

TFSMUN 2025



(UNHRC)

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN
RIGHTS COUNCIL

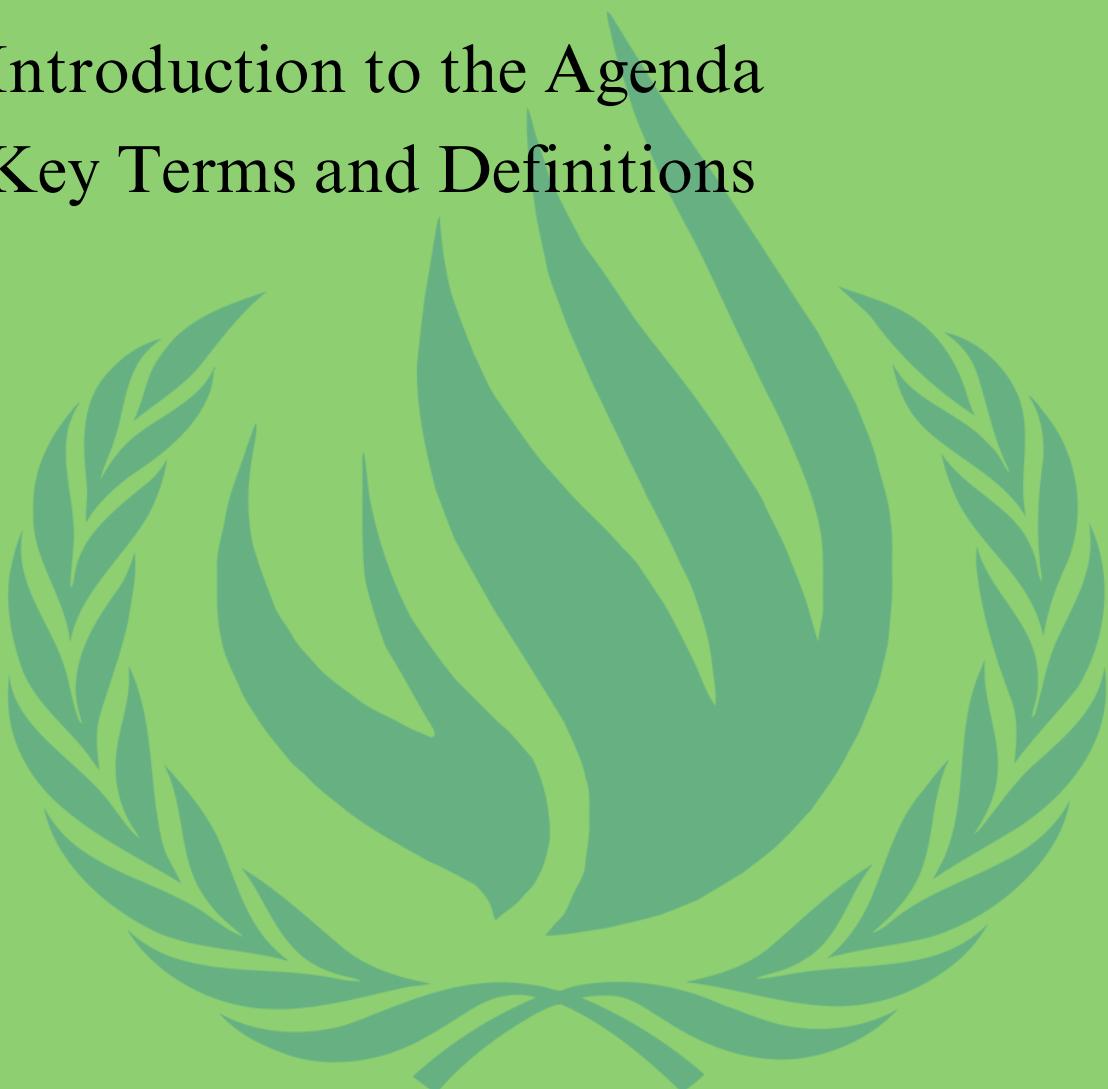
AGENDA:

*Safeguarding Human Rights
Amidst Armed Conflict: The
Case of Israel and Gaza"*

BACKGROUND GUIDE

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Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

Greetings from the Executive Board of UNHRC.

We are thrilled to welcome you to this year's Model United Nations conference and to our committee sessions. It is our honor and privilege to serve as your Executive Board and guide you through discussions on one of the most pressing global issues of our time: Safeguarding Human Rights Amidst Armed Conflict: The Case of Israel and Gaza"

This topic demands a delicate balance of empathy, diplomacy, and critical analysis. As delegates, you will delve into the complexities of human rights protection in a protracted conflict, exploring challenges such as civilian safety, humanitarian access, and accountability for violations of international law.

As your Executive Board, we are here to support and guide you. If you have any questions or require assistance with your research or position paper preparation, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. Our aim is to create an engaging and intellectually stimulating environment where every voice is heard, and meaningful progress is made.

We look forward to witnessing your passion, intellect, and diplomatic skills as we navigate this challenging and important topic together. Let this conference be an opportunity not only to learn but also to inspire change and contribute to global peace and justice.

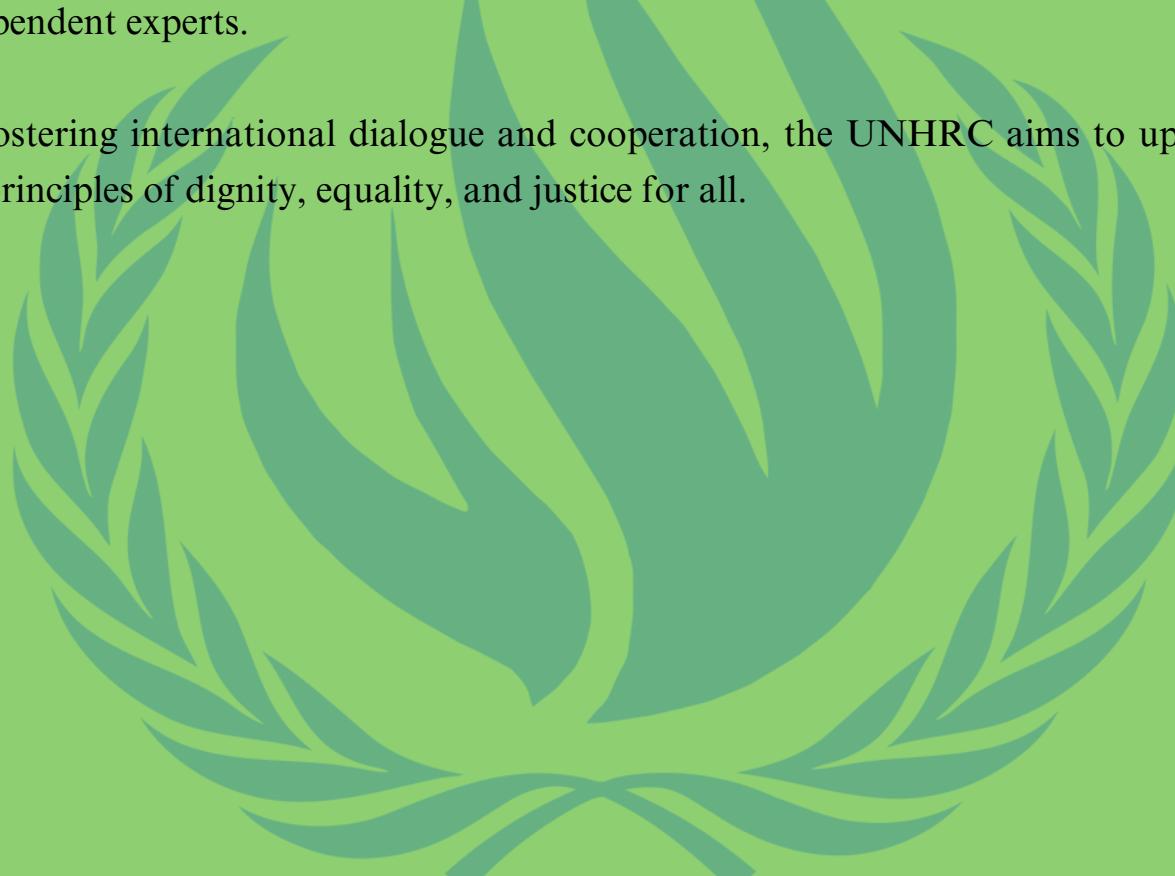
Sincerely,
S.K. Manav & Suvan Sahoo,
Chairs of the UNHRC Committee

What is UNHRC?

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system, established in 2006 to promote and protect human rights worldwide. It consists of 47 member states elected by the UN General Assembly and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

The UNHRC addresