HRC

Topic A: HRC's Intervention in Israeli Settlements
Topic B: USA's Promotion of Democracy in Iraq

Township of Langley Model UN 2012

Welcome from Dias

Dear Delegate,

The Dias of HRC welcomes you to TOLMUN 2012!

Your director and chair of HRC for TOLMUN 2012 are In Hwang and Wasim Kapadia. It is a great pleasure to welcome delegates to the Human Rights Council. This backgrounder is for you to familiarize with these two topics in regard to human rights. TOLMUN in November will be addressing the following topics at the conference:

1) HRC Intervention in Israeli Settlements
2) Topic B: USA's Promotion of Democracy in Iraq

Delegates should further research on both topics to understand the relevant opinions of the country that you represent. Remember that you are supposed to represent your government not the population or yourself. We highly recommend all delegates of the committee to submit a position paper outlining the perspectives of your country. You will need to cite the references and list all references in the MLA format.

Your understanding of the topics through your study will contribute to a successful debate and resolution. The Dias looks forward to working with you delegates to make history and improving our world. Happy researching!

In Hwang
Director
HRC
Township of Langley Model UN
hrc.tolmun@gmail.com

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"All victims of human rights abuses should be able to look to the Human Rights Council as a forum and a springboard for action."

- Ban Ki-moon,
UN Secretary-General, 12
March 2007,
Opening of the 4th Human
Rights Council Session

History of HRC

" The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them. It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It meets at the UN Office at Geneva."
                                        - UN Human Rights Council

The UNHRC holds regular sessions three times a year, in March, June and September. The UNHRC can decide at any time to hold a special session to address human rights violations and emergencies, at the request of one third of the member states. To date there have been 19 Special Sessions.

On 18 June 2007, the UNHRC adopted Resolution 5/1 to establish a Complaint procedure. The Complaint procedure's purpose is to address consistent patterns of gross and reliably attested violations of all human rights and all fundamental freedoms occurring in any part of the world and under any circumstances.

Role of HRC

The Human Right Council (HRC) was created on 15 March 2006 by United Nations General Assembly. It was established as a subsidiary organ of the United Nations General Assembly, replacing the Commission on Human Rights. This committee promotes "universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind and in a fair and equal manner."

Topic A: HRC Intervention in Israeli Settlements

Figure 1
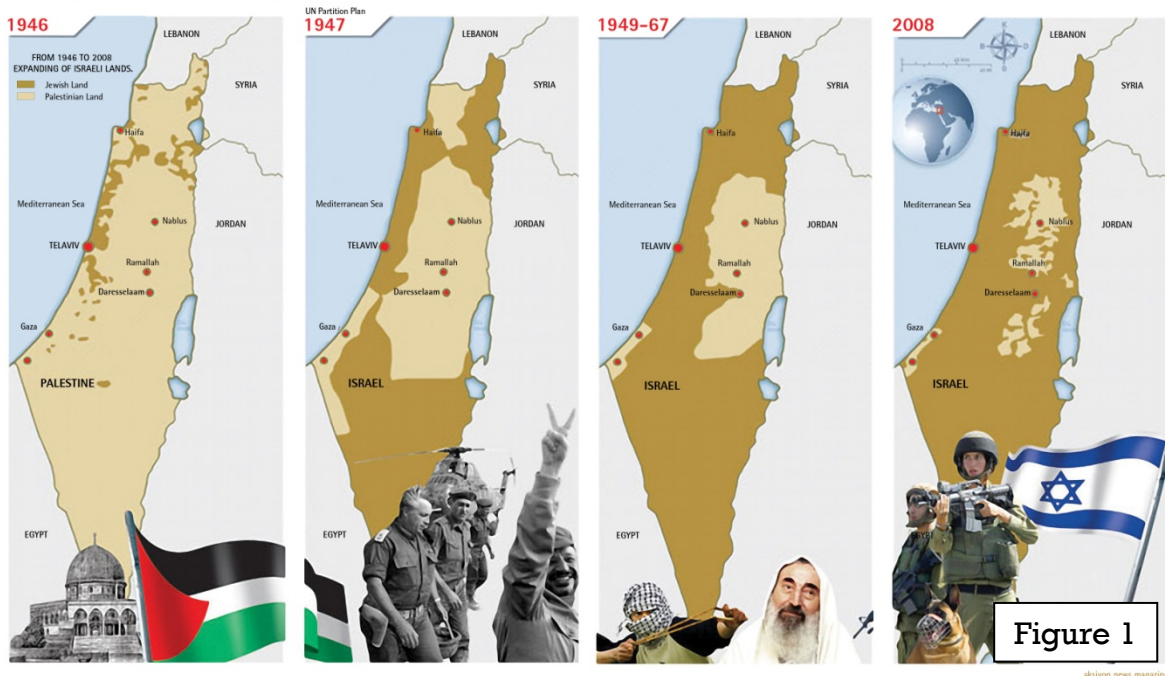
Introduction

Interminable conflicts continues in the Middle East; therefore, the search for effective solution that will eliminate the root cause of this conflict. The global public today thinks that because the Palestinians are inconsequent terrorists, they do not have the point of view worth listening to. However, we have keep in mind that Palestinians sees a real injustice in this matter as their thousand years old homeland was taken without their consent by force during the creation of Israel. the mythic "land without people for a people without land" was already home to 700,000 Palestinians in 1919.

The Zionist (a form of nationalism of Jews and Jewish culture) position is that, in the late 19th century, Jews showed up in the Palestine to reclaim their ancestral land. They bought the land and started building up their community. Violence grew as Jews and Palestinian Arabs met. The Palestinians were forced to defend themselves and their land, in one form or another, this same situation continues till the present day. However, this explanation is commonly misunderstood by many people across the globe.

The real intention of the Zionist movement, from the beginning, was to completely eliminate the indigenous Arab population so that Israel can be a whole Jewish state. When the Lang was bought by the Jewish National Fund was held in the name of the Jewish people and could never be taken back by the Arabs. The progress of the Zionist movement can be seen in Figure 1 above.

It has been reported that HRC has been proceeding with allegedly one side fact finding missions in these settlements. Be aware that Israeli has a history of lacking commitment with HRC such as in the Gaza Conflict in 2009.

History

The Jewish People's Council declared the establishment of State of Israel on May 14, 1948, which was followed by a long Zionist movement since late 19th century. Since then, countless conflicts occurred between Israel and its neighboring Arab nations such as Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, and more.

"Civil War"

Following the vote on the Partition Plan, Palestinian population violently reacted on November 30, 1947. December 2-5, the Arabs marched into Zion Square to protest against the vote, but was stopped by the British. Then, the protesters turned to center of the city and attacked buildings and shops. During the continuation of 2 days of violence, 70 Jews and 50 Arabs were killed.

Arab Invasion
(May 14- June 11, 1948)

Israel had numerous wars with the Arab nations after its independence. The Arab League members Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, and others refused the UN partition plan and marched their force into Israel. The Arab nations attacked "on the occasion of the intervention of Arab States in Palestine to restore law and order and to prevent disturbances prevailing in Palestine from spreading into their territories." this was described by the UN Secretary General as "the first armed aggression which the world has seen since the end of war [World War II]." On May 29, 1948, United Nations Security Council Resolution 50 was initiated and declared an arms embargo on the region. On June 11, a month long UN truce of put as both sides wanted to recover and reorganize their army.

Ten-Day Offensive
(July 9 - 18, 1948)

This was an Israeli aggression to drive the Syrians back across the Jordan. However, the Israeli force was repulsed by the Arab Legion. The IDF (Israeli Defense Force) was on the offensive in most of Palestine. By that time, Israel has mobilized 49,000 troops. Since then, the organization and the equipment has improved all the time. on the other hand, Arab supply routes were weakly defended and inefficient.

Armistice Agreements
(March - July 1949)

Under UN mediator Dr. Ralph Bunche, Israel signed armistices with Egypt , Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria; however, actual peace agreements were never signed. Israel's' new borders known as Green Line was established (Figure 2). Although permanent ceasefire came to effect, Israelis' and Arab countries' army remained on the border.

On May 11, 1949, Israel was admitted as a member of the United Nations. Between 1947 and 1949, it is estimated 726,000 Palestinians had left Israel. the Palestinian refugees were settled in refugee camps in poor conditions. Therefore, the UN established UNRWA to provide aid to the refugees in December of 1949.

Figure 2

*6-Day War
(June 5-10, 1967)*

Israel conquers and occupies Sinai and Gaza in the west, then conquers the West Bank from Jordan, and Golan Heights from Syria. UN called for Israeli withdrawal to establish peace.

Yom Kippur War/ October War (October 6, 1973)

On the Jewish day of atonement, Egypt retook the Suez canal and a narrow zone on the other side of the canal. Syria re-conquered the Golan Heights . With US and Soviet supply, Israel pushed back the Syrians. The IDF crossed the Suez Canal and cut off the Egyptian army.

*Gaza War
(December 27, 2008 - January 18, 2009)*

This conflict was a 3 week armed conflict in the Gaza strip (Figure 3). Israel's aim of this operation was to seize rocket fire into Israel and arms import into Gaza strip. Palestinian groups continued to attack, what they characterized as "massacres". In response, the Israeli force attacked civil service centers, political and administrative institutions, and densely populated cities of Gaza, Khan Yunis, and Rafah. This conflicted concluded in casualty of 1,314 Palestinians dead, 412 of them were children, and 5,300 injured (statistic from International Committee of the Red Cross). On the other hand, Israel had casualty of 13 killed, 4 friendly fire, 518 injured.

Since 1967, Israeli government has invested significant amount of resources in establishing and expanding settlements in the Occupied Territories. As a result, approximately 500,000 Israeli citizens live on the West Bank, including those

established in East Jerusalem (lands that used to belong to the Palestinians). Israeli governments built thousands of new housing units, claiming that this was necessary to meet the "natural growth" of the existing population. Over less than a decade, between 1993 and 2000, the number of settlers on the West Bank increased by almost 100 percent. As a result of this, the Palestinian population in these areas has been pushed out from their homes and became refugees.

Figure 3

Current situation

The situation between Israel, Palestine, and other Arab nations are very tense. Especially after the Arab Spring, a revolutionary movement of demonstrations and protests that occurred in many Arab countries, that started late 2010. This left Israel in-between radically transforming regions. After Arab Spring, Arab nations gained statehood recognition from the United Nations, which made Israel feel increasing isolated.

Also there is Iran and its nuclear program, which is bringing Iran closer and closer to nuclear technology and nuclear bombs. This concerns Israel greatly as it has added to the implacable enmity between the two nations.

The problem that the Human Rights Council has with Israelis have been continuously denying the human rights of the Palestinian citizens in the Israeli region. According to *Americans for Peace Now*'s "Facts on the Ground" Map Project, there are 171 official Israeli settlements and 101 informal outposts on Palestinian land. In regards to Israel occupying East Jerusalem and West Bank, The International Humanitarian Law prohibits an occupying power from transferring citizens from its own territory to the occupied territory (Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 49). These establishments of settlements in those regions leads to the violation of the rights of the Palestinians as enshrined in international human rights law. Among other violations, the settlements infringe on the right to self-determination, equality, property, an adequate standard of living and freedom of movement.

Also, Israel has cut working relations with the UN Human Rights Council, after it decided to investigate Jewish settlements in the West Bank. On 22 March, 2012, the Human Rights Council voted to send an independent international fact-finding mission to "investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem." However, the Israeli representative at the UN in Geneva ordered to immediately cut off contact with the council, and also to ignore calls from the human rights commissioner.

Questions to Consider

1. To what extent should Human Rights Council infringe national sovereignty of Israel, Palestine, and other Arab nations?
2. What are the causes of the disagreement between Israel and its neighboring nation?
3. Was your country related to this issue? How?
4. How will the continuation of this conflict affect the human rights of population in this region?
5. How can future violence be prevented?

Topic B: USA's Promotion of Democracy in Iraq

Introduction

Democracy, one of the universal core values and principles of the United Nations, is respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the principles of holding periodic and genuine elections by universal suffrage. This value of democracy is embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and further developed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which enshrines a host of political rights and civil liberties underpinning meaningful democracies. Democracy is essential for human rights as it ensures an equitable distribution of wealth, and equality and equity in respect of access to civil and political rights.

Spreading democracy as a goal of American foreign policy is not new. Even in the Middle East, the administration of President George H. W. Bush pushed for democratic reform as a priority in 1989 and was instrumental in promoting elections in Jordan and elsewhere.

Today, the spreading of democracy is more rapid than ever before. Waves of revolutionary demonstrations and protests for democracy swept through numerous dictatorial regimes across the world. One that happened most recently is called The Arab Spring as rulers of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen have been forced from power; civil demonstrations have arose in Bahrain and Syria; major protests have broken out in Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Sudan, Morocco, and Algeria; other minor conflicts have occurred in many other nations.

Iraq was invaded by the United States and the United Kingdom from March 20, 2003 to December 18, 2011. The Iraqi war, so called Operation Iraqi Freedom by United States military, was to free the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein's Dictatorial regime. After 8 years of military operation, on December 15, 2011, US declared the Iraq War over. The total number of dead Iraqi soldiers was 28,821 - 37,405. Number of civilian deaths from violence ranged from 103,160 to 113,728.

