

OAKMUN
2025



Background Guide **UNHRC**

**Evaluating Human Rights Violations and
Exploring Measures to Safeguard
Civilians amid the Israel-Hamas Conflict**

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Letter from the Executive Board

Greetings Delegates,

We are delighted to welcome you to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) at OAKMUN 2025, where we are committed to ensuring a smooth and efficient committee flow during the three days of conference. As the executive board, we are excited to see you represent your respective nations and work together to develop resolutions and form a consensus addressing the conflict that we will be deliberating upon. As a delegate, you'll be putting your negotiation prowess, diplomacy, critical thinking abilities, and knowledge of global affairs to the ultimate test. Alongside that, You'll have your hands full tackling moderated caucuses during formal sessions to handling the rest of the committee during the chaotic unmoderated caucuses.

In order to provide you a solid grasp of the agenda and to help you get started on your conference research, we have put together this background guide. It is imperative that you do not use this background guide as your only source of information for the duration of the conference's research. It is advised that you use this Background guide to gain a foundational understanding before expanding your knowledge on your own through independent study, which will be helpful during the conference.

Since the UNHRC usually entails the most elite delegates amongst the delegates who attend the conference, the Executive Board will remain rigid in terms of the Rules of Procedure, and will also further refrain from interrupting the flow of debate, thus the responsibility of deciding and altering the flow of committee is in your hands, the delegates. To do so, you will have to be thorough with the RoP, Thus please read the RoP mentioned in the Background guide adequately. We encourage you to approach this conference not as a competition, but as a learning experience that will help you gain new connections, learn invaluable concepts, and further understand the world of international relations better. Lastly, if you have any queries, Don't hesitate to contact the Executive Board through email.

Goodluck, and Godspeed.

Warm Regards,

Sourav Satish - Head Chair

Zaina Rao - Vice Chair

Aadi Nair - Moderator

Introduction to Committee

The United Nations Human Rights Council, one of the principal intergovernmental bodies within the UN system, is tasked with the responsibility of promoting and protecting human rights around the globe. Established by General Assembly Resolution 60/251 (2006), the UNHRC replaced the former Commission on Human Rights and functions as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly.

The Council is composed of 47 member states, elected by the General Assembly on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, with seats allocated among regional groups. Members serve for a term of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election after two consecutive terms. Each member has one vote, and decisions are generally made by a simple majority.

The Human Rights Council aims to address human rights violations and make recommendations, including through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism, which assesses the human rights records of all UN member states. It also works in accordance with its mandate to promote respect for human rights, prevent violations, and respond to emergencies, while fostering international cooperation and dialogue in line with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.



Rules of Procedure

Motions

Roll Call

At the beginning of each Session and upon the Motion to begin Roll call, Chairpersons shall call in an alphabetical order on all Member States in order to state their status of attendance. Member States may reply “present” or “present and voting”. Representatives stating just “present and voting” shall have no right to abstain from any vote on any substantial voting procedure, and a delegate who votes “present” may abstain from voting.

Note: Voting stance can be changed from “Present” to “Present and Voting” the next time Roll Call is being done in the next session/day. However, it can't be changed from “Present and Voting” to “Present”.

How to raise it: The delegate of [portfolio] raises a motion to begin a roll call.

General Speaker's List (GSL)

Procedurally, After a Roll call, initially in the session, You start with the General Speaker's List where delegates will be recognised to give a 90 second (The time limit can be altered by a Motion to Change the Speaker's Time) speech entailing the delegate's stance, and what they propose to do for the rest of the committee session, and sometimes if time permits, an initial solution may be briefed about too.

Furthermore, If three consecutive motions fail, The committee will procedurally be reverting back to the General Speaker's List due to the committee's lack of clarity on how to proceed with the flow of debate. Moreover, The delegates, if permitted by the Executive board, can speak in the GSL innumerable times.

Note: The General Speaker's list is non-exhaustive, thus there is no ending to the list and speakers can always be recognised under the Executive Board's discretion.

How to raise it: The delegate of [portfolio] raises a motion to establish the general speakers' List.

Rules of Procedure

Moderated Caucus

A Moderated caucus is aimed to facilitate and accelerate the discussion on the agenda deemed as essential and critical for the topic on agenda, through discussion on a specific topic under the agenda and when the committee is in formal session. The motion for the moderated caucus can be introduced by any of the delegates once the Floor is open for Points and Motions, Usually three motions will be recognised before voting upon them. The delegate shall specify the total time of the Motion, individual speaker's time for each of the delegates (not exceeding the speaker's time set for the general Speaker's List) and the purpose of the Motion.

How to raise it: The delegate of [portfolio] raises a motion to move into a Moderated Caucus on "topic" for the time period of "x" minutes allotting "x" minute per speaker.

Note: The Total time for a Moderated Caucus can't exceed 20 minutes.

As a Moderated Caucus is limited to the number of delegates recognised to speak, a delegate who is not recognised may send in a substantive chit (Which will be explained later).

Unmoderated Caucus

An Unmoderated Caucus is an informal form of debate, during which delegates are able to freely discuss all issues with other delegates, lobby for their interests, resolve difficult questions about the topic on the agenda, make blocs and create working papers and resolutions. Here, delegates are allowed to move around the venue, and talk to any delegate. However, It is usually under an Executive Board member's supervision.

How to raise it: The delegate of [portfolio] raises a motion to move into an unmoderated Caucus for the time period of "x" minutes.

Note: The total time period for an Unmoderated Caucus can't be for more than 30 minutes, however, another motion may be raised to extend the Unmoderated caucus.

Rules of Procedure

Yields

During a GSL, if a delegate has any remaining time, They can yield this time in any one of the following manner:

1. Yield to POINT OF INFORMATION / Questions - If the delegate is open to questions, it is at the discretion of the Chairpersons to grant this right to any delegate willing to pose an inquiry to the delegate within the remaining time allocated to the delegate regarding the speech. The delegate who yielded his time to questions can refuse to answer any of them at his discretion.
2. Yield to another delegate - the remaining time will be offered to another delegate as allotted by the former speaker. The delegate who was yielded the time must've priorly agreed for this arrangement and should be willing to speak right after the delegate yields the time. The Remaining time can't be used when the delegate is giving his speech.
3. Yield to the Executive Board: If there is remaining time left, but the delegate is not wishing to answer any questions or give his allocated time to another delegate, he /she can yield his time back to the Chairpersons, who will proceed with another delegate on the Speaker's List/ wishing to speak afterwards. Moreover, the Chairpersons can decide to ask questions, or may decide to use the time for questions / points of information.
4. Yield to Comments: If there remaining time left, it can be yielded to comments where other delegates in the committee, if recognised, will be commenting on the delegates speech. (However, The Executive Board will be prohibiting these yields in this conference).

Rules of Procedure

Points

1. Point of Parliamentary Inquiry: This point is raised by a delegate to clarify anything regarding the rules of procedure or to know the status of the committee. Such Points may not interrupt speakers and can be introduced only when the Floor is open for Points.

How to raise it? : The delegate of “your allocated country” raises a point of a parliamentary inquiry.

