and that all peace talks to return to the 1967 borders were a waste of time.¹⁶ In contrast, Fatah has called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict since its 1989 Charter constructed in Tunis. While Hamas's new charter, proposed in May of 2017 shows a more moderate group, the rivalry between Fatah and Hamas has not subsided. Their competing approaches have continuously caused division within the two parties.

In addition to their charters, the majority of the international community dismissed Hamas as a political party. Their attacks on Israel and continued denouncement of Israel as a state has led the international community to only work with and provide aid to the Fatah led government. These two differing ideologies and the need for continued support from the international community have led to the strife and lack of compromise between Fatah and Hamas for decades.

All of the history between the two groups led to the 2017 reconciliation talks, which took place in Moscow, Russia. At the time, it seemed that major headway was being made to create a coalition government between the two parties. During the talks, Fatah and Hamas made an agreement to hold municipal elections in May. The municipal elections, the first in 10 years, were originally postponed because of a dispute about whether or not the polling should take place in the West Bank and/or the Gaza Strip. The parties decided in January that both the West Bank and Gaza would participate.¹⁷ As the time neared for voters to voice their opinion about the state of Palestinian politics, Hamas pulled out of the agreement and chose not to participate in the elections. The parties have not revisited the possibility of a coalition government.

Had Hamas chosen to participate, this would have been the first joint election since 2007 when Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip. The unity government between Hamas and Fatah is imperative to the advancement of the Palestinian cause, both locally and in the eyes of the international community. Hamas claims that it pulled out of the deal because it believes that reconciliation must take place before elections happen; Fatah believes elections are the key to reconciliation. Regardless of which is deemed correct, action must be taken for any advancement of unity between the two. The outcome of this unity affects Palestinians and their government, as well as the Arab world as a whole. The state of Palestine has been a top priority for the AL since its creation. Despite this, it is hard for Palestine to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the international community without unity from within.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of State. "The Oslo Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process." *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo.

¹⁵ "Fatah: Palestinian Political Organization." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed September 14, 2017. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Fatah>

¹⁶ Hamas. "The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement." *Hamas Covenant 1988*, Yale University, avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp.

¹⁷ Jazeera, Al. "West Bank Palestinians Vote in Local Elections." *Palestine News | Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 13 May 2017, www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/west-bank-palestinians-vote-local-elections-170513073441630.html.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

As you can see, the situation between Fatah and Hamas is a serious one that indirectly affects everyone in the region, and directly affects Palestinian civilians. The divide between Fatah and Hamas means that, in addition to Palestine's issues with Israel, its citizens suffer greatly from domestic disputes and the state's efforts to gain recognition are quickly losing legitimacy in the eyes of the international community.

With the growing tensions between Fatah and Hamas, and the League's invested interest in the State of Palestine, it is imperative that the League find a way to unite the parties. To solve this problem, it is important to consider the values of the two parties and the disputes between them.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Where does my state currently stand in relation to the conflict between the PA (Fatah) and Hamas? Does it identify more strongly with the ideology or strategy of one than the other?
- What can my state contribute to the unity of Fatah and Hamas?
- How can I use my state's culture and history, and that of other states in the League to create a compromise and unity between the two parties?
- How have international players intervened in the Fatah and Hamas conflict to date?
- What role can my state play in enforcing the rules of a proposed resolution?
- If/when unity is achieved between Hamas and Fatah, what is the next step in the region?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What are the best methods to facilitate unity between Fatah and Hamas? Why?
- How will the proposed strategy remain equitable to both parties?
- Is cooperation between the two parties the answer to getting access into Gaza? If not, what steps must take place after cooperation to get assistance and aid into Gaza?
- How will the League enforce cooperative efforts between the two parties?
- How, if at all, will the League address Hamas's role as a violent extremist organization (VEO) in the cooperation?

IV. Additional Resources

[HAMAS-FATAH RECONCILIATION](#)

This article provides a brief timeline of the creation of both Hamas and Fatah and their history up until the most recent election in May 2017.

[Fatah vs. Hamas](#)

This article contains in-depth history of the creation of both Fatah and Hamas. It also has an analysis of each organization's goals and resources from their early years. Contains links to official websites for both Hamas and Fatah.

[The Unbreakable Relationship: Hamas and the Humanitarian Aid in Gaza](#)

This article goes in depth about the struggle of getting humanitarian aid in and out of the Gaza region. It also goes over the aspects of how Gaza has become completely dependent on humanitarian aid and how Israel has intervened with humanitarian aid in Gaza.

