



2023 - 2024

Model Arab League BACKGROUND GUIDE

Council on Palestinian Affairs

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**National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations**



Original draft by S. Feser, Chair of the Council on Palestinian Affairs at the 2024 National University Model Arab League, with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations.

Honorable Delegates,

I am honored to welcome you to the Council on Palestinian Affairs for the 2023-2024 Model Arab League season. My name is S. Feser, a student at Converse University studying Politics. This is my third year partaking in Model Arab League, with my first year participating as the delegate representing Qatar in Palestinian Affairs. Model Arab League has helped me to grow as a leader, researcher, writer, and orator. I have met many wonderful people and grown an increased understanding of the MENA region. I could not be more grateful for the experiences Model Arab League has provided me, and I hope you will love it just as much as I do.

The Council on Palestinian Affairs is unique in that its goals are all centered on supporting and uplifting the State of Palestine and its people. The challenges facing Palestine have persisted for over 75 years and have affected the lives of the Palestinians throughout multiple generations. Due to the broad impact of the challenges facing Palestine, the topics cover a variety of different areas: social, economic, defense, and more. Through your research and your time in debate, you will be able to obtain a better understanding of the conflict plaguing Palestine, develop empathy for its people, and come up with innovative solutions to its challenges. You must do this all while remaining true to the values of your country, and remaining diplomatic in the face of disagreement.

I encourage you to embrace all the experiences the Model Arab League has to offer. Model Arab League can be intimidating to both new and returning delegates, so I will give you some words of advice. Remember, this is a learning conference. Every single one of you brings your unique perspectives and skills to the table. Give your input and write on the draft resolutions. This is your opportunity to grow as a debater and leader. Remain diplomatic. You are here to find ways to serve Palestine best. Collaborate, listen, learn from each other, and compromise to find common ground. There is no such thing as too much research. This background guide serves to provide fundamental research, but much more is necessary to understand the complexity of Palestine, the Arab League, and your country's policy. Lastly, have fun. This is your time to meet new people, gain valuable experiences, and make memories to last a lifetime. Soak up every second of it.

I wish you much luck and joy in your research. I look forward to working with every one of you and seeing all the creative solutions you will bring to the table. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at Sierra.Feser@converse.edu.

All the best,

S. Feser

Topic I: Assessing ways to provide the necessary care to Palestinian orphans while working to keep them under the care of other Palestinians.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

In discussions of events with mass casualties, such as violent conflicts, or worldwide pandemics, attention is seldom given to the children that are left orphaned. There are roughly 153 million officially recognized orphaned children globally, which does not include the millions more that go unrecognized.¹ Each day, the number of orphaned children increases by an estimated 6,000.² The loss of a parent can greatly impact a child's cognitive and behavioral development, leading to issues such as poor mental health, poor academic performance, teen pregnancy, and more. Additionally, orphaned children become more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.³

The 400 million children living within areas of violent conflict and war face unimaginable victimization and hardship. These children run a higher risk of experiencing separation from their parents or orphanhood, making them even more vulnerable to the atrocities and brutality of conflict.⁴ The United Nations recognizes six grave violations against children in times of conflict which are the killing and maiming of children, recruitment into armed forces, attacks against schools and hospitals, sexual violence, abduction, and the withholding of humanitarian aid.⁵ The UN verified approximately 3,000 grave violations have occurred during the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the majority of them occurring against Palestinian children. This number includes 86 Palestinian children that were killed, 1,121 that were maimed, 134 attacks against schools and hospitals, and 1,583 instances of humanitarian aid being denied.⁶

International adoption was once considered a popular option among citizens in Western countries to not only address the issue of orphanhood, but also build their own family. However, in the past decade, more countries have begun to restrict or ban foreign adoptions to countries such as the United States. Some of these countries include China, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Russia

¹ "Orphans and Children." Islamic Relief USA, <https://irusa.org/orphans-and-children/>. Accessed 5 Aug. 2023. Nar, Cansu. 2021 *Orphan Report*. April 2021, <https://ihh.org.tr/public/publish/0/152/insamer-2021-yetim-raporu-eng-200425-n.pdf>

² "Orphans and Children." Islamic Relief USA, <https://irusa.org/orphans-and-children/>. Accessed 5 Aug. 2023.

³ Cha, Ariana Eunjung. "10.5 Million Children Lost a Parent or Caregiver Because of Covid, Study Says." *The Washington Post*, 26 Oct. 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/09/06/covid-deaths-orphans-worldwide/>

⁴ "Children in War and Conflict." UNICEF USA, <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/emergency-response/conflict>. Accessed 5 Aug 2023.

⁵ "Children Under Attack." UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/children-under-attack>. Accessed 4 Aug 2023.

⁶ "Israel and the State of Palestine." Office of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 3 Aug 2023, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/where-we-work/israel-and-state-of-palestine/>.

and South Korea. These restrictions to foreign adoption come about as concerns for the safety of these children have been raised, including kidnapping and human trafficking of children to be adopted, and also issues where foreign adoptees are later returned to their country of origin. There has been a new push to keep orphans within their home countries, surrounded by their culture and people.⁷ However, some countries lack the infrastructure and child welfare structures to do this effectively. Luckily, there are other methods for the international community to support orphans without foreign adoption. Foreign aid organizations seek to provide the necessary support to orphans and their surviving families to help children be raised in the best conditions possible while also remaining within the borders of their country. Islamic Relief USA is one such organization providing aid to not only Palestinian orphans, but also other countries within the League of Arab States and other Islamic nations⁸

B. History of the Arab World

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict managed to take the lives of many Palestinian children and their families. 2022 was marked as the deadliest year for children in the West Bank, with 34 children becoming victims of the conflict.⁹ Additionally, during the Israeli airstrikes in Gaza in May of 2021, over 60 children were discovered to have been killed.¹⁰ Children that have survived the carnage of Israeli attacks may instead find their guardians being taken from them, such as it was during the 51-day assault against Palestine in 2014 that left an additional 1,500 children orphaned.¹¹ Israel has been a force that has greatly exacerbated the instances in which Palestinian children are separated from their parents and families in other ways besides lethal force. Israel had admitted to having sent dozens of Palestinian children to Europe for adoption, primarily in the 1970s and 1980s, but some instances occurred as recently as the Oslo negotiations in the 1990s.¹² In the modern day, 500-1,000 children are detained arbitrarily every

⁷ Rahal, Sarah. "Agency's move to stop foreign adoptions leaves few options in Michigan." *The Detroit News*, 13 Feb. 2020, <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2020/02/12/agencys-move-bar-foreign-adoptions-leaves-few-options-michigan/4654654002/>.

⁸ "Orphans and Children." Islamic Relief USA, <https://irusa.org/orphans-and-children/>. Accessed 3 Sep. 2023.

⁹ "2022 Becomes the Deadliest Year for Palestinian Children in the West Bank in over 15 years - Save the Children." *Save the Children*, 23 Nov 2023, <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/2022-becomes-deadliest-year-palestinian-children-west-bank-over-15-years-save-children>.

¹⁰ "Death toll rises to 60 as more Palestinian children's bodies pulled from rubble." *Defense for Children International Palestine*, 17 May 2021, https://www.dci-palestine.org/death_toll_rises_to_60_as_more_palestinian_children_s_bodies_pulled_from_rubble.

¹¹ O'Toole, Megan. "The orphans of Gaza." *Al Jazeera*, 15 Jan 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/1/8/the-orphans-of-gaza>.

¹² "Israel Accused of Smuggling Muslim Palestinian Children for Adoption in Europe." Palestine Return Centre, 22 Dec 2019, <https://prc.org.uk/en/news/911/israel-accused-of-smuggling-muslim-palestinian-children-for-adoption-in-europe>.

year by Israel. These children have reported experiencing physical, emotional, and sexual abuse during their detention, sometimes as a method of extracting information.¹³

Orphans are increasingly susceptible to violations of their safety and human rights that many Palestinian children experience. The demolition of Palestinian homes leads to feelings of helplessness among children, displaces them from their community, and disrupts the families and their lives.¹⁴ Palestine finds importance in educating the youth, with 94% of young children being enrolled in school. Even still, barriers such as the blockades, Israel's bombing of schools, and the overall lack of safety and necessary infrastructure hinder students from attending school or enjoying a secure learning environment. By the time students are of secondary school age, 22% of boys and 7% of girls have dropped out.¹⁵ Meanwhile, underage marriage remains rather high, with 21% of girls and 2% of boys under the age of 18 being married.¹⁶ Access to basic necessities, including food, remains inconsistent, especially for the 36% of Palestinians who live in poverty.¹⁷ Children without parents or caregivers will often find themselves more vulnerable to burdens and disparities facing Palestinians.

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

Providing protection and care for Palestinian orphans means tackling the issues that endanger numerous Palestinian children. Many of the children within Palestine come to age in a world of danger, uncertainty, and oppression. Experiencing brutality such as the raids and attacks of Israeli troops, the demolition of housing, and the other restrictions and disruptions caused by the occupation has led to an estimated 90% of children both orphaned and otherwise that are constantly experiencing trauma. Additionally, 53% of children within Palestine meet the criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder.¹⁸ Being so surrounded by death and destruction has resulted in some children being unable to envision a purpose or future for themselves beyond death and resistance to Israeli occupation. This has brought about a trend of children wanting to become

¹³ Stripped, Beaten, and Blindfolded: New Research Reveals Ongoing Violence and Abuse of Palestinian Children Detained by Israeli Military." *Save the Children*, 10 July 2023, <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/stripped-beaten-and-blindfolded-new-research-reveals-ongoing-violence-and-abuse-palestinian>.

¹⁴ "Palestinian Children Displaced Again and Again | Israeli authorities repeatedly demolish Palestinian community in the northern Jordan Valley." *Defense for Children International Palestine*, 8 April 2021, https://www.dci-palestine.org/israeli_authorities_repeatedly_demolish_palestinian_community_displacing_dozens_of_children.

¹⁵ "Education and adolescents | Working to ensure that all Palestinian children and adolescents grow up in a safe environment and have access to quality basic education." UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/sop/what-we-do/education-and-adolescents>. Accessed 4 Aug. 2023.

¹⁶ "Fact-sheet Regarding Early Marriage in The Gaza Strip." Aisha Association for Woman and Child Protection, 30 December 2020, <https://aisha.ps/en/statistics/35>.

¹⁷ "Palestinian economy reels under COVID-19 impact, enduring poverty and unemployment." UNCTAD, 14 Sep. 2022, <https://unctad.org/news/palestinian-economy-reels-under-covid-19-impact-enduring-poverty-and-unemployment>.

¹⁸ Ahmed, Kamran. "Trauma and mental health in Gaza." *Al Jazeera*, 14 June 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/6/14/trauma-and-mental-health-in-gaza>.

martyrs. Educators and mental health professionals have worked to provide Palestinian children with a sense of purpose and hope. Some teachers try to keep their students busy even while not at school to distract them from the desolation that surrounds them. Investments in the arts provide an avenue where children can express their emotions through creative means. However, these adults are unable to shield the youth from the conflict. Additionally, it is hard to inspire optimism within children when many adults have lost hope as well.¹⁹

Other things to consider are not only orphans whose parents have died but also children of unknown parentage. Stigma surrounds children of unknown parentage, as there is often the inference that these children were born outside of marriage. Although these circumstances are not the fault of the child, they still face ostracization and discrimination. Some of the most psychologically impacting consequences of being a child of unknown parentage are the bullying and harassment received from peers. Upon entering adulthood, the stigma of being from an unknown parentage can hinder job opportunities.²⁰

Orphans and children of unknown parentage within Palestine are more likely to face homelessness, psychosocial difficulties, and behavioral disturbances. However, the risk of these issues occurring diminishes if the parentless child is raised within a loving family, given a well-rounded education, and treated with the same dignity as children with parents.²¹ Although some efforts are made to assist these children, many improvements must be made. Some orphanages do exist, but they cannot care for all the unhoused children and only take the ones most in need. Additionally, many of the children within orphanages are not parentless or without families, but rather, are in a situation where the parents are simply unable to care for their children.²² The Ministry of Social Affairs within Gaza makes efforts to help provide financial assistance to the families of orphans and children of unknown parentage to avoid more children becoming homeless.²³ Despite the stigma attached to parentless children, more Palestinian adults

¹⁹ Pietromarchi, “Virginia. Why do some Palestinian teens in Jenin dream of ‘martyrdom?’” *Al Jazeera*, 14 June 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/14/why-do-some-palestinian-teens-in-jenin-dream-of-martyrdom>.

²⁰ Jalal, Rasha Abou. “Palestinian orphans suffer discrimination | The tribal nature of Palestinian society frowns upon abandoned children whose parents are unknown.” *Al-Monitor*, 25 April 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2014/04/palestine-foundlings-suffer-discrimination.html>

²¹ Al-Louh, Omar. “The most recent case was a few months ago.. 160 children of unknown parentage in the Strip | The news of the foundlings in “Gaza” defied the circumstances, married into prestigious families.” *Palestine Today Agency*, 28 Sept 2013, <https://paltoday.ps/ar/post/179177/%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B8%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%81>.

²² O’Toole, Megan. “The orphans of Gaza.” *Al Jazeera*, 15 Jan 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/1/8/the-orphans-of-gaza>.

²³ Al-Louh, Omar. “The most recent case was a few months ago.. 160 children of unknown parentage in the Strip | The news of the foundlings in “Gaza” defied the circumstances, married into prestigious families.” *Palestine Today Agency*, 28 Sept 2013, <https://paltoday.ps/ar/post/179177/%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B8%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%81>.

are seeking to adopt. However, parents face legal obstructions to changing a child's last name to their new family's name. The word "Mawla," meaning under the guardianship, will appear after the child's first name, denoting that the child is adopted. This legally binds the child as someone with unknown parentage, making them prone to face such discrimination.²⁴

The Palestinian Authority remains ill-equipped to best address the needs of orphans and other vulnerable children. The Israeli occupation and raids are barriers to the Palestinian Authority's ability to provide the necessary care to vulnerable Palestinian children. However, international organizations have largely stepped in to provide orphans and other children with much needed aid. The United Nations Relief Work Agency, in collaboration with Islamic Relief USA, helps to provide orphans, disabled children, and other youth and their families with necessary resources.²⁵ However, more aid is still needed to protect these children, and efforts must be made to make the Palestinian Authority more effective in addressing the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children in Palestine.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What methods have other countries utilized to successfully protect children from violent conflict?
- To what capacity is it possible to protect and improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children experiencing constant victimization?
- How have other countries combatted the stigma surrounding children of unknown parentage?
- How beneficial is it to keep children in their country with their people even when living in a country in constant conflict?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How can the international community better address the grave violations experienced by Palestinian children?
- How can the Palestinian government promote civilian cooperation to protect orphans and children of unknown parentage?
- What methods can be utilized to more successfully reunite children with their families?
- What safety measures can be taken to protect Palestinian children from arbitrary detention?

²⁴ al- Ghoul, Asmaa. "Despite stigma, adoptions are on the rise in Gaza." *Al-Monitor*, 16 Mar. 2016, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2016/03/gaza-children-of-unknown-parentage-adoption.html>.

²⁵ "Evaluation of UNRWA Support to Vulnerable Children in Gaza Funded by Islamic Relief USA, 2015-2021." The United Nations Relief Work Agency fo Palestinian Refugees in the Near East, 27 Mar. 2023, <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/dios-and-evaluation/evaluation-unrwa-support-vulnerable-children-gaza-funded-islamic>. ; "Middle East | Palestine." Islamic Relief USA, <https://irusa.org/middle-east/palestine/>. Accessed 3 Sept. 2023.

IV. Additional Resources

[Children in the State of Palestine | UNICEF Report](#)

UNICEF provides a thorough number of statistics on children within Palestine in areas such as obtaining education, access to clean water, and more. UNICEF also outlines goals to help improve the lives of Palestinian children.

[2021 Orphan Report](#)

This report helps to define what it means to be an orphan and outlines many of the struggles they become vulnerable to, and special cases that cause orphanhood, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and violent conflict. This report also includes areas of importance in uplifting orphans, such as providing them with a quality education.

[A Mandate to Protect Children Affected by Conflict](#)

The UN outlines the dangers and brutalities facing children in areas of armed conflict, and ways to help these children through 4 pillars of protecting, preventing, raising awareness, and promoting lessons learned. The UN lists how it was successful in aiding children, as well as commitments to helping them in future.

[Israel: Submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#)

Human Rights Watch wrote to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the human rights violations the Israeli government has committed against Palestinian children. They outline in length the atrocities committed within Palestine, including use of lethal force, abuse of children, attacks on schools, and more. This submission also includes suggested calls to actions for the Israeli government and proposed questions to ask Israel about the crimes committed within Palestine.

[Evaluation of UNRWA Support to Vulnerable Children in Gaza Funded by Islamic Relief USA, 2015-2021](#)

The UNRWA conducted a study on the results of the aid they were providing to the children within Palestine, including orphans and disabled children, between the years of 2015 and 2021. The study concluded that UNRWA efforts, with the financial backing Islamic Relief USA, was successful in helping Palestinian children enjoy a higher standard of living.

Topic II: Devising means of reducing Palestinian economic dependence on Israel.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

Globalization has led to a level of economic interdependence between nations. Because of this, the events and disruptions of economic production in one country can have global impacts. One of the more prominent and recent examples of this happening was the start of the war between Ukraine and Russia. Countries in all regions of the world who relied on Russian and Ukrainian exports experienced shortages and rising prices. The Middle East was impacted by this by receiving fewer imports of goods such as wheat, causing the price of certain food products to rise.²⁶ The war has been a massive blow to Ukraine's economy as well. In 2022, Ukraine's economy contracted over 30%, meanwhile the invading power, Russia, only saw a 2% contraction. Ukraine will take a long time to recover from the economic loss as it works on reconstruction from all the damage caused by Russia's invasion.²⁷ The invasion of Ukraine shows similarities to Palestine as another nation that has been invaded by an opposing power wishing to gain control of its territory. However, unlike Ukraine, Palestine has remained under the oppressive occupation and continuous invasion of Israel for many years, and its economic input on the global economy is much smaller.²⁸

In the fight for a free and independent Palestine, it is important to first liberate Palestine from its economic dependence on Israel. However, Palestine's struggling economy is one factor greatly hindering its ability to become self-reliant. The recent COVID-19 pandemic was a major shock to Palestine's economy, as it was to the rest of the world. Palestine's economic recovery efforts have been relatively successful, however, it is still in no shape to stand on its own. Even with the Palestinian economy growing 7% in 2021, it remained 5% below its pre-pandemic level, and economic growth began to slow down the following year. The Palestinian Authority was able to increase its tax revenue, which helped to lower Palestine's fiscal deficit. However, with Israel being in charge of collecting taxes for Palestine, they took a cut of Palestine's money as compensation for Israeli victims of Palestinian violence.²⁹ There is a large disparity in gender unemployment leaving 54% of women unemployed compared to 30% of men. This employment

²⁶ "How War in Ukraine Is Reverberating Across World's Regions." International Monetary Fund, 15 Mar. 2022, <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/03/15/blog-how-war-in-ukraine-is-reverberating-across-worlds-regions-031522>.

²⁷ "One year of the war in Ukraine leaves lasting scars on the global economy." United Nations Department on Economic Affairs, 6 Mar. 2023, <https://www.un.org/en/desa/one-year-war-ukraine-leaves-lasting-scars-global-economy>.

²⁸ "Country Comparison." *WorldData.info*, <https://www.worlddata.info/country-comparison.php?country1=PSE&country2=UKR>. Accessed 2 September 2023.

²⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/palestinian-economic-growth-slow-2023-world-bank-2023-05-02/>

inequity is made even more substantial considering Palestinian women are receiving more years of schooling than men.³⁰

Palestine as a whole feels the impact of its struggling economy, however, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank experience varying levels of economic hardship. The unemployment rate sat at around 26% for the entirety of Palestine, with 13% of Palestinians in the West Bank and 45% in the Gaza Strip being unemployed.³¹ High rates of Palestinians experienced food insecurity, however, it varies from 25% in the West Bank and 53% in the Gaza Strip. There is a substantial gap between the wages workers receive in the two areas of Palestine, with workers in the West Bank earning 119.4 Shekels daily compared to 42.4 Shekels in Gaza.³²

The economic predicament within Palestine does not only restrain their ability to become self-sustaining, but it is also largely due to Israel's occupation of Palestine. Israel's restriction on the freedom of movement is one of the biggest barriers keeping job-seeking Palestinians from entering the workforce.³³ Meanwhile, Israel's control and destruction of Palestine's infrastructure and natural resources inhibit Palestine from growing economically. Israel has forced Palestine to rely on them for a source of employment and trade, which remains insecure and unstable by the turbulent and restrictive nature of Israel's occupation.³⁴

B. History of the Arab World

The Palestinian Liberation Organisation entered a series of agreements during the negotiations with Israel in the 1990s known as the Oslo process. One of the agreements was the 1994 Protocol on Economic Relations, commonly known as the Paris Protocol. This was intended to be a temporary arrangement that would help to form peaceful economic relations between Israel and Palestine, while simultaneously strengthening Palestine's economy. In actuality, it became a more permanent situation that put Palestine even deeper into the stronghold of Israel.³⁵ Palestine now would use the Israeli Shekel as its form of currency, and Israel was given the ability to collect taxes on Palestine's behalf. Israel has routinely abused this power by

³⁰ Palestinian economy reels under COVID-19 impact, enduring poverty and unemployment." UNCTAD, 14 Sep. 2022,

<https://unctad.org/news/palestinian-economy-reels-under-covid-19-impact-enduring-poverty-and-unemployment>.

³¹ Palestinian economy reels under COVID-19 impact, enduring poverty and unemployment." UNCTAD, 14 Sep. 2022,

<https://unctad.org/news/palestinian-economy-reels-under-covid-19-impact-enduring-poverty-and-unemployment>.

³² "Unemployment will remain high in Palestine." Economist Intelligence, 4 May 2022,

<http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1242072707&Country=Palestine&topic=Economy&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=Economic+growth>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Hawari, Yara. "Money can't 'fix' Palestine's occupied economy." Al Jazeera. 27 Jan 2020.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/1/27/money-cant-fix-palestines-occupied-economy>.

³⁵ Arafah, Nur. "Long Overdue: Alternatives to the Paris Protocol." *Al Shabaka*, 27 Feb 2018.

<https://al-shabaka.org/briefs/long-overdue-alternatives-paris-protocol/>.

withholding the tax revenue as punishment for actions committed by militant groups.³⁶ The Protocol also allowed the Palestinian Authority to set its own tariffs on imports from a select list of countries, but in practice, has largely been used to limit imports Palestine is allowed to receive. Palestinian laborers were granted the opportunity to work inside Israel, which has been beneficial to the 100,000 employed there.³⁷ However, these workers face the continuous threat of their employment being terminated if they are considered to be participating in activities that are “politically undesirable.”³⁸ The sections of the Paris Protocol that Palestine would benefit most from, such as the Joint Economic Committee, are seldom utilized effectively.³⁹

Beyond the protocol, Israel’s occupation inhibits Palestine’s ability to grow its economy. Israel illegally controls the natural resources and land belonging to Palestine. The Israeli government routinely extracts the natural resources and minerals provided by the Dead Sea without allowing Palestine to reap any of the benefits. In the process of extracting natural resources, Israel has brought a great deal of damage to the local environment and contaminated water sources. Much of the useful farmland exists in what Israel designates as a buffer zone, and any attempts to cultivate the land may come with the risk of being fired at by Israeli troops.⁴⁰ All infrastructure in Palestine is effectively under the control of Israel, which limits Palestinians’ access to it. Israel denies open access to their ports for Palestine, despite this being outlined within the Paris Protocol. The hindrance to the movement of goods and services further hinders employment and access to goods within the market.⁴¹

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

Despite the barriers facing Palestine’s prospects of becoming economically independent, they have been making strides in the right direction. Tax collecting efforts rose by over 19% in 2022, and they were able to drop their deficit by over 60%. Unemployment and poverty rates have been trending downwards, although they do remain high. Consumption is helping to slowly

³⁶ Rasgon, Adam. “First, an Economic Peace: Revisiting Israel and Palestine’s Paris Protocol.” *Foreign Affairs*, 17 Nov. 2015,

https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/israel/2015-11-17/first-economic-peace?check_logged_in=1.

³⁷ “35. Amend the Paris Protocol.” Israel Policy Forum.

<https://israelpolicyforum.org/2022/12/23/35-amend-the-paris-protocol/>. Accessed 2 Aug. 2023.

³⁸ Hawari, Yara. “Money can’t ‘fix’ Palestine’s occupied economy.” Al Jazeera. 27 Jan 2020.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/1/27/money-cant-fix-palestines-occupied-economy>.

³⁹ “35. Amend the Paris Protocol.” Israel Policy Forum.

<https://israelpolicyforum.org/2022/12/23/35-amend-the-paris-protocol/>. Accessed 2 Aug. 2023.

⁴⁰ “Israel’s exploitation of Palestinian resources is human rights violation, says UN expert.” United Nation Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 18 Mar. 2019,

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2019/03/israels-exploitation-palestinian-resources-human-rights-violation-says-un-expert?LangID=E&NewsID=24349>.

⁴¹ Hawari, Yara. “Money can’t ‘fix’ Palestine’s occupied economy.” Al Jazeera. 27 Jan 2020.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/1/27/money-cant-fix-palestines-occupied-economy>.

grow the economy, particularly in the areas of retail, wholesale, and services.⁴² However, a lot more must be done to create a stable and sustainable economy for Palestine. Further efforts must be made to increase revenue and manage Palestine's debt. Some of this must be accomplished through stable donor support and some degree of collaboration with Israel.⁴³

To boost the economy, more must be done to better the labor conditions within Palestine. The Palestinian Authority has often neglected to make laws that improve working conditions, such as improving social security or guaranteeing severance pay. Additionally, the PA has failed to enforce some of the laws that do exist, as seen by the fact that 40% of employed Palestinians are paid below the minimum wage. However, some of the largest areas of concern exist within the disparities women laborers experience in Palestine. There are no protections in place to ensure women receive equal pay to men. The gender norms within Palestine limit women's employment in mixed-gender workplaces, and often hinder them from being chosen for leadership positions.⁴⁴

The specific employment needs of Palestinians must be addressed to help stimulate financial growth. Only 45% of Palestinians participated in the workforce at the end of 2022. Although the labor market increased by around 20,000 jobs every year between 2000 and 2021, it still has not been able to keep up with the employment needs of Palestinians as unemployment increased from 14.3% to 26.4 in the same 21-year timeframe. Additionally, there is a disconnect between where jobs are located within Palestine, and where they are demanded most. Due to the barriers in movement, many women are inhibited from participating in some of these vocations, while men who take the trip to work face long wait times at checkpoints, and other hurdles during their commutes.⁴⁵

The Palestinian Authority's National Development Plan for 2021-2023 outlines a method of economic disengagement with Israel. The goal is not only to become independent from Israel but to raise the cost of the occupation within Palestine to the point where it is no longer deemed worthwhile.⁴⁶ There are three main pillars of economic disengagement. The first is cluster development, which focuses on investing primarily in the sector of the economy that a certain city or area holds the advantage. For example, areas like Jenin would constitute an agricultural cluster, and incentives, tax breaks, and funding would all contribute to bolstering that sector of the economy within Jenin. The second pillar is alternative partners, in which Palestine would

⁴² World Bank Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. The World Bank, Apr. 2023, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099455304272328937/pdf/IDU00e7074dc01c850437a0b9770f1fcae9a85c8.pdf>.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Coulibaly, Karen, Ma, Jiayi and Qassis, Hania. *The West Bank and Gaza*. International Monetary Fund, 14 Apr. 2023.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ *National Development Plan*. Prime Minister's Office, https://andp.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/National%20Development%20Plan%202021-2023_English.pdf. Accessed 3 Aug. 2023.

form new business partners outside of Israel, primarily with other Arab states. In using these partnerships, Palestine will greatly reduce using Israeli goods and services, and instead replace them with the foods and services of their new partners. The final pillar is the building of a knowledge economy. Investments would be made to train Palestinians in information technology, making them eligible to participate in the global market instead of being tied down to working within the Israeli or Palestinian markets alone.⁴⁷

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What methods have other countries in conflict utilized to revive their economies?
- How have countries with struggling economies become independent from countries with larger economies?
- What is the feasibility of the Palestinian Authority's National Development Plan in liberating Palestine and its economy from Israel?
- How have countries oppressed by an occupying power gotten around the barriers to improve their economic situation?
- How have countries successfully used remote and virtual jobs as a means to address employment needs within their country?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How can Palestine better their tax collection abilities without relying on Israel?
- How can Egypt and Jordan cooperate with Palestine and Israel to allow Palestine to increase their participation in the global economy?
- In what ways can the international community at large help to stimulate the economy of Palestine?
- How can the Palestinian Authorities incentivize jobs within Palestine over Israel?
- How can the Palestinian Authority address the labor disparities between men and women?

IV. Additional Resources

[Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of the State of Israel and the P.L.O.](#)

Annex IV in the Gaza-Jericho agreement, commonly called the Paris Protocol, was made between the Palestinian Liberation Front and the Government of the State of Israel. The Protocol outlines methods and frameworks that will, in theory, better the economic relations between the two nations.

⁴⁷ “The Palestinian Economic Disengagement Plan from Israel: an opportunity for progress or an illusion?” *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 42, 2022, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01436597.2022.2060813>.

UN Committee Discussion on Israel Practices against Palestinian Economy Exacerbating Dire Living Conditions

The meeting coverage details a discussion within the Second Committee involving Israel's violations against international law and the impacts they have on Palestine and also Syrians.

Countering economic dependence and de-development in the occupied Palestinian territory Report on UNCTAD Assistance to the Palestinian People

This 2022 UN report provides in depth detail on the economic development of Palestine, the impact of foreign aid, and the hindrances caused by the Israeli occupation.

Topic III: Protecting and creating infrastructure and services for disabled Palestinians.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

There are approximately 1.3 billion people living with disability globally making them the world's largest minority. This number equates to roughly 16% of the world's population or 1 in 6 people.⁴⁸ Within this population, around 240 million disabled individuals are children.⁴⁹ We often view the health conditions one deals with as a disability, however, they are more correctly defined as disabling conditions, or one of the factors that leads to one becoming disabled.⁵⁰ Another factor contributing to disability is how the surrounding environment negatively impacts an individual living with these conditions.⁵¹ For example, paralysis is a condition that contributes to a disability of mobility impairment. This disability is exacerbated if someone with mobility impairments is unable to receive the aids to help them move throughout society, or live in an environment that is not accessible to those using mobility aids.

There are six main categories of functioning as it pertains to disability: visual, auditory, physical and mobility, speech, cognitive, and self-care.⁵² Disabling conditions can be temporary, like a broken leg, or can be chronic and permanent, like amputation. Mental health conditions are one of the most prevalent causes of disability globally. Depression and anxiety are the most common mental health disorders, but this also includes mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse disorder, and more.⁵³ The types of disabling conditions and the ways they negatively impact one's functioning within society are vast and varying, meaning every individual who experiences a disability will need a unique type of support and assistance.

The inequities facing disabled people are significant and can lead to a lower quality of life. Health disparities make people living with disabilities more likely to suffer from poor health and more likely to live a shorter life span than those without disabilities.⁵⁴ This is due in part to

⁴⁸ "Disability" The World Health Organization, 7 Mar. 2023.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health>.

⁴⁹ "Children with disabilities: Every child has the right to live in an inclusive world." UNICEF <https://www.unicef.org/disabilities>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁵⁰ Correa De Araujo, Rosaly, Walker, Deborah Klein, and Krahn, Gloria L. "Persons With Disabilities as an Unrecognized Health Disparity Population." *American Public Health Association*, 6 Mar. 2015, <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302182>.

⁵¹ Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities." World Health Organization, 2022.

⁵² "Types of Disabilities." *Usability and Web Accessibility*, <https://usability.yale.edu/web-accessibility/articles/types-disabilities>. Accessed 30 July 2023.

⁵³ *World mental health report | Transforming mental health for all*. World Health Organization, 2022.

⁵⁴ "Disability" The World Health Organization, 7 Mar. 2023.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health>.

some disabling conditions already making one more susceptible to experiencing illness, but there are many other factors contributing to the poorer health facing disabled people. A large reason is the inability to access necessary health care and services. Oftentimes, the focus on healthcare and research surrounding disabled people is curing the disabling condition, rather than providing the necessary support to allow one to live a fulfilling life. Additionally, those of lower socioeconomic status cannot always afford the care and assistance, and in some countries, the necessary healthcare and services are not available whatsoever. Even in instances where healthcare facilities and services are present and prevalent, healthcare providers may lack the knowledge and skills to support those dealing with disabling conditions.⁵⁵

Ableism also is a factor in the lower quality of life for disabled individuals. People with disabilities are sometimes purposely excluded from many common experiences and opportunities within society, such as employment and education. In other instances, support for disabilities is not offered within society, making it difficult or impossible for certain disabled individuals to participate. In extreme instances, people with disabilities can be treated with cruelty by their society, including abuse, involuntary institutionalization, and forced sterilization.⁵⁶

B. History of the Arab World

The effects of armed conflicts and political instability within regions of the Arab World contribute to a rise in disability by the people impacted. The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict and the turbulent political environment within Palestine are no exceptions. The Palestine Census Bureau officially reports that 2.1% of Palestinians live with a disability, compared to the 16% disability rate globally.⁵⁷ In general, many countries in the Arab region report lower rates of disability, with over half of Arab countries reporting that less than 2% of people in their country are experiencing a disability. However, it is believed this number understates the actual rates of disability within the region.

The definitions and wording used in self-reported questionnaires may contribute to the underreported disability rate. Many Arab countries, including Palestine, collect information on disabilities using the Washington Group Short Set Questions when asking someone to report on whether they have a disability.⁵⁸ This is a self-reported questionnaire that measures how difficult

⁵⁵ Rimmer, James H. "Addressing Disability Inequities: Let's Stop Admiring the Problem and Do Something about It." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 20 Sept. 2022, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191911886>.

⁵⁶ "Disability" *The World Health Organization*, 7 Mar. 2023, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health>.

⁵⁷ KPMG International Development Advisory Services. *Disability in the Arab region: A challenged vulnerability*. UNFPA Arabic, 2021, https://arabstates.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/14385_-_disability_in_the_arab_region_-_final_report_web_version_-_opt_7.pdf.

⁵⁸ *Disability in the Arab Region*. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2018, https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/pubs/pdf/disability-arab-region-2018-english_1.pdf.

it is for the person to see, hear, remember and concentrate, take care of oneself, move, and communicate. The different levels of difficulty one can answer in the questionnaire are “no difficulty,” “some difficulty,” “a lot of difficulty,” and “cannot do at all.”⁵⁹ In Palestine, they categorize someone as having a disability if they report having “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all” in each area of functioning, excluding the ability to take care of oneself in the reporting.⁶⁰ The vague and immeasurable nature of these questions leaves a lot of room for interpretation. Some who complete the questionnaire may underreport the difficulty they face due to the stigma surrounding disabilities. Furthermore, this reporting excludes those who may experience relatively moderate disabilities and the roughly 25% of Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip experiencing mental illness and psychological distress.⁶¹

The many challenges and hardships facing disabled Palestinians are exacerbated by conflict with Israel. During the 2014 Gaza Conflict, over 11,000 Palestinians and over 1,000 became disabled as a consequence. In 2018 and 2019, during demonstrations on the border of Gaza and Israel, over 150 Palestinians had to amputate limbs after being injured by Israeli armed forces opening fire on them. Additionally, Human Rights Watch reported in 2019 that Israeli armed forces have at times shot at disabled Palestinians, even after identifying that they were disabled and were found to not be a threat.⁶²

Hamas, which is in control of the Gaza Strip, has its share of blame for the disparities disabled Palestinians are facing. Hamas has continuously failed to help ensure accessibility for disabled people. Up until 2020, there were no regulations requiring ramps and elevators for those with physical disabilities, and there are still no regulations to assist those with other disabilities, such as vision loss, and these regulations do not apply to all essential infrastructures such as Mosques.⁶³ Hamas has also been ineffective in protecting disabled Palestinians from discrimination. On an interpersonal level, many disabled Palestinians report being treated as subhuman, often shunned, ignored, or hidden. Palestinian women are also deemed as not suitable for marriage, which can lead to resentment from their families.⁶⁴ The discrimination continues in the inaccessibility of school and employment. A little under 40% of Palestinian children with

⁵⁹ *The Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS)*. The Washington Group on Disability Statistics, 11 Oct. 2022, https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/fileadmin/uploads/wg/Washington_Group_Questionnaire_1_-_WG_Short_Set_on_Functioning_October_2022.pdf.

⁶⁰ *Characteristics of Individuals with Disabilities in Palestine An Analytical Study Based on the Population, Housing and Establishments Census 2007, 2017*. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2532.pdf>

⁶¹ *Humanitarian Needs Overview*. OCHA, Dec. 2019, https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/hno_2020-final.pdf

⁶² “Gaza: Israeli Restrictions Harm People with Disabilities: Neglect by Hamas Authorities, Armed Conflict Cause Further Hardship.” *Human Rights Watch*, 3 Dec. 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/03/gaza-israeli-restrictions-harm-people-disabilities>.

⁶³ “Gaza: Israeli Restrictions Harm People with Disabilities: Neglect by Hamas Authorities, Armed Conflict Cause Further Hardship.” *Human Rights Watch*, 3 Dec. 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/03/gaza-israeli-restrictions-harm-people-disabilities>.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

disabilities are able to obtain any level of education, compared to almost 83% of non-disabled Palestinian children who are able to obtain an education. These disparities are worse for disabled girls, who are far less likely than disabled boys to obtain an education. When it comes to the rate of employment, disabled people obtain employment at nearly half the rate as non-disabled people.⁶⁵

There are other major factors leading to disability within Palestine. The Palestine Census Bureau reports that 34% of disability occurs due to illness, 23% of disabling conditions are present at birth, and 21% of disabilities occur due to aging. Illness being the largest category of disabling conditions is significant as healthcare is not readily accessible in Palestine, particularly in the Gaza Strip. The restrictions on free movement are the most significant hindrance to access to healthcare. Without permission to travel, immediate health crises cannot be treated, and disabling conditions that need active treatment will continue to worsen if they are unable to travel to obtain the necessary care.⁶⁶ Additionally, Palestine's Census reports that the most prominent disabilities are ones that impact mobility and vision, with them making up roughly 30% and 26% of disabilities respectively. Despite this, Palestinians with visual and physical disabilities have voiced that even with assistive technologies, a lot of buildings and public spaces are not accessible to them.⁶⁷

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

Israel's harm to disabled Palestinians continues even beyond violent attacks.⁶⁸ Israel's limitations on what can enter Gaza have hindered Palestinians from receiving assistive technologies and equipment. are constantly at risk of not having breathing technologies when they need them most. The limitations Israel has placed on Palestinians' right to free movement make it even more difficult for disabled Palestinians to receive the access necessary care and services. The power shortages caused by Israeli control of Palestine's energy supply have been noted to profoundly hinder the lives of those living with a disability. Inconsistent power makes it difficult for disabled Palestinians to charge their assistive technologies, such as mobility scooters. Many people who experience hearing loss and rely on sign language and other visual methods to speak to others have difficulty communicating at night without a light. People with chronic respiratory problems risk not having their breathing assistance technology when they

⁶⁵ *Disability in the Arab Region*. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2018, https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/pubs/pdf/disability-arab-region-2018-english_1.pdf.

⁶⁶ "15 Years of Blockade and Health in Gaza." World Health Organization & Health Cluster Occupied Palestinian Territory, July 2022, https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/documents/15_years_of_blockade_and_health_in-gaza.pdf?ua=1

⁶⁷ "Gaza: Israeli Restrictions Harm People with Disabilities: Neglect by Hamas Authorities, Armed Conflict Cause Further Hardship." *Human Rights Watch*, 3 Dec. 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/03/gaza-israeli-restrictions-harm-people-disabilities>.

⁶⁸ "Gaza: Life 'extraordinarily difficult' for people with disability." *Al Jazeera*, 3 Dec. 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/3/life-in-gaza-extraordinarily-difficult-for-disabled-hrw>.

need it most. And these are only some of the issues the inconsistent access to electricity creates for disabled Palestinians.⁶⁹

Mental health conditions are the most underreported and prevalent disabling condition in Palestine. The people of Palestine continue to be traumatized not only by the periodic violence between Israel and Palestine but also by living a life constantly under Israeli occupation. About 37% of adults and 53% of children in Palestine meet the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder.⁷⁰ Mental health services are extremely limited and not accessible to those living in more rural areas throughout Palestine. Even if mental health care were accessible, the stigma of mental health care is ever present, preventing many individuals from seeking services. Misinformation appears to be one of the biggest contributors to the stigma surrounding mental health conditions, and using channels such as television and the internet to educate the public about mental health can possibly help to end these negative perceptions.⁷¹

Despite the discrimination and harm against disabled Palestinians, both Israel and Palestine have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012 and 2014 respectively. By ratifying the convention, they are both bound to defend and maintain the rights of disabled people to healthcare, mobility, protection from discrimination and harm, and accessible education.⁷² In 1999, the Palestinian Authority passed The Law on the Rights of the Disabled. This law guaranteed disabled Palestinians the right to an “honorable and decent life”, and promised to make many efforts to assist disabled people such as providing economic assistance for disability services, accommodations for disabled people in school, and incentives for private businesses to hire people with disabilities.⁷³ Later in 2012, Palestine created The National Strategic Plan of the Disability Sector in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to detail a method of addressing the needs of Palestinians with disabilities.⁷⁴ Although a variety of factors

⁶⁹ “Gaza: people with disabilities disproportionately affected by the energy and salary crisis.” OCHA, 11 Oct. 2017, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-people-disabilities-disproportionately-affected-energy-and-salary-crisis>.

⁷⁰ Ahmad, Kamran. “Trauma and Mental Health in Gaza.” Al Jazeera, 14 June 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/6/14/trauma-and-mental-health-in-gaza>.

⁷¹ *Caregivers in the West Bank : Knowledge, Attitudes, and Current Status*. World Vision, 23 May 2023, <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/World%20Vision%20-%20Study%20-%20MHPSS%20Knowledge%20and%20Attitudes%20in%20the%20West%20Bank%20-%20FINAL%20-%2030May23.pdf>.