Example: Point of Parliamentary Inquiry, The Delegate of India would like to know who the next speaker on the list is?

2. Point of Personal Privilege: A delegate may raise the Point of Personal Privilege in case of whichever kind of personal discomfort which prevents him from full participation in the debate. Such things can be for example audibility of other speakers, switching of air conditioning etc. A Point of Personal Privilege can interrupt a speaker only in the case of bad audibility.

How to raise it? : The delegate of “your allocated country” raises a point of personal privilege

3. Point of Information: This point can be raised when the speaker yield's time to POIs / Questions, and is usually to ask a question pertaining to the given speech. Therefore, POIs can only be asked during the General Speaker's List.

4. Point of Order: There are two types of point of orders; Factual Inaccuracy, and Logical Fallacy. These points are used when there are irregularities, invalid points, and factually wrong aspects in a speech.

- a. Point of Order, Factual Inaccuracy: Used when there is something in the speech that is factually incorrect according to information from sources that are considered valid.
I.e. Delhi is not the Capital of the USA, it is the capital of India.
- b. Point of Order, Logical Fallacy: Used when something in the speech doesn't logically make sense, or when the delegate is contradicting themselves.

These points must be framed in a very specific manner, if not, they will not be accepted:
How to raise: “Point of Order, Type of POO, The Delegate mentioned Verbatim, however “x”.
Note: POOs usually carry a good weightage, thus it should be raised in the above manner strictly with the exact verbatim. Moreover, POOs are only accepted during Moderated Caucuses.

Rules of Procedure

Substantive Chit:

Substantive chits can only be sent by delegates when they're not recognised to speak in a moderated caucus and want to convey something that is imperative and has not already been mentioned. The following format shall be used:

Substantive Chit:

To:Executive Board

From: Delegate of [portfolio]

- These points must include substantive nature
- And should not be a speech.

Right of Reply:

Delegates, whose country's national integrity or sovereignty has been contested and violated, may require Right of Reply. A chit entailing why a delegate wants to raise a right to reply must firstly be sent to the executive board, after which, the Executive board will call in the Secretary General, and both the delegates in question will be allotted a specific amount of time to justify themselves. After which, a procedural voting will begin where the delegate who loses the right to reply will be gagged for a specific period of time mentioned by the Secretary General.

Draft Resolution:

A draft resolution, or referred to as "Resolution" once the committee passes the document, contains all the solutions that the committee wants to introduce in the form of a formal document that will be discussed and put to vote in front of the committee. If passed, this acts as a set of suggestions and recommendations to those who agree with it on the issue at hand.

Sponsors:

Sponsors are those who have majorly written the resolution, whose countries must agree with every clause, and who would be answering the questions based on the resolution once their resolutions are tabled and are being presented. The number of sponsors is usually kept between 2 and 4, this will be informed to the committee on the day of the conference. The sponsors usually will also be marked higher due to them contributing to the resolution the most, and their lobbying over the two days.

Rules of Procedure

Signatories:

Signatories are those who would like to see the resolution discussed in front of the committee. A signatory does not necessarily agree with the resolution, just wants to see it be debated. A delegate can be a signatory to more than one resolution. Resolutions must have at least 1/3rd of the committee's strength as signatories to be able to present them to the committee.

Amendments:

An amendment to a resolution is in the form of an edit, addition, or deletion to the resolution that has been presented to the committee. This is usually sent to the chairs after the resolution has been discussed and through a motion, the committee is in an amendment session. If more than 1/3rd the number of a resolution's total number of operative clauses are accepted as amendments, the resolution will be scrapped. When an amendment is presented to the chairs, the sponsors of the resolution will be given the option to either accept it as friendly or unfriendly. A friendly amendment is automatically accepted, and the content that was aimed to be changed, added or deleted is done as such. An unfriendly amendment means that the committee will vote, to decide whether or not the change shall be made. This is done through a simple majority vote.

1. (To introduce Resolution) the delegate of “your allotted country” would like to raise a motion to introduce *RESOLUTION NAME*
2. (Amendments) the delegate of “your allotted country” would like to raise a motion to move into the amendment session for *RESOLUTION NAME*
3. (To vote on the resolution) the delegate of “your allotted country” would like to raise a motion to table the *RESOLUTION NAME* for the voting procedure.

Rules of Procedure

Resolution Format:

(Name of resolution)

Sponsors:

Signatories:

Topic:

XYZ Committee name,

1. Every preambulatory clause ends with a comma (,)
2. Every Operative clause ends with a semicolon (;)
3. Every sub-clause to a resolution should end with a comma (,) till and unless it is the last sub-clause to the main clause, it shall end with a semicolon (;)
4. Every main clause before starting with a sub-clause should have a colon (:)
5. Full stop at the end of the resolution.

Crisis Related RoP:

A crisis update is essentially an update that describes the developments and it clearly describes the current situation in committee. An example of a crisis update can be the following- Electricity in the Kashmir Valley was cut between 2AM and 9AM in the morning. However during the blackout, at 5AM in the morning, Kashmiri Hindus in Jammu broke down the mics and loudspeakers of a mosque which was at the border between a Muslim and a Hindu neighborhood. After a crisis update, the floor for directives will be open, so delegates may play around with the crisis update, and also conduct their own personal operations.

This might seem complicated initially, Therefore, we advise you to carefully read through the following guidelines for crisis notes:

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Rules of Procedure

Directives:

Delegates utilize directives to wield their portfolio powers, which are distinct to each delegate and define the reach of their directives. For instance, The Russian Federation may conduct a stealth military operation to assassinate President Zelensky.

Directives can go beyond traditional roles to achieve other objectives, like enhancing portfolio powers or pursuing personal goals, which may involve clandestine activities such as assassinations or state annexation. However, all these actions, including increasing portfolio powers, must be executed through covert directives in this committee. For example, the President could use directives to extort or launder money for personal gain by offering a favorable deal to a large company.

While crisis committees offer considerable freedom, it is essential to follow certain guidelines when crafting directives:

Firstly, directives should maintain a sense of realism; they should be plausible in the real world, regardless of how radical or extreme they are. If a directive is deemed unrealistic, it will fail.

Secondly, effective directives should be detailed. While a lack of detail might not affect whether a directive fails or passes, it will significantly impact its effectiveness. For instance, a delegate wishing to build a wall on the US-Mexico border should not merely state "Build a wall" but should include details on construction, purpose, and the financial and political benefits of the wall.

Rules of Procedure

Directives:

There are two types of directives in a crisis committee:

- Covert; Something to be done secretly without the knowledge of the rest of the committee, the details are known only to the EB. However, only the objective of the directive will be revealed to the EB on the crisis update.
- Overt; Something to be done in the open, whose details can be revealed to the rest of the committee.

Apart from this, directives can also be split into groups on the basis of the number of contributors to a particular directive;

- Individual Directive: Written by only one delegate.
- Joint Directive: Written by multiple delegates; The involved delegates will be sharing common objectives and further share resources, and etc..