Topic III: Securing Increased Water Access and Sanitation for Palestinians via League Channels and Negotiation with International Bodies.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

Water is a basic resource that all living things need and has been considered a basic human right by the United Nations since 2010. Though these are facts, the Palestinian people continue to not have regular access to water. This is not caused by drought, but rather the absolute control Israel has over water supplies in the region. As a result, Palestinians have struggled gain access to clean drinking water on a day-to day basis for decades.¹⁸ Israel has led the international community to believe that Palestine is a water-scarce region, which is quite the contrary. To many surprise, Ramallah has more rainfall than London.¹⁹ Israel is deliberately denying Palestinians the right to control their water resources and turning water into a tool to subdue them.

Due to the lack of water, sanitation and hygiene suffer as well since they both need water to operate. The scarcity of water in Palestine it puts hygiene on a back-burner as no water should be wasted on cleanliness, when there isn't even enough for a family to drink. Schools and health centers are often not equipped with clean toilets and washrooms. Sewage networks were already inadequate and deteriorated even more so after the Gaza war in 2014. As such, it is our responsibility and duty to create a diplomatic solution to the water crisis in Palestine, either by providing water sources from our countries to Palestine, by lobbying to provide water source access to the PA from the Israeli government, or through other means that the Council finds best.

B. History in the Arab World

Since Zionists first occupied the West Bank in 1967, Israel has maintained a monopoly over Palestinian water resources. Through discriminatory water-sharing agreements, the Israeli national water company Mekorot is able to restrict the water supply to the West Bank, causing thousands of Palestinians to become water-dependent on Israel. These agreements prevent Palestinians from developing proper water and sanitation infrastructure through illegal planning and permit. The water sharing agreements ultimately created the Joint Water Committee (JWC).²⁰ All Palestinian water projects in the West Bank require approval by JWC, where the approval rate is 56% for Palestinian projects and 100% for Israeli projects. This is because Israel has de facto veto power, and no Palestinians have sat on this committee since 2010.²¹

¹⁸ United Nations. "The Human Right to Water and Sanitation ." *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*, United Nations, 29 May 2014, www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml.

¹⁹ Hegazi, Farah. "'Ramallah Has More Rainfall Than London' But Israel's Policies Have Created Water Scarcity for Palestinians." *Muftah*, 6 Mar. 2017, muftah.org/ramallah-rainfall-london/#.WbvH5NN97BI.

²⁰ "Israel:Water as a Tool to Dominate Palestinians." News from Al Jazeera, www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/israel-water-tool-dominate-palestinians-160619062531348.html.

²¹ 8 "Palestine Sewage Crisis and Sanitation in Refugee Camps." ANERA, www.anera.org/priorities/sewage-sanitation-systems/.

In 1995 the Oslo II interim agreement was made to facilitate the mountain aquifer water resource that is equally for both Palestine and Israel, but this has not been the case.²² When the agreement was made in 1995, over 71% of the water was allocated to Israelis and Palestinians were allocated 17%. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as of 2016 Israelis receive 87% of the water while Palestinians receive a mere 13%. In the 22 years since 1995 the Palestinian population in the West Bank has doubled and their allocated water resources have decreased over time. Due to such reductions families in the West Bank end up spending 30% of their income on the purchase of water.²³

The water and sanitation issue poses an even greater threat in Gaza where only 10% of the population has access to safe drinking water compared to 90% in the West Bank.²⁴ The issue in Gaza goes beyond simply access to water, but the quality of water. Large sums of water have been pumped out of the natural aquifer underneath Gaza. In turn seawater has mixed in and made the water source too salty to drink.²⁵ Due to this Gaza has to deal with both the quantity and quality of water of nearly two-million people. The people of Gaza must solely rely on humanitarian aid that is often unreliable and restricted to get their daily drinking water.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

Lack of access to water is one of the most pertinent issues faced by Palestinians as water is a obligatory resource needed to live. To tackle this issue, the League must pull together all resources and open all avenues to help provide water resources to Palestine. It is imperative that this Council seeks methods to provide proportional access to water for both the West Bank and Gaza. In order to achieve this goal, this Council may have to make separate plans for each region. It is important for the League to find legal and permanent pathways to help develop Palestine's sanitation and sewage infrastructure and flow of clean water into and throughout both regions.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How can my state contribute to the water and sanitation crisis in Palestine?
- Are there existing frameworks and initiatives that can be applied to the State of Palestine?
- What legal capacity does Palestine have in this matter regarding Israel's control of the water resources? Can intergovernmental laws support their claims?
- How can my state and the League as a whole negotiate assistance with international bodies?

²² Black, Ian. "Water under the Bridge: How the Oslo Agreement Robbed the Palestinians." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 4 Feb. 2013, www.theguardian.com/world/on-the-middle-east/2013/feb/04/israel-palestinians-water-arafat-abbas.

²³ Bollack, Eloise. "Palestinian Villages 'Get Two Hours of Water a Week'." *News from Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 24 Oct. 2016, www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/palestinian-villages-hours-water-week-161023105150024.htm

²⁴ 10"Water Situation Alarming in Gaza." *World Bank*, www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/11/22/water-situation-alarming-in-gaza.

²⁵ Sarsak, Reem, and Mohammad N Almasri. "Seawater Intrusion into the Coastal Aquifer in the Gaza Strip: a Computer-Modelling Study." *The Lancet*, vol. 382, no. S32, 2013, doi:10.1016/s0140-6736(13)62604-5.

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How will these methods maintain water and sanitation infrastructure?
- How does this initiative improve both short term and long-term access and availability of water resources for Palestine?
- What can neighboring countries do to help elevate water scarcity? Open borders for aid?
- How are international bodies integrated into the resolution? Is what you are asking in the purview of their body

IV. Additional Resources

[THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN INTERIM AGREEMENT ON THE WEST BANK AND THE GAZA STRIP](#)

This agreement is commonly referred to as, the water-sharing agreements, which have been in effect since 1967 and prevent Palestine from developing and maintain their water infrastructure to date.

[On the Oslo II 20 years anniversary EWASH calls on the International Community and local authorities to guarantee Palestinians' water rights](#)

This document analyses the 1995 Oslo II Interim agreement that helped allocate the mountain aquifer water. It is a plea by EWASH to the international community to step in and guarantee Palestine's right to water.

[TROUBLED WATERS – PALESTINIANS DENIED FAIR ACCESS TO WATER](#)

This document is an Amnesty International report specifically on Palestinians denied access to water from 2009.

[Obstacles to Arab-Israeli peace: Water](#)

This article discusses how the Arab-Israeli dispute is a conflict about land - and maybe just as crucially the water which flows through that land.

Topic IV: Examining the Impact of the Blockade of the Gaza Strip and Negotiating its Removal, Particularly on the Egypt-Gaza Border.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

The Gaza Strip borders Israel to the North and the East, and Egypt to the South. There have been restrictions on movement in and out of Gaza since as early as the 1990's by the Israeli government, but a new blockade was imposed in 2007 when Hamas took effective control over the Strip. The current blockade restricts all movement by land, sea, and air in and out of Gaza. The blockade limits the access to resources inside the strip, and compromises the safety of those locked in Gaza.

In addition to the Israeli blockade, Egypt has imposed a blockade on the border since 2007 due to attacks by Islamist militants in the Sinai Peninsula.²⁶ In 2014, they tightened the blockade by shutting down the Rafah border. This was the last remaining opening for Palestinians to the outside world.²⁷ The blockade from both Israel and Egypt remains in place, continuing the suffering of Palestinians throughout the Gaza Strip.

B. History in the Arab World

June 2017 makes ten years since Israel began its land, sea, and air blockade of Gaza. The Israeli blockade along with restrictions by Egypt completely restricts entry or exit from the Gaza Strip. The dual border blockade makes it nearly impossible for anything or anybody to get in and out of the Gaza Strip.²⁸ The Gaza Strip has basically turned into a prison for nearly 2 million Palestinians. Due to this blockade the quality of life has significantly deteriorated. Resources such as electricity have experienced chronic deficits as fuel cannot be imported from anywhere, but Egypt and Israel have these commodities readily available. The increase in the price in fuel has caused drastic electricity shortages to the point where Gazans only have electricity for 3-5 hours a day.²⁹

Since the blockade, there have been three armed conflicts within the Gaza Strip, and these conflicts have directly impacted civilians' quality of life. Israelis have targeted civilian infrastructure, such as sanitation, electricity, homes, factories, and water in all these conflicts.³⁰ With the borders on lockdown, there is no flow of resources and aid to rebuild and maintain the infrastructure that has been destroyed. This deterioration of infrastructure is not only detrimental to Gazan quality of life, but has stifled their already crippled economy.

