

## **Topic 1:**

# **Addressing the poor standard of living of Palestinian refugees in the West Bank**

## **I. Statement of the Problem**

1. The West Bank is currently inhabited by over 700,000 Palestinian refugees.<sup>[1]</sup> A Palestinian refugee is defined as someone, or the descendant of someone, whose original place of residence was in Israel before the occurrence of the 1948 Palestinian Exodus.<sup>[2]</sup> The refugees of the West Bank have a struggling economy, held afloat primarily by foreign donations.<sup>[3]</sup> Over a quarter of those refugees have been living in makeshift refugee camps that are overcrowded and poorly maintained<sup>[2]</sup>; additionally, most of the population has extremely limited access to clean drinking water<sup>[4]</sup>, substantial housing, and medical aid.<sup>[5]</sup>
2. The predominant migration of Palestinians out of Israel was a result of the establishment of the State of Israel which was recommended by the United Nations in Resolution 181(II).<sup>[6]</sup> Because the United Nations is partially responsible for the creation of the Palestinian refugee population, many have questioned whether or not it is the UN's responsibility to provide aid to the struggling people of the West Bank and, if so, to what degree.
3. Delegates should consider whether the UN has the right to directly interfere with the prosperity of a people, how any changes will affect the State of Israel, the source from where the financial resources for this potential initiative will come from, how it will change the international economy, and how assistance to the Palestinian people will impact their cause for an independent state.

## **II. History of the Issue**

4. In 1948 the United Nations proposed the termination of the British Mandate in the Middle East and the granting of the land to the World Zionist Organization for the formation of an official Israeli state.<sup>[6]</sup> Preceding the official establishment of the State of Israel tensions between the Palestinian Arabs and the Israelis had escalated during the 1947 Civil War. As soon as Israel declared independence the conflict escalated into what is known as the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.<sup>[7]</sup> During the two wars, over 700,000 Arabs fled Israel for their safety in what is known as the 1948 Palestinian Exodus.<sup>[8]</sup> While some migrated into neighboring Arab countries a large number settled in the disputed West Bank territory. To this day thousands of Arabs live as refugees in poverty in the West Bank waiting to return to the land they claim is rightfully theirs.<sup>[1]</sup>

5. One of the main standard of living quarrels is control over the limited fresh water supply in the Israeli-West Bank area. As a result of the 1967 War, Israel gained control over the mountain aquifer located in the West Bank as well as the Sea of Galilee. Israel claimed that these extensive water sources were necessary in order to sustain the country's rapidly growing population. The extremely limited water supply not only affects the health of the West Bank population but also greatly impacts the prosperity of their agricultural economy.<sup>[4]</sup>

6. With limited natural and financial resources, many refugees resorted to small scale farming or cottage industry-like services.<sup>[3]</sup> The separation wall running through the West Bank set up to block off land intended for the use of Israeli expansion has isolated thousands of families from their land. For many people their small plots of farmland are their only source of income and now, due to Israeli expansion, nearly one-fifth of the agricultural land in the West Bank is inaccessible.<sup>[9]</sup>

7. Over 200,000 Palestinians rely on employment in Israel, but the fluctuation in the relations between the two peoples has greatly impacted the availability of these jobs. During the 1987 Intifada, tensions between Israelis and Palestinians increased drastically and as a result unemployment rates rose and the standard of living dropped.<sup>[10]</sup> Also, the recent increased Israeli security has permitted fewer Arabs to commute over the border to their jobs; this has taken a serious toll on the West Bank population's economic prosperity.<sup>[5]</sup>

8. In the past the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) have provided millions of dollars worth of aid to Palestinian refugees. This assistance has been in the form of health care services, education, social services, and emergency aid.<sup>[11]</sup> Today these organizations, in combination with donor aid, are the primary factors allowing for the little economic stability that exists in the West Bank.