In conclusion there are 4 types of directives:

- Individual Covert Directive
- Individual Overt Directive
- Joint Overt Directive
- Joint Covert Directive

The following will be the format, and must strictly be followed without any changes:

[Type of Directive (Individual / Joint Directive, Covert / Over]

To: The Executive Board

From:

Objective: [The Primary Objective and the goal of the directive must be briefed about]

Plan of Action (POA):

[Preferred in phases, and with points mentioned in each instead of long paragraphs, pictures and diagrams may be used for reference.]

Conclusion / Expected outcome: [Mention what should potentially be the outcome if your directive passes.]

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Rules of Procedure

Communiqué:

Communiqués are often used to contact entities outside the committee to involve them in a certain way in the crisis. Usually, they are written as a formal correspondence to the external actor, asking them for the action you wish to take. Note that these actions lie under the abilities of the correspondent and not your portfolio. Communiques again can be individual or joint and can take covert and overt forms. They should be made with the following format:

[Type of Communiqué (Overt / Covert)]
To:
From:
[Body of the Communiqué]

[Signature of the delegate sending the letter]

Press Release:

These are statements made by the delegate to the general public and the press, usually used as a tool to provide justification or reason behind the delegate's actions in a directive. They shall follow the following format strictly:

PRESS RELEASE

From:
Title of Press Release:
[Body of the Press Release]
[Signature of the delegate]

Introduction to agenda

The origins of the israel hamas conflict is rooted in the 19th century. To understand the everlasting conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians we need to fathom the crux of the zionism movement. In the late 19th century jewish civilians living in Europe were subjected to antisemitism, paroxysmic attacks, and pogroms coupled with legal discrimination. To evade such cruelty, Theodor Herzl after the Dreyfus Affair in France (1894) reckoned it would be better for the jews if they were to relocate their abode entirely. This led to the rise of Zionism in the late 19th century.

Palestinian Arab nationalism

Along with the embankment of zionism, Arab nationalism was spurring across the middle east due to the downfall of the ottoman empire. This nationalism was based on the sense of shared Arab identity , culture and language, coupled with the desire for independence and most importantly self-rule. Palestinian Arabs in the late 19th century were composed of both muslim and christian. Their connection with their land was seen as sacred Jerusalem, Hebron, and other cities holding deep significance. The rise of Arab nationalism had only made the connection with their land even stronger. Hence when zionist immigrants began arriving in large numbers especially after the 1917 Balfour Declaration, Palestinians viewed their abrupt immigration as unjust as Britain started favoring the establishment of a Jewish homeland at their expense. Finally as Arabs witnessed the loss of their sacred land it wavered their nationalism. Finally as retaliation local political figures such as al-Husayni family of Jerusalem, emerged as figures of resistance to jews, and british policies.

Protests and Revolts

From 1920 onwards, Palestinians began organising protests, gatherings, revolts and whatnot. This had engendered early riots such as 1920–21 riots(early violence between arabs and jews), 1929 disturbances (disputes over the access to the western wall), and the 1936–1939 Arab Revolt(an uprising between the British rule and Zionists)

Introduction to agenda

UN partition

After the world war the tension between the jewish community and the Arab community had reached a breaking point. Britain after the world war was exhausted and didn't have the time or resources to manage the escalating violence. Hence Britain referred the issue to the United Nations or the UN. Especially after the holocaust period (1941–45) more than 6 million jews were killed and intensifying global support for the jewish community. The UN, recognising the harsh circumstances for the jews passed **Resolution 181** in November 1947 via the UN General Assembly. This resolution had constituted the division of land. The plan allocated 55% of the land to the jewish community, even though jews only made up about one third of the population ,and had owned less than 10 percent of land. The Arab community was allocated 45 % of the land despite constant argument over occupying the majority. Jerusalem and Bethlehem were governed by **corpus separatum**(separate body) and were placed under international control.

The Arabs were not pacified with this plan and remained unsatisfied unlike the jews who were content. The rejection of the plan had resulted in immediate clashes in late 1947. Next year 1948 ma 14 the jews had declared independence of the state of Israel. Within hours the neighbouring Arab state launched attacks, dictating the first Israeli- Arab war(also known as the 1948 War or the Nakba, “catastrophe,” in Palestinian memory). The war ended with Israel controlling about 77 % of the former mandate territory far more than the UN had planned and had **displaced over 700,000 Palestinian Arabs**, creating a massive refugee crisis that remains unresolved to this day

Introduction to agenda

1967 Six-Day War: Israeli Occupation of Gaza

Gaza, a narrow strip along the Mediterranean, served as an abode to nearly a myriad of refugees. Its population surged from 80,000 to over 200,000 due to the influx of Palestinian refugees. Near the vicinity of Gaza lay Egypt. The Egyptian military administration did not choose to annex Gaza and instead allowed them to be a politically separate nation and offered no citizenship to the residents. This left Gaza's people in a state of political limbo: neither independent nor integrated into another state. Refugees had undergone a housing crisis with most of them living in UNRWA administrative camps. Since the Egyptian government did not oversee Gaza's humanitarian crisis, education, health, and infrastructure was handled by the international agencies. This reduced Gaza to a vastly impoverished state yearning for humanitarian dependence.

During 1950 Palestinians's fadyeens carried out cross border raids into Israel. These raids were taken out via Gaza, often targeting civilians and military positions. This state of unrest had ensued in humanitarian conflict and provoked Israeli reprisals to retaliate, trapping Gaza in a cycle of violence.

Tensions in the 1960s were surging. Gamal Abdel Nassar, the Egyptian president nominated himself as the leader of Arab nationalists promising to liberate Palestine. In May 1967, Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and mobilized troops in Sinai, leading Israel to launch a preemptive strike. This guerilla warfare even though was conducted through a thorough planning the israel's had secured victory in just 6 days, defeating Egypt Jordan and Syria to launch a preemptive strike. This had for the first time resulted in Gaza coming under direct militant rule of the israel militant administration. The Israeli authorities employed a complete Totalitarianistic scheme to track Gaza movement. Israeli authorities controlled borders, movement, and administration, dramatically altering daily life of the civilians. Soon after the war the Israeli administration began establishing settlements inside Gaza, guarded heavily by the army. Palestinian land was confiscated for these settlements, along with strict curfews, checkpoints, and security operations resulting in limited freedom of movement.

Introduction to agenda

Socio political consequences

Due to the lack of freedom given to the palestinian citizens the Palestine Liberation Organization(PLO) organised a resistance movement which escalated to retaliation in the form of attacks on the Israeli forces. Life in Gaza then had become shaped by military occupation. The economic dependence of Israel, the restrictions imposed on political expression, and the growing resentment among the population catered to a vigilant state of unrest.

For Israel Gaza acted only as a buffer zone between the sraelis and the egyptian. Meaning that most of the preemptive strikes, attacks and unauthorised military armament would be conducted through the Gaza strip making the life of civilians living in Gaza perilous. For Palestinians, Gaza became a symbol of dispossession and military domination.