²⁶ "Egypt Criticized for Gaza Blockade." Middle East Policy Council. Accessed September 15, 2017. <http://mepc.org/commentary/egypt-criticized-gaza-blockade>

²⁷ Schneider, Victoria. "Egypt's siege on Gaza: 'Rafah opens only for the dead'." October 25, 2015. Accessed September 15, 2017. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/egypt-siege-gaza-rafah-opens-dead-151025092556908.html>

²⁸ "Gaza: Looming Humanitarian Catastrophe Highlights Need to Lift Israel's 10-Year Illegal Blockade." Amnesty International. Accessed September 15, 2017. www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/06/gaza-looming-humanitarian-catastrophe-highlights-need-to-lift-israels-10-year-illegal-blockade/.

²⁹ Khoury, Jack. "With Only Three Hours of Electricity a Day, Gaza Is 'on Verge of Explosion'." *Haaretz.com*, Haaretz, 9 Jan. 2017, www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/.premium-1.763586.

³⁰ Munayyer, Yousef. "What Exactly Is the Blockade of Gaza?" *Foreign Policy*, 3 June 2010, foreignpolicy.com/2010/06/03/what-exactly-is-the-blockade-of-gaza/.

Depriving any human of these basic rights to life constitutes as a human rights violation and doing such often requires intervention by the international community, however there has been very limited intervention in the case of Palestine.

Egypt has facilitated the blockade from early on by closing the Rafah border crossing, however, the removal of President Mohammed Morsi has exacerbated and intensified the closure of the Rafah border. Since 2013, the Egyptian government refuses to open the border the majority of the time due to Hamas's association with the Muslim Brotherhood and their control of the Gazan Rafah border. President Abdel Fattah Saeed Hussein Khalil el-Sisi, the current president, does not want the Muslim Brotherhood to be associated with Egypt any longer including those with ties to Hamas. Due to the disassociation, 2 million Palestinians are locked within Gaza unable to leave and without sufficient infrastructure, clean water, food and housing.³¹

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

This topic is of grave importance as many Palestinians continue to suffer under Israel's illegal blockade and the blockade of the Rafah border. The situation of Palestinians in Gaza worsens with every passing moment. The UN has continuously repeated that if the Israeli blockade is not lifted Gaza will become uninhabitable by 2020. The Arab League must seek ways to lift these blockades and come to the aid and protection of the Palestinians living within Gaza. In addition, this topic takes keen notice to specifically handling the Egypt-Gaza border. It is imperative that this council looks at means to guarantee negotiations between Egypt, Fatah, and Hamas to reopen the border.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How can my state facilitate negotiations between Egypt and Gaza?
- Does the international community need to be involved in these negotiations? If so why?
- Do ethical and human rights violation need to be brought forth if Egypt does not open the Gaza border? Should intergovernmental agencies get involved if there is inaction?
- Is Egypt abiding by the Arab Charter on Human Rights?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Who will facilitate the operations of the Rafah crossing? Does there need to be a joint task force in place to run this crossing?
- Who which states and bodies will facilitate the Egypt-Gaza border opening?
- If the border is open what rules and regulations for crossing are acceptable?

³¹ *Overview of Access of Palestinians from Gaza in 2016.* www.ochaopt.org/content/overview-access-palestinians-gaza-2016.

- What tactics will be put in place to ensure the border stays open, if an agreement is reached?

IV. Additional Resources

[Gaza Blockade](#)

This is the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs official website. On this site, they have a forum and collection of articles and data surrounding the Gaza Blockade.

[History of Israeli blockade on Gaza](#)

This article goes through the chronologically history of the Israeli blockade on Gaza until 2011, analyzes the situation, and forecast the future.

[SECURITY COUNCIL CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE, DURABLE, FULLY RESPECTED CEASEFIRE IN GAZA LEADING TO FULL WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES](#)

This document is a United Nations press release from the security council that demanded the withdrawal of Israeli forces in Gaza immediately in 2009.

[PALESTINE \(STATE OF\) 2016/2017](#)

Amnesty International produced a report on the State of Palestine for 2016/2017. It includes background of the current situation and recorded human rights violations.