### III. Potential Solutions

9. Potential solutions to this issue include:

- the expansion of powers granted to the UNRWA and the UNHCR
- the creation of a new body or consolidation of the two pre-existing UN bodies for the purpose of providing aid to the Palestinians
- advocating for more donor aid from benefactors
- allowing the Palestinians to rely on the already existing donor aid and their growing economy to raise their own standard of living
- urging Israel to negotiate with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in order to form an agreement that would include financial assistance and other resources to the Palestinian people

## IV. Position and Research Tips

10. Representing a position authentic to each delegates' respective country is key in this debate. To expand your research, delegates should consider these questions

- What is your country's position, if any, on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- Does your country currently provide aid to other countries or has it in the past? Would your country be willing to give aid to the Palestinian people?
- Is your country a developing nation in need of international assistance?
- What is your country's history in the Human Rights Council?

### Useful Web Sources

- <http://www.un.org/>
- <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home>
- <http://www.unrwa.org/index.php>
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html>

## V. Note to Delegates

Hello delegates,

We want to thank you for the dedication you have put into this conference and are anxious to see the product of your hard work. That being said, we are very excited to be your chair and are greatly anticipating the upcoming debate at MUNSA XVIII.

-Your Chairs: Alejandro, and Maddie

### References

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## **Topic 2:**

### **Addressing substandard working conditions for undocumented migrant workers.**

#### **I. Statement of the Problem:**

1. The UN Convention on the Rights of Migrants defines a migrant worker as a "person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national"<sup>[9]</sup>. More specifically, an undocumented migrant worker is defined as someone who lacks the necessary documents required for legal immigration or residence.<sup>[10]</sup>
2. Undocumented migrant workers are beneficial because many employers struggle to find citizens to fill the low-level but operation-necessary positions that migrant workers, who are looking for any form of employment, are willing to fill. By the year 2030, 76 million baby boomers will be retiring and only 46 million U.S.-born workers will be entering the workforce which creates a labor gap of 30 million. At that point the migrant labor force will be vital to the sustainability of the U.S. economy<sup>[11]</sup>.
3. The federal government estimates that 60 percent of migrant workers are illegal immigrants. Some female migrant workers across the United States are sexually harassed and assaulted.<sup>[7]</sup> Also, many migrant workers fail to receive payment for their work for three to ten months. Due to their immigration status they refrain from calling authorities because of their fear of being deported.<sup>[8]</sup>

4. In 2010, The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment had reports of 313 deaths including 18 suicides among Sri Lankan migrant workers. Additionally, this included primarily issues of harassment and sickness. The majority of the migrant workers are females who are working in the Gulf. <sup>[6]</sup>

5. Delegates should debate plans of action for addressing xenophobia and increasing global workers' rights. This problem is in dire need of a solution, seeing as many individuals worldwide are becoming so poverty stricken as a result of immigration laws, that we are finding that many become dehydrated, famished, and malnourished. <sup>[3]</sup>

## II. History of the Issue:

1. In 1985, the United Nations came up with the Declaration on the Human Rights of Individuals Who are not Nationals of the Country in which They Live.<sup>[2]</sup> This entailed that fundamental human rights would be provided in the International Covenants on Human Rights which would give these inalienable rights to even non-citizens. This declaration is a guide to all states as they implement laws, so migrants rights will always be protected. <sup>[1]</sup>

2. In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development used the term “undocumented” to describe migrant workers, but this was in the wrong due to the fact that this does not cover migrants who enter legally, but become illegal by violation and/or possession of false documents. <sup>[5]</sup>

3. In 1966 China and several other nations signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights which recognized the dignity and equality of inalienable rights which included freedom, justice and peace in the world. <sup>[4]</sup> It also addressed civil and political freedom and the recognition of dignity, along with economical, social and cultural rights. It ultimately ended with universal respect. <sup>[5]</sup>

## III. Potential Solutions

- funding needed to implement beneficial change in facilities
- establishment of sanitary sources for workers
- Increased health care benefits for migrant workers.

## IV. Position & Research Tips:

- What is your country's position, if any, regarding the working conditions of migrants
- What is your country's history in the Human Rights Council?
- Does your country currently utilize a migrant labor force?
- Are people from your country migrating to other countries in search of employment?
- It is important to only use veritable and verifiable sources.

## V. References

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-Your Chairs: Alejandro and Maddie