Rise of Hamas:

Two decades of Israeli military occupation in Gaza and the West Bank had created widespread frustration. Palestinians had faced land confiscation, settlement expansions, and strict adherence to curfews and checkpoints. Following this, in December 1987, a traffic accident in Gaza killed four Palestinian workers. The public was outraged by this and erupted in protests against military oppression, marking the beginning of the First Intifada.

During this atmosphere of unjust military suppression and retaliation, Hamas (Ḩarakat al-Muqāwamah al-’Islāmiyyah, "Islamic Resistance Movement") was formally established in 1987. The establishment of Hamas was done through the Gaza branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was an Islamist organization centralized to focus on social, religious, and charitable work. The Brotherhood was not inclined toward direct confrontation and rather adopted a strategy of traditional avoidance. In the case of Hamas, they had disregarded their tradition and adopted a more militant line, positioning itself as both a religious and resistance movement.

Introduction to agenda

Human Rights Concerns in the Israel–Hamas Conflict

Civilian casualties:

The historical legacy of the conflict has manifested not only in recurring military confrontations but also in severe humanitarian consequences for civilians, particularly in Gaza. During such military escalations the primary concern was of the surging number of deaths and casualties encountered. In Gaza, Israeli airstrikes regularly hit Gaza's densely populated areas, such as refugee camps, residential buildings and schools. This had caused mass civilian casualties to rise. These actions were then condemned and questioned under the International Humanitarian Law (IHL). In Israel, hams and other armed groups have fired thousands of missiles and rockets using the Israeli iron dome air defence system have intercepted many of them, yet the rockets and missiles that land result in mass civilian casualties. This had manifested a constant state of fear. International observers, including the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) repeatedly stress that combatant and civilian zones in a state of war must be distinguished, a rule that is frequently violated in practice.

Gaza blockade

Since 2007 after Hamas took control of Gaza Israel (with Egyptian cooperation at the Rafah crossing) has maintained a land, air, and sea blockade. Due to this the movement of civilians were tightly controlled, the movement of neutral vessels, merchant ships and imports were highly restricted. Israel tried to justify its actions by saying it was a security measure to prevent arms smuggling to Hamas. This had an everlasting humanitarian impact as Palestinian refugees would suffer from chronic shortages of food, clean water, fuel, and electricity. Hospitals would often lack essential medical supplies and equipment. Employment rates would decline rapidly, and the freedom of movement would be restricted for civilians.

Introduction to agenda

Gaza blockade-continuation

Both Israel and Hamas have faced widespread criticism for their militant confrontations and practices which infringe upon civil liberties and basic human rights. For the Israelis, the use of administrative detention allows authorities to hold Palestinian civilians and refugees without formal or legal procedure for 6 month periods. This policy was justified by the Israeli administration but condemned by human rights groups. Children and adults in the west bank were also detained for being part of formal and arranged protests which seemed to question Israeli rule and their occupation. This had raised concerns about violating international conventions on the rights of children. In Gaza, the hams have also been similarly accused of severe political repression of individuals and civilians. Reports from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch document cases of torture, extrajudicial executions of alleged collaborators, and violent crackdowns on dissent, especially targeting members of the rival Fatah party. Freedom of speech, press, and assembly under Hamas governance has also been severely restricted, leaving Gaza's civilian population caught between two systems of repression.

Targeting and Shielding

The conduct of hostilities between Israel and Hamas has generated persistent allegations of violations of international humanitarian law, particularly concerning the protection of civilians. Israel has been accused of employing disproportionate force, with airstrikes on residential buildings, schools, and hospitals resulting in high civilian casualties and raising doubts about whether adequate measures are taken to minimize harm to non-combatants. Conversely, Hamas is charged with endangering civilians by embedding its military infrastructure within populated areas—firing rockets from neighborhoods, storing weapons in homes, and allegedly using human shields. This tactic, widely condemned under international law, increases the risks for Gaza's population and complicates accountability. Israel argues that Hamas bears responsibility for civilian deaths due to its military strategies, while Hamas claims Israel deliberately targets non-combatants. Independent investigations, however, often conclude that both parties contribute to civilian suffering, albeit through different methods, perpetuating the cycle of violence and humanitarian crises.

Historical Context

Overview

The Israeli–Palestinian dispute is a protracted contest over territory, sovereignty, rights, & national identity that has produced recurrent armed conflict, multiple episodes of mass displacement, institutional fragmentation within Palestinian polity, sustained changes in territorial control, & long-term humanitarian vulnerability for civilian populations.

Contemporary protection issues in Gaza & southern Israel are best understood as the cumulative outcome of :

- (i) imperial legacies & partition decisions;
 - (ii) interstate wars that reconfigured territorial control;
 - (iii) occupation policies & settlement expansion;
 - (iv) intra-Palestinian political fragmentation;
 - (v) recurring cycles of intense urban warfare;
 - (vi) economic constraints and movement restrictions that have degraded civilian infrastructure & coping capacity.
-

1. Imperial legacies, the Mandate era & the 1947–1948 transition to statehood

- **Late Ottoman & Mandate transformation:** By the late nineteenth century the geographic area later called Mandatory Palestine contained a mixed agrarian & urban population with evolving communal identities. The late Ottoman reforms, European migration patterns, rising nationalist ideologies, & the effects of World War I shaped both Jewish political mobilisation (Zionism) & emergent Palestinian Arab nationalism. The 1917 Balfour Declaration expressed British policy support for a Jewish national home in Palestine while also referencing preservation of the civil & religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities, a formulation that produced long-term political ambiguity & competing legal expectations. Avalon Project

- **Partition politics & the end of the Mandate:** After World War II the U.N. Special Committee on Palestine recommended partition. The United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 181 on 29 November 1947, proposing a partition plan that would create separate Jewish & Arab states with a special international regime for Jerusalem. The plan's partial acceptance by Jewish leaders & rejection by most Arab leaders precipitated intercommunal violence in 1947–48 and the wider 1948 Arab–Israeli war that accompanied Israel's declaration of independence on 14 May 1948. Avalon Project

Historical Context

3. 1980s–1990s: political mobilisation, the Intifada & Oslo institutional arrangements

- **First Intifada & human-rights internationalisation:** The First Intifada (1987–1993) was a mass popular uprising in the West Bank & Gaza combining civil resistance, spontaneous local governance forms & heightened confrontations with Israeli forces. The uprising foregrounded the human-rights costs of prolonged occupation, catalysed international attention, & changed political calculations on all sides. [Peacemaker](#)
- **Oslo Accords & interim governance:** The early 1990s Oslo process (notably the Declaration of Principles signed in 1993) produced mutual recognition between Israel & the Palestine Liberation Organization, created the Palestinian Authority with devolved civil responsibilities in designated areas, & established a phased approach to final status negotiations. Oslo left the core questions of borders, the status of Jerusalem, refugees, settlements & permanent security unresolved, producing a layered set of governance arrangements (West Bank Areas A, B & C) that complicate legal accountability & civilian access across contiguous territories. [United States Institute of Peace](#)

4. Gaza after 2005: disengagement, intra-Palestinian rupture & the evolution of external constraints

- **2005 disengagement & continuing external controls:** Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005 removed permanent Israeli settlements & most ground forces from Gaza's interior. However, controls over Gaza's maritime boundaries, airspace & principal border crossings remained elements of Israeli authority affecting Gaza's external autonomy. The distinction between internal withdrawal and continuing external control is crucial when assessing whether operational constraints—on trade, movement & access—are the product solely of internal governance or of exogenous regulatory regimes. [Encyclopedia Britannica](#)
- **Hamas electoral victory & political bifurcation:** The January 2006 Palestinian legislative elections brought a surprise victory for Hamas. Following internal political confrontation with Fatah, Hamas took exclusive control of Gaza's institutions in 2007. The resulting bifurcation—Gaza under Hamas, the West Bank largely under the Palestinian Authority—produced practical complications for aid delivery, diplomatic engagement, security coordination & the international community's legal approach to governance in Gaza. [Wikipediaecf.org.il](#)

Historical Context

4. Gaza after 2005: disengagement, intra-Palestinian rupture & the evolution of external constraints

- **Blockade, restrictions & socioeconomic effects:** After 2007 Israel (together with periodic Egyptian restrictions on the Rafah crossing) imposed stringent controls on the movement of people and goods into & out of Gaza. Humanitarian organisations describe these measures as a blockade whose combined effects with recurrent hostilities have produced chronic shortages of construction materials, fuel, medical supplies & export markets; high unemployment; infrastructure degradation; & long-term dependency on external assistance. The blockade's effects on livelihoods, health systems & reconstruction capacity are central to understanding persistent civilian vulnerability. unispal.un.orgUNICEF

5. Repeated cycles of intensive hostilities: modalities & cumulative impact (2008–2023)

- **Operational pattern:** Major campaigns in 2008–09, 2012, 2014, 2021 & subsequent escalations share common operational features: intensive aerial bombardment, targeted or broader ground operations, rocket volleys into southern Israeli population centres, mass internal displacement, damage to civilian infrastructure, & short-term ceasefires mediated by third parties. Each episode generated concentrated destruction of housing, health infrastructure, schools & utilities; repeated reconstruction attempts have been disrupted by restrictions on materials & renewed hostilities.
- **Urban warfare & civilian exposure:** Gaza's compact geography & high population density magnify the risks of civilian harm during any military campaign. Conflation of civilian neighbourhoods with potential military locations, the use of civilian buildings for military purposes in some instances, & the inability to provide safe sanctuary at scale create an environment in which distinction, proportionality & precaution rules are exceptionally difficult to operationalise and verify. OCHAOCCHA OPT

Historical Context

6. The 7 October 2023 attack, the 2023–2024 campaign & immediate humanitarian consequences

- **Trigger event (7 Oct 2023):** On 7 October 2023 armed groups from Gaza launched a large-scale cross-border attack into Israeli territory with high civilian casualties & multiple hostage-takings. The attack had immediate political effects: it generated domestic Israeli resolve for an extensive military response, shifted regional diplomatic calculations, & precipitated the major Gaza campaign that followed. News reporting summarises the scale of the initial attack as producing very large numbers of Israeli casualties & multiple hostages taken, figures that have formed the basis of subsequent hostage negotiations and ceasefire diplomacy. [ReutersAP News](#)
- **Scope of the Israeli military response & humanitarian effects:** Israel's response combined sustained air strikes, artillery, targeted raids & broader ground operations in Gaza alongside tightened controls over crossings. Humanitarian agencies reported widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure—hospitals, primary health clinics, water & sanitation systems, electricity distribution networks & housing—and mass internal displacement across Gaza. Shortages of food, potable water, fuel, medical supplies & shelter became acute; the stated restrictions on crossings at various times hindered scaled humanitarian flows. These immediate effects compounded pre-existing deprivation to create a multi-sectoral humanitarian emergency. [worldjpn.netUNRWA](#)

7. Demography, refugees & social vulnerability — precise programmatic figures

- **Gaza population & density:** As of mid-2024 the United Nations used operational planning figures estimating Gaza's population at roughly **2.1 million** persons; the strip's area of approximately 360 square kilometres produces one of the highest population-density environments globally, a fact that shapes protection assessments. High population figures concentrated into a small territory cause rapid saturation of displacement sites during hostilities. [United NationsOCHA](#)
- **Refugee registrations:** UNRWA's historical mandate dates to the immediate post-1948 period; the agency documents roughly **750,000** Palestine refugees at the time of its formation and currently registers multiple millions of Palestine refugees across the region, a significant proportion of whom reside in Gaza or maintain family links to Gaza. These refugee demographics influence entitlement regimes, social service provision & cross-border political networks for displaced populations. [UNRWA](#)

Historical Context

7. Demography, refugees & social vulnerability — precise programmatic figures

- **Settler population in the occupied West Bank & East Jerusalem:** Settlement expansion since 1967 has produced a substantial Israeli settler population within the West Bank & East Jerusalem. Recent official reporting aggregates indicate a settler population in the order of **several hundred thousand to over seven hundred thousand** across the West Bank & East Jerusalem, a scale that materially affects land availability, movement restrictions & the prospects for territorial contiguity of any prospective Palestinian polity. Delegates should consult UN OCHA, EU & national statistical publications for precise year-by-year counts when addressing West Bank governance & protection issues. [European External Action Service OHCHR](#)

8. Economic & public-health consequences of protracted conflict & constraints

- **Infrastructure degradation & service collapse:** Repeated hostilities combined with restrictions on imports (notably construction materials, fuel & medical equipment) degrade essential services: electricity generation, water purification & distribution, wastewater treatment & hospital operations. When central utilities fail, public health risks multiply—**infectious disease transmission, interruptions in routine care, degradation of maternal & neonatal services & compromised chronic-disease management.** These secondary health effects often cause more sustained civilian morbidity than immediate trauma.
[unispal.un.org UNICEF](#)
- **Socioeconomic stagnation:** Blockade conditions, restricted labour mobility, destroyed commercial infrastructure & constrained trade create high unemployment rates—especially among youth—and stifle private-sector recovery. Long-term unemployment & limited economic opportunity produce intergenerational harm, elevated poverty rates & reduced household capacity to absorb shocks from episodic hostilities. [unispal.un.org](#)

Historical Context

9. Regional political dynamics, external actors & the limits of mediation

• **Regional roles:** Egypt's management of the Rafah crossing, Israel's bilateral security ties, Iranian support for non-state actors in the region, & the diplomatic initiatives of the United States, the European Union, regional Arab states & multilateral organisations have shaped the conflict's trajectory. These external influences affect the availability of mediation channels, ceasefire leverage, humanitarian routing options & the political incentives for durable de-escalation. Diplomatic shifts outside the immediate theatre—such as changing U.S. policy stances or Arab normalization patterns—often alter negotiating possibilities. [Al Jazeera](#) [Reuters](#)

Conventions, treaties and laws related to the agenda

1. The Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 & customary international humanitarian law

Operative legal emphasis: The four Geneva Conventions set forth protections for persons who are hors de combat, prisoners of war, the wounded & sick, & civilians. Key provisions for this agenda include Common Article 3 (minimum protections applicable in non-international armed conflicts), Fourth Geneva Convention protections for civilians (including the prohibition on collective penalties) & the catalogue of “grave breaches” that give rise to individual criminal responsibility. The Conventions are complemented by customary IHL rules that govern distinction, proportionality, precautions in attack, & protections for civilian objects. [ICRC](#) [United Nations](#)

Legal & political significance: The Geneva Conventions constitute the bedrock of IHL applicable in both international & non-international armed conflicts; their provisions inform determinations of lawfulness for conduct such as attacks on civilians, sieges, forced displacement & denial of humanitarian relief. Because the Conventions are universally ratified, delegates should treat their operative language as the primary legal reference for assessing protection obligations and possible grave breaches. [ICRC](#)

Targeted protections addressed: Distinction between combatants & civilians; prohibition on wilful killing, torture, hostage-taking & unlawful deportation; prohibition of collective penalties (GC IV, Art. 33); obligations to respect & facilitate relief consignments (e.g., GC IV, Arts. 23 & 59–62); duties concerning occupation where applicable (GC IV, Art. 55). These provisions directly frame legal assessments of attacks against hospitals & schools, sieges or blockades that impede aid, forced displacement, & reprisals against civilians. [ICRC IHL Databases+1](#)

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Conventions, treaties and laws related to the agenda

2. Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions (1977) — particularly AP I & AP II

Operative legal emphasis: Protocol I (applicable to international armed conflicts) codifies the fundamental IHL principles of distinction, proportionality & precautions (e.g., Arts. 48, 51, 52) and sets rules for humanitarian relief in besieged areas (Arts. 69–71). Protocol II (non-international armed conflicts) reinforces prohibitions such as collective punishment & protections for persons not taking part in hostilities. [ICRC IHL Databases+1](#)

Legal & political significance: Where applicable, the Protocols refine treaty obligations and provide additional operational rules for protection of civilians & relief operations; some provisions of AP I & AP II are reflected in or have influenced customary IHL. Delegates must determine applicability (treaty status varies by State) but should nonetheless consult AP language for normative guidance on sieges, relief access & the conduct of hostilities. [ICRC IHL Databases](#)

Targeted protections addressed: Legal tests for lawful targeting; limitations on siege tactics that cause starvation; conditions for permitting relief consignments to civilian populations; explicit prohibitions on reprisals against protected persons. These rules inform legal analysis of blockades, sieges & conditions under which relief must be permitted. [United Nations](#)

3. Hague Regulations (1907) — occupation doctrine (Article 43) & related obligations

Operative legal emphasis: Article 43 of the Hague Regulations imposes on an occupying power the duty to restore & maintain public order & civil life “as far as possible,” subject to the limits of military necessity. Complementary Fourth Geneva Convention provisions (e.g., Articles 55 & 59) delineate the occupying power’s obligations regarding food, medical supplies & relief. [hpcrresearch.orgICRC](#)

Conventions, treaties and laws related to the agenda

3. Hague Regulations (1907) — occupation doctrine (Article 43) & related obligations-continuation

Legal & political significance: The occupation regime defines a specific matrix of duties (administration, public welfare, maintenance of services) where “effective control” exists. Determinations of occupation are fact-specific but crucial because they convert certain operational failures (for example, failure to provide essential services) into obligations of an occupying State. Delegates should evaluate factual control carefully when invoking occupation-law duties. [Human Rights Watch](#)

Targeted protections addressed: Duties to maintain or restore water, sanitation, health systems & food supplies; limitations on population transfers; obligations to permit & facilitate relief; legal consequences where occupation obligations are breached. [ICRC](#)

4. Prohibition of collective punishment, siege & starvation as methods of warfare

Operative legal emphasis: Treaty law expressly prohibits collective penalties against civilian populations (GC IV, Art. 33), & customary IHL forbids starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. Siege tactics & blockades that have the direct effect of depriving civilians of essential sustenance can amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity where the requisite mens rea & scale are present. Scholarly & institutional authorities treat blockades that cause mass starvation or impede impartial relief as potentially criminal. [ICRC IHL Databases](#) [ASILguide-humanitarian-law.org](#)

Legal & political significance: Prohibitions on collective punishment & starvation are peremptory in character for the protection of civilians. Delegates should recognise that allegations concerning blockades, sieges, fuel denial & deprivation of water or medical supplies implicate these core rules and may trigger criminal investigations or other accountability measures. [guide-humanitarian-law.org](#)

Targeted protections addressed: The law forbids measures that collectively punish civilians; it requires permitting, facilitating & protecting impartial humanitarian relief when civilians are at risk of starvation or disease; it prohibits using deprivation as a weapon. [ASILguide-humanitarian-law.org](#)

Conventions, treaties and laws related to the agenda

5. Obligation to allow & facilitate humanitarian assistance (GC IV Arts. 23, 55 & Arts. 59–62; AP I Arts. 69–70)

Operative legal emphasis. Geneva Convention IV requires contracting parties to allow the free passage of consignments of medical & relief supplies intended for the civilian population (Art. 23) & obliges an occupying power to ensure provision of food & medical supplies where the population's survival is threatened (Art. 55). Articles 59–62 set out conditions for relief operations; AP I further refines relief obligations for besieged areas. These treaty provisions are widely reflected in customary international law governing humanitarian access. [ICRC IHL Databases+1](#)

Legal & political significance. These provisions form the legal basis for claims that parties must permit, facilitate & not arbitrarily impede impartial humanitarian relief. The legal regime balances the right of passage with a party's security concerns, but scholarship and practice emphasise that denials of relief must be narrowly justified & that technical arrangements may be required to prevent diversion. Delegates should anchor protection proposals that seek corridors, safe passages, or fuel & medical deliveries in these treaty texts. [elac.ox.ac.uk](#)[Lieber Institute West Point](#)

Targeted protections addressed. Free passage of humanitarian consignments for vulnerable groups; neutral supervision of distribution; respect for impartiality & non-discrimination in relief operations; obligations against arbitrary denials that would endanger civilian survival. [guide-humanitarian-law.org](#)

Conventions, treaties and laws related to the agenda

6. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court — war crimes, crimes against humanity & command responsibility (Arts. 7, 8, 28)

Operative legal emphasis: The Rome Statute defines war crimes (Art. 8), crimes against humanity (Art. 7) & sets out superior responsibility for commanders & other superiors (Art. 28). The Statute includes explicit offences relevant to the agenda, such as intentionally directing attacks against civilians, causing starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, unlawful deportation or transfer, taking hostages, & extensive destruction not justified by military necessity. [International Criminal Court](#)[Public.Law](#)

Legal & political significance: The ICC provides the primary permanent international criminal forum for investigating & prosecuting individuals responsible for the most serious international crimes. Where the Court has jurisdiction, its normative framework shapes investigatory priorities & evidentiary preservation; ICC action also exerts political pressure for domestic accountability. Delegates should be aware of the legal thresholds for the Court's crimes & the institutional consequences of referrals, cooperation requests or support measures. [International Criminal Court](#)[ICRC IHL Databases](#)

Targeted protections addressed: Individual criminal responsibility for attacks on civilians, starvation crimes, unlawful deportation & hostage-taking; superior responsibility for commanders who knew or should have known about crimes & failed to prevent or punish them. These doctrines inform discussions about evidence preservation, witness protection & cooperation with international prosecutors. [Public.Law](#)[Legal Information Institute](#)

Conventions, treaties and laws related to the agenda

7. Genocide Convention & ICJ provisional measures (South Africa v. Israel)

Operative legal emphasis. The Genocide Convention imposes duties to prevent & punish genocide. In South Africa v. Israel the ICJ issued provisional measures ordering steps to prevent acts that could amount to genocide, to ensure urgent humanitarian access at Rafah & to preserve evidence. Provisional measures are binding on the parties pending final adjudication. [International Court of Justice+1](#)

Legal & political significance. ICJ provisional measures carry immediate legal weight; they can require concrete protective steps that are enforceable as international judicial orders. Because provisional measures are addressed to States, they function as high-order legal commands that complement criminal investigations by targeting state obligations to prevent atrocity crimes. Delegates should treat ICJ measures as potent legal sources when arguing for state-level compliance obligations relating to civilian protection. [United Nations International Court of Justice](#)

Targeted protections addressed. Prevention of genocidal acts (including incitement), keeping border crossings or corridors open where ordered, preservation of documentary & forensic evidence, & state obligations to report on measures taken to comply with the Court's orders. [International Court of Justice+1](#)

8. State responsibility, command responsibility & remedies (ILC Articles on State Responsibility; Rome Statute Art. 28)

Operative legal emphasis. The Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts establish conditions under which States are internationally responsible for breaches of obligations, the legal consequences of such breaches, & possible countermeasures. The Rome Statute's Article 28 codifies superior responsibility for commanders & other superiors. Together these regimes support claims for reparations, diplomatic countermeasures & criminal accountability. [United Nations Office of Legal Affairs](#) [ICRC IHL Databases](#)

Conventions, treaties and laws related to the agenda

8. State responsibility, command responsibility & remedies (ILC Articles on State Responsibility; Rome Statute Art. 28)

Legal & political significance: State responsibility enables injured States &, in some circumstances, the wider international community to invoke legal consequences for wrongful acts. Command responsibility operationalises individual liability for crimes committed by subordinates. For delegates, these doctrines explain pathways from factual finding to legal consequence: public reporting, evidence preservation, criminal referrals, reparations claims & International Court litigation. [Cambridge AssetsLegal Information Institute](#)

Targeted protections addressed: Reparation frameworks, obligation to investigate & prosecute, state duties to prevent internationally wrongful acts, & criminal liability for commanders who fail to prevent or punish subordinates' crimes. [United Nations Office of Legal Affairs](#)

9. Accountability mechanisms & remedial instruments (overview)

- **International Criminal Court (ICC):** Investigations, arrest warrants, victim participation & reparations where jurisdiction exists. See ICC declarations on the Palestine situation & prosecutorial statements. [International Criminal Court+1](#)
- **International Court of Justice (ICJ):** Provisional measures & contentious adjudication under treaties such as the Genocide Convention; binding orders to States. [International Court of Justice](#)
- **UN Human Rights Council & OHCHR:** Fact-finding, commissions of inquiry, reporting mandates & recommendations that form the evidentiary basis for further legal or political action. [United Nations](#)
- **Domestic prosecution & universal jurisdiction:** National courts may exercise jurisdiction over international crimes; domestic avenues remain central where international courts lack reach.

Resolutions related to the agenda

1. General Assembly — A/RES/ES-10/21 (Emergency Special Session) — 27 October 2023

Operative emphasis: The Emergency Special Session resolution A/RES/ES-10/21 called for an immediate & sustained humanitarian truce; condemned attacks on civilians; demanded compliance with international humanitarian law; and urged unfettered humanitarian access. The text expresses the collective political will of the Assembly concerning urgent protection and relief measures. [UN Documentation](#)

Legal & political significance: General Assembly resolutions adopted in emergency special session are not themselves legally binding but constitute authoritative expressions of the political will of a majority of Member States. ES-10/21 therefore functions as a strong political and normative reference point for measures prioritizing civilian protection and humanitarian relief when the Security Council's ability to act is constrained. Delegates should treat the resolution as an important statement of international consensus on the necessity of urgent humanitarian steps. [UN Documentation](#)

Targeted protections addressed: The resolution foregrounds immediate cessation of hostilities for humanitarian purposes, the release of hostages, and unimpeded delivery of relief consignments to civilian populations. These elements frame the political case for corridors, pauses, & measures to reduce civilian exposure to harm. [UN Documentation](#)

2. Security Council — S/RES/2712 (15 November 2023)

Operative emphasis: Security Council Resolution 2712 called explicitly for urgent & extended humanitarian pauses and corridors throughout Gaza to enable the rapid, safe, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance and to mitigate civilian deprivation of basic services. It also demanded the unconditional release of hostages and recalled parties' obligations under international humanitarian law. [United Nations Security Council Report](#)

Resolutions related to the agenda

2. Security Council — S/RES/2712 (15 November 2023)

Legal & political significance: Security Council resolutions constitute the principal instrument by which the UN exercises collective security and humanitarian authority. While the Council's binding legal authority depends on the resolution's Chapter and operative language, S/RES/2712 is a strong political directive emphasizing immediate operational measures (pauses, corridors) to protect civilians and facilitate assistance. It is therefore a central text for any discussion of operational modalities for relief in active hostilities. [Security Council Report](#)

Targeted protections addressed: The resolution focuses on: (a) establishing humanitarian pauses/time-limited modalities to enable relief; (b) designating and protecting access corridors for food, medicine, fuel, & medical evacuations; and (c) reaffirming obligations not to deprive civilians of essential services. These operative emphases make S/RES/2712 a primary Security Council reference for immediate protection measures. [United Nations](#)[United Nations Press](#)

3. Security Council — S/RES/2720 (22 December 2023)

Operative emphasis: S/RES/2720 reiterated the Council's call for protection of civilians and immediate humanitarian assistance in Gaza. The resolution requested institutional coordination — including a Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator under the Secretary-General — to plan and synchronize humanitarian response and the restoration of essential services. [UN Documentation](#)[Security Council Report](#)

Resolutions related to the agenda

3. Security Council — S/RES/2720 (22 December 2023)

Legal & political significance: Beyond urgent humanitarian pauses, S/RES/2720 links immediate protection measures to institutional follow-through for recovery and service restoration. Its request for an appointed UN coordinator signals an international preference for centralized operational management of relief & reconstruction tasks. For delegates concerned with systemic protection measures, 2720 provides the Council's authoritative framework for combining immediate life-saving steps with coordinated longer-term restoration planning. [UN Documentation](#)[Security Council Report](#)