History

In 1988, the Hussein regime began a campaign of extermination against the Kurdish people living in Northern Iraq. The attacks resulted in the death of at least 50,000 (as many as 182,000) people, many of them women and children. A team of Human Rights Watch investigators determined that the attacks on the Kurdish people were characterized by gross violations of human rights, including mass executions and disappearances of many tens of thousands of noncombatants, widespread use of chemical weapons that killed thousands, the arbitrary imprisoning of tens of thousands of women, children, and elderly people for months in conditions of extreme deprivation, forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of villagers after the destruction of their homes, and the demolition of nearly two thousand villages along with their schools, mosques, farms and power stations.

On September 11th 2001, the World Trade Venter and the Pentagon was attacked by terrorist group and resulted death of over 3000 civilians. The Bush administration blamed Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda network. Government of United States and the United Kingdom claimed that Iraq has possessed weapons of mass destruction and was posing threat to their security, and declared war on terrorism. At the time, no suggestion was made that Iraq was connected with the 9/11 attack. In September 2002, US government and US media disinformation campaign was launched to persuade the Americans that Iraq was responsible for 9/11 attack. Other reasons for invasion included Iraq's support for the families of Palestinian suicide bombers, human rights abuses, and an effort to spread democracy to the nation. In early 2003, the U.S., British, and Spanish governments proposed the so-called "eighteenth resolution". This proposed resolution was subsequently withdrawn due to lack of support on the UN Security Council. In particular, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members France, Germany and Canada and non-NATO member Russia were opposed to military intervention in Iraq.

On March 20, 2003, the US and coalition conducted a surprise attack on Iraq without declaring war. On May 1, 2003, the Operation Iraqi Freedom was accomplished; major combat operations in Iraq have ended. After investigation following the invasion, the U.S.-led Iraq Survey Group concluded that Iraq had ended its nuclear, chemical and biological programs in 1991 and had no active programs at the time of the invasion. In 2003, Iraq's leader Saddam Hussein was captured and his government was over thrown. Later on, on June 28, 2004, the United States transfers national sovereignty back to Iraq, letting Iraq govern itself again but under United State's supervision.

In January 2005, after the first parliamentary election, Iraqi Transitional Government took its place. A year later, the Al Maliki Government took office to the present day. On August 31, 2010, Obama declared that "Operation Iraqi Freedom is over". On September 1, 2010, Operation Iraqi Freedom was renamed to Operation New Dawn as the remaining 50,000 US troops were assigned to non-combat operations while maintaining the ability to return to combat state when necessary. After 8 years of military operation, on December 15, 2011, US declared the Iraq War over.

Current situation

Iraq continues to deal with the legacy of decades of appalling human rights violations under Saddam Hussein's regime, as well as institutional deficiencies and the fallout of the 2003 Iraq War. Its dangerous security situation and the political tension within the government make the progress and engagement on human rights even more difficult. Corruption remains widespread. Unemployment and a lack of access to basic public services still affect large numbers of the Iraqi population. According to a United Nations report, armed violence continues to affect large numbers of Iraqis, with minorities, women and children suffering disproportionately, torture reported and impunity rife. "Widespread poverty, economic stagnation, lack of opportunities, environmental degradation and an absence of basic services constitute 'silent' human rights violations that affect large sectors of the population". However, some progress towards improving human rights over the past twelve months has been made. The passage of legislation in the Kurdistan Regional Assembly in August banning domestic violence was a welcome development. Some areas of political rights, such as freedom of assembly and expression, have been improved.

In 2011, the promotion of human rights played a major part in our overall strategy for Iraq. Our priorities included strengthening and improving governance, the rule of law and education across Iraq, and supporting the implementation of the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations, including the establishment of the Independent High Commission for Human Rights. But despite some preparatory steps the High Commission is still not established and the government has not yet published its three-year National Action Plan on implementing the Universal Periodic Review recommendations. The UK funded a number of projects to promote human rights across Iraq. These included training programs for the police and women's shelter staff in the Kurdistan Region, and work with the Kurdistan Regional Government to improve the protection of women's rights in legislation.

Two problems stand out as particularly difficult to successfully spread. First, not all major political forces in Iraq may want democracy Western-style. These forces can influence the outcome of democratic elections through the well known mechanisms of patronage and pressure politics. Forcing Western standard, mostly influenced by Christianity, of "fair governing" and human rights can be unfair to the Iraqi population who are used to their Islamic culture. Secondly, even if most Iraqis want democracy, it may not work because the political conflicts unleashed by democratization exceed the conflict absorption capacities.

Questions to Consider

1. What were the causes of Iraq War?
2. Do the number of casualties justify the cost of democracy?
3. What are the consequences of democracy in Iraq? What are the benefits? What are drawbacks?
4. What solutions can help reduce conflicts in Iraq caused by tension between pro-democracy and anti-democracy groups?
5. What are the humans rights that are not available in Iraq?

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Topic A

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