⁷² “Gaza: Israeli Restrictions Harm People with Disabilities: Neglect by Hamas Authorities, Armed Conflict Cause Further Hardship.” *Human Rights Watch*, 3 Dec. 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/03/gaza-israeli-restrictions-harm-people-disabilities>.

⁷³ “Palestinian Territory – Law on the Rights of the Disabled.” Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, 9 Aug. 1999, <https://dredf.org/legal-advocacy/international-disability-rights/international-laws/palestinian-territory-law-on-the-rights-of-the-disabled/>. “Understanding Mental Health and Psychosocial Needs of Children and Caregivers in the West Bank: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Current Status.” *World Vision*, 20 May 2023, <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/World%20Vision%20-%20Study%20-%20MHPSS%20Knowledge%20and%20Attitudes%20in%20the%20West%20Bank%20-%20FINAL%20-%2030May23.pdf>.

⁷⁴ “The National Strategic Plan of the Disability Sector in the Occupied Palestinian Territories For the Supreme Council of the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities.” Development Studies Centre - Birzeit University, Aug. 2012,

have hindered the promises outlined from being brought to fruition, these frameworks can help to guide Palestine as it works to address the disparities facing disabled Palestinians.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How does expanding what qualifies as a disability help to better assist the disabled community?
- How has the international community supported countries in the Arab world by providing services and assistance to disabled people?
- In what ways have Arab countries addressed the mental health epidemic happening within the region?
- What methods have been implemented in other countries around the world to fight the stigma against disabilities and mental illness?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What are the biggest barriers to obtaining education and employment within Palestine?
- What methods have been most successful in providing disabled people with the services, infrastructure, and technology necessary?
- What are the biggest barriers keeping disabled Palestinians from obtaining equitable and accessible educational and employment opportunities?
- How have countries with inconsistent power supplies addressed the needs of disabled people who are heavily reliant on assistive technologies?

IV. Additional Resources

[Medical News Today: What is Ableism](#)

Medical News Today helps to define ableism as a form of oppression which can appear in many different ways and on many different levels within society. It also talks about anti-ableism as a way to fight against the discrimination facing disabled people and how one can help in the deconstruct ableism.

[Advancing Health Equity And Reducing Health Disparities For People With Disabilities In The United States](#)

This academic article explains the health equities and disparities within the United States. It describes how this may impact others differently based on what types of disabilities they face, how their ethnicity, race, and sexuality, and the difficulty of getting accurate statistics on

<https://e-inclusion.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/resources/National%20Strategic%20Plan%20for%20the%20Disability%20Sector%202012.pdf>

disability. The article provides recommendations on policies that can be implemented to help disabled people.

The WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health (2019-2023)

The World Health Organization Special Initiative for Mental Health outlines two strategies to help address the needs of those experiencing a mental health condition within 12 focus countries. It provides a game plan for how these strategies will be implemented and what outcomes will denote the success of the initiative.

Convention On The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities (CRPD)

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a UN human rights treaty intended to protect the civil liberties of disabled people. The CRPD is 50 articles long and addresses many different issues pertaining to individuals with disabilities such as access to justice, right to work, and many more.

Topic IV: Evaluating the progression of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and examining means for de-escalation and protection of Palestinians from continued harm.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

The history of the turmoil between Palestine and Israel is long and complex, spanning even before the partition plan for the creation of the two states was developed in 1947. However, the Oslo Accords in 1993 had some hope that the beginning of peace between Israel and Palestine was on the horizon. The Oslo Accords had brought the end of the First Intifada, an uprising of the Palestinian people against the Israeli government, and were the first time the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel formally recognized each other.⁷⁵ Oslo helped to develop the Palestinian Authority, the new governmental body in charge of Palestine. However, the PLO hoped to assert Palestine's right to self-determination, and get Israel to end the settlements on Palestinian land. By the end of the accords, Israel had actually gained more control of Palestinian land than it had entered the accords with.⁷⁶

In 1995, negotiations divided the West Bank into three territories: Areas A, B, and C. Area A began as 5% of the West Bank which then grew to 18% by the end of the negotiations, Area B taking up 21% of the West Bank, with the remaining 60% making up Area C. The newly formed Palestinian Authority was supposed to control social affairs, such as education and health care, as well as the economy within Areas A and B. However, Israel would hold onto control of security, allowing them to continue to leave and enter these Areas and maintain a lot of control. It was agreed that Area C would be passed onto the Palestinian Authority, which would maintain full control of this territory, but this never came to fruition.⁷⁷

The Palestinian people had grown ever more infuriated as the Oslo Accords led to no satisfactory results for them. It all boiled to a head on September 28, 2000, when Ariel Sharon came to visit the third holiest site in Islam, the al-Aqsa mosque in East Jerusalem.⁷⁸ Ariel Sharon had been a large proponent of the Israeli settlements within Palestine. On the day of his visit, uprisings erupted throughout Palestine which would be known as the Second Intifada. Although they started as peaceful demonstrations, Israeli forces reacted by use of rubber bullets and live ammunition. Within the first five days of the uprisings, 47 Palestinians were killed and 1,885 were injured, compared to the 5 Israelis who had been killed. This marked the beginning of the

⁷⁵ Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Global Conflict Tracker*, 9 Aug. 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>.

⁷⁶ Damen, Rawan. "The Price of Oslo." *Al Jazeera*, 2013, <https://remix.aljazeera.com/aje/PalestineRemix/the-price-of-oslo.html#/14>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Global Conflict Tracker*, 9 Aug. 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>.

Second Intifada which would continue until 2005, and continued the pattern of violence and armed attacks by the Israeli forces against Palestine.

B. History of the Arab World

The Oslo Accords ended with no solution in sight, and arguably some significant losses for the Palestinians. However, a brief attempt at peace for the two nations was initiated by the United States in 2013. In 2014, Fatah, the faction leading the Palestinian Authority, joined forces with Hamas, who that same summer fired close to 3,000 rockets into Israel. These actions only provoked retaliation from the Israeli armed forces, and ensured no substantial peace efforts would be achieved between Israel and Palestine. The chaos and burden Palestinians experience is not only the fault of Israel, but the political instability within their country.⁷⁹

In the early decades following Israeli statehood, the Arab League remained staunchly united against Israel. In the 1960s, they had helped to create the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and had issued the Khartoum Resolution. The Resolution is also known as the “Three Nos” for its stances of “no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it.” So committed to the Palestinian cause, the League suspended Egypt’s membership for 10 years after they entered peace negotiations with Israel.⁸⁰ However, in 2002, Saudi Arabia sponsored the Arab Peace Initiative with the backing of the League. This initiative outlined a path towards peace in which Israel’s right to exist as a state if they would withdraw all their troops residing on any lands captured since 1967. Although Israel voiced willingness to possible negotiations, they were not open to the repatriation of nearly 4 million Palestinians.⁸¹

Now within the League, the nations hold varying stances on how to approach Israel and Palestine. In the 2022 League Summit in Algeria, the member states reaffirmed their backing of the Palestinian cause, while also ensuring not to entirely condemn Israel in the process.⁸² Although tensions between Israel and Palestine continue to sour, some Arab nations have begun normalizing relations with Israel. In 2023, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, The United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain all established diplomatic relations. Sudan has voiced plans to normalize relations in the near future.⁸³ Saudi Arabia has floated the idea of entering into diplomatic relations should

⁷⁹ Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.” *Global Conflict Tracker*, 9 Aug. 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>.

⁸⁰ Masters, Nathan & Sergie, Mohammed Aly. “The Arab League.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 25 May 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/arab-league>.

⁸¹ “The Arab Peace Initiative.” *Al Jazeera*, 28 Mar. 2010, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2010/3/28/the-arab-peace-initiative>.

⁸² “Arab League says Palestinian cause central, glosses over Israel.” *Al Jazeera*, 2 Nov, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/2/arab-league-says-palestinian-cause-central-glosses-over-israel>.

⁸³ Goren, Nimrod. “The Slowing Down of Israel-Arab Relations Under the Netanyahu Government.” *MEI*, 25 May 2023, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/slowing-down-israel-arab-relations-under-netanyahu-government>.

their demands with the United States be met.⁸⁴ And although not formal, Oman and Qatar had under-the-table relations with Israel.⁸⁵

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

Both Palestine and Israel agreed in February of 2023 that there was a dire need for de-escalation after Palestinian homes were set on fire by Israeli settlers in the West Bank.⁸⁶ Yet in May, fighting between Israel and militant groups resumed within Palestine taking both Israeli and Palestinian lives. In one of the latest instances of violence, Israel deployed thousands of troops into a refugee camp in Jenin, in addition to conducting airstrikes as well. This attack killed 12 Palestinians and injured an additional 50.⁸⁷ By the summer of 2023, Israeli forces killed over 160 Palestinians, including around 26 children.⁸⁸

In order to obtain peace and order within Palestine, there certainly needs to be help from the international community. The United Nations has been very vocal over the years in condemning Israel's unwarranted violence in Palestine and has repeatedly called for Israel to restore Palestinians their rights. Other than being a source of agitation for Israel, the UN statements have not been effective in making any notable change within Israel and Palestine.⁸⁹ Egypt has continued to hold a prominent mediating role throughout the conflict, particularly between Palestine and Hamas. However, Egypt's role as a mediator is almost forced upon Palestine as the only country that borders the Gaza Strip other than Israel. Egypt has come to the aid of Palestine at times, such as by helping to rebuild homes in the Gaza Strip that were destroyed in Israeli raids in 2021. However, Egypt has also added to the harm inflicted by Israel by upholding the blockades hindering goods from entering the Gaza Strip.⁹⁰ Outside of the Arab World, the United States has consistently attempted to intervene in the conflict. The United States has long voiced for a two-state solution and has at multiple points attempted to provide an avenue for the countries to negotiate, such as during the Madrid Conference in 1991, and the

⁸⁴ Crowley, Michael, Kingsley, Patrick, and Nereim, Vivian. "Saudi Arabia Offers Its Price to Normalize Relations With Israel." *The New York Times*, 9 May 2023,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/us/politics/saudi-arabia-israel-united-states.html>.

⁸⁵ "Arab League says Palestinian cause central, glosses over Israel." *Al Jazeera*, 2 Nov. 2022,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/2/arab-league-says-palestinian-cause-central-glosses-over-israel>.

⁸⁶ "Israel and Palestinians agree on steps to curb violence." *Al Jazeera*, 26 Feb. 2023,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/26/israel-and-palestinians-agree-to-deepen-ties-to-avert-violence>.

⁸⁷ "Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Global Conflict Tracker*, 9 Aug. 2023,

<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>.

⁸⁸ "Five Palestinians killed as Israeli forces raid West Bank camp." *Al Jazeera*, 19 Jun. 2023,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/6/19/deaths-injuries-as-israeli-forces-raid-jenin#:~:text=Since%20the%20start%20of%202023,between%20May%20and%2013>.

⁸⁹ Lederer, Edith H. "The UN refuses to retract its condemnation of Israel over the Jenin military operation."

Associated Press, 7 July 2023, .

<https://apnews.com/article/un-gutterres-israel-palestinians-jenin-condemnation-force-2ba74afe49053453005c2b3e337a92cd>.

⁹⁰ "Egypt's role in Gaza: More than a mediator." *Al Jazeera*, 26 Apr. 2022,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/26/egypts-role-gaza-more-than-mediator>

peace negotiation attempts in 2013. The United States has not hidden its favoritism of Israel, taking steps such as recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and conducting the Abraham Accords.⁹¹

Bringing peace to Israel and Palestine goes beyond just easing relations between their respective authorities, but also the Israeli and Palestinian people. The voices for peace are often drowned out by angry and impassioned Israeli and Palestinian citizens. However, even if not mainstream, there are civilians within Israel and Palestine coming together to call for peace between the two states. Instead of commemorating Israel's Memorial Day, in April 2023 15,000 Israeli and Palestinian people came together in Tel Aviv to celebrate a Joint Memorial Day. Israelis and Palestinians alike came together to mourn their loved ones lost in the conflict and discuss a future where peace is possible within Israel and Palestine.⁹²

II. Question to Consider in your Research

- How can the trend of Arab countries normalizing ties with Israel help or hurt Palestine?
- To what degree should the international community get involved in the de-escalation efforts?
- What are the most successful methods utilized by other conflicting countries of maintaining long term peace efforts?
- How feasible would it be to give Palestine control of its land in the designated Area C, bearing in mind the number of Israeli settlements that have been built in this territory?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How impactful would improving public opinion amongst Israeli and Palestinian citizens of the opposing side be in de-escalation efforts?
- What infrastructure and safety protocols can be developed to help protect the Palestinian people?
- How can further agreements between Israel and Palestine be upheld to ensure the rights of the Palestinian Authority to govern its land are upheld?

⁹¹ Robinson, Kali. "What Is U.S. Policy on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, 12 July 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-us-policy-israeli-palestinian-conflict#chapter-title-0-4>.

⁹² Sella, Adam. "The Palestinians and Israelis embracing peace." *Al Jazeera*, 8 May 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/8/the-palestinians-and-israelis-who-embrace-peace/>.

IV. Additional Resources

[Brookings: How the Peace Process Killed the Two-State Solution](#)

Brookings explains the harms caused to Palestine by the United States' overt favoritism towards Israel. The details of how much of the attempts at peace brokered by the United States, as well as Trump's acknowledgment of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel has only enabled Israel in its actions, while increasing the pressure and burden put onto Palestine.

[Approaching Peace: Centering Rights in Israel-Palestine Conflict Resolution](#)

Carnegie outlines a method for peace between Israel and Palestine which considers the rights of both Israel and Palestine in the process. This article suggests making the United States a more credible mediator, centering rights in any peace discussions, and helping Palestine to obtain more power to successfully advocate their rights as a process to obtain peace.

[Middle East Institute: The Slowing Down of Israeli-Arab Relations Under Netanyahu Government](#)

This briefing by the Middle East Institute speaks on the slowing down of formalizing relations between Israel and other Arab countries after Netanyahu becoming the Israeli Prime Minister once more. With Israel's government becoming ever harsher in its treatment against Palestine, much of the Arab world has become more vocal against the policies, hindering the expansion of the Abraham Accords that Netanyahu had expected.