Targeted protections addressed: The text emphasizes restoration of water, sanitation, health systems, & electricity to avert secondary humanitarian catastrophes; coordination mechanisms for deliveries of fuel & medical supplies; and personnel access for relief agencies. These operational priorities bridge immediate life-saving interventions and the conditions necessary for sustained civilian protection. [UN Documentation](#)[Security Council Report](#)

4. Security Council — S/RES/2728 (25 March 2024)

Operative emphasis: Resolution 2728 demanded an immediate ceasefire to be observed during the month of Ramadan and urged steps toward a lasting and sustainable cessation of hostilities; it reiterated calls for the unconditional release of hostages and for humanitarian access. [UN Documentation](#)[Security Council Report](#)

Legal & political significance: S/RES/2728 exemplifies the Council's use of time-limited, culturally contextual ceasefires as a mechanism to produce temporary cessation of violence that can enable humanitarian operations & confidence-building. The resolution's adoption with a majority of Council members demonstrates international political support for timebound, demonstrable pauses as a means of mitigating civilian harm. [UN Documentation](#)[United Nations Press](#)

Targeted protections addressed: The resolution's operative logic centers on calendar-linked pause measures to: (a) reduce immediate civilian exposure; (b) allow intensified humanitarian relief during a defined interval; & (c) create space for negotiation on further measures to secure civilian safety. [UN Documentation](#)

Resolutions related to the agenda

5. Human Rights Council — A/HRC/RES/55/28 (5 April 2024) and HRC mandates

Operative emphasis: Human Rights Council resolutions adopted in 2024 under Item: Promotion and protection of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory called for immediate protection steps, documentation of alleged violations, independent fact-finding and reporting by OHCHR, & consideration of measures to prevent further human-rights harms, including political recommendations regarding arms transfers. [United Nations](#)
CENTRE DE GENEVE

Legal & political significance: The HRC exercises the UN's principal institutional authority on human-rights monitoring, reporting, and recommendations. While its resolutions are not judicially binding, HRC mandates create evidence-collection mechanisms and produce reports that underpin subsequent legal, political, or prosecutorial steps. For inquiries into patterns of alleged violations and for preserving material and testimonial evidence, HRC instruments and OHCHR reports are primary sources of investigative findings. [United Nations](#)

Targeted protections addressed: HRC texts focus on monitoring alleged violations of international humanitarian law & international human-rights law, identifying needs for independent investigation, and recommending measures such as arms-transfer reviews, witness protection, & preservation of forensic evidence. These functions make HRC outputs integral to building accountability and reparative measures. [United Nations](#)

6. International Court of Justice — Provisional measures in South Africa v. Israel (26 Jan 2024; subsequent orders 28 Mar 2024 & 24 May 2024)

Operative emphasis: In response to South Africa's application under the Genocide Convention, the International Court of Justice indicated provisional measures to prevent acts that might amount to genocide; it ordered, inter alia, measures to ensure humanitarian access through the Rafah crossing and preservation of evidence, and issued binding interim directions applicable to the parties named in the case. Subsequent orders clarified and extended the Court's measures. [International Court of Justice+2](#)
[International Court of Justice+2](#)

Resolutions related to the agenda

6. International Court of Justice — Provisional measures in South Africa v. Israel (26 Jan 2024; subsequent orders 28 Mar 2024 & 24 May 2024)

Legal & political significance: ICJ provisional measures are judicial orders that, under the Court's own jurisprudence and the Statute of the Court, are legally binding on parties to the proceedings. The ICJ's orders constitute immediate judicially-enforceable obligations directed at preventing irreparable harm to rights claimed under a convention. Delegates should understand the ICJ measures as the most direct form of binding international legal instruction addressed to the parties in question, with specific operational prescriptions (for instance, concerning crossings, access, & evidence preservation). The ICJ pronouncements also carry significant political implications regardless of practical compliance. [International Court of Justice Reuters](#)

Targeted protections addressed: The Court's provisional measures emphasize prevention of large-scale civilian harm, maintenance of humanitarian corridors and crossing points where ordered, the obligation of States to prevent and punish incitement to genocide, & requirements to preserve evidence for judicial examination. These measures thereby intersect substantively with humanitarian access, protection of civilians, & accountability mechanisms. [International Court of Justice](#)

Case Study: Israel–Gaza Conflict before the UNHRC

Background

The Israel–Gaza conflict, particularly escalations in 2008–09 (Operation Cast Lead), 2014 (Operation Protective Edge), and 2021, has been a recurring subject of scrutiny before the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). The humanitarian consequences—especially civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of infrastructure—have triggered repeated investigations and debates.

Case Study: Israel–Gaza Conflict before the UNHRC

UNHRC Involvement

- **2009: Goldstone Report**
 - Following Operation Cast Lead, the UNHRC established a Fact-Finding Mission led by Justice Richard Goldstone.
 - The report concluded that both Israel and Hamas committed violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law.
 - Israel was accused of using disproportionate force and targeting civilian infrastructure, while Hamas was accused of indiscriminate rocket fire into Israel.
- **2014: Commission of Inquiry on Gaza (Operation Protective Edge)**
 - The Council created an independent commission to investigate violations during the 2014 conflict.
 - Findings: Both parties were responsible for war crimes, but Israel was particularly criticized for its high civilian death toll due to airstrikes and shelling in densely populated areas.
- **2021 Escalations**
 - The UNHRC voted to launch an ongoing Commission of Inquiry to examine all underlying root causes of recurring violations in Gaza and the West Bank, marking the first open-ended investigation in UNHRC history.

Humanitarian Concerns Raised

- **Civilian Protection:** Thousands of civilian casualties, particularly women and children, were documented.
- **Blockade of Gaza:** The UNHRC frequently highlights the humanitarian crisis caused by restrictions on movement, goods, and medical supplies.
- **Indiscriminate Attacks:** Hamas' rocket attacks on Israeli civilians are equally condemned as violations of IHL.
- **Right to Self-Determination:** Repeated emphasis is placed on the Palestinian people's right under international law.

Case Study: Israel–Gaza Conflict before the UNHRC

Legal Framework Applied

- Geneva Conventions (1949) – Protection of civilians during armed conflict.
- International Humanitarian Law (IHL) – Proportionality, distinction, and necessity in military operations.
- Human Rights Treaties – ICCPR and ICESCR obligations binding on both Israel and Palestine (as recognized by the UNGA).

Outcome and Ongoing Conflict

- Israel rejects most UNHRC inquiries, citing institutional bias (particularly Agenda Item 7).
- The Council continues to document humanitarian violations, with findings often feeding into debates at the International Criminal Court (ICC) regarding potential war crimes.

QARMAs (Questions a resolution must answer):

- 1) What specific human rights and international humanitarian law violations are being committed, and how should they be identified?
- 2) What immediate measures must be taken to safeguard civilians during the conflict?
- 3) Who should monitor and guarantee the protection of civilians, and by what mechanisms?
- 4) How can safe and unhindered humanitarian assistance be delivered?
- 5) What protections must be provided for vulnerable groups such as children, women, the elderly, and displaced persons?
- 6) How should the safety of medical personnel, facilities, and humanitarian workers be ensured?
- 7) What accountability mechanisms should be established for parties committing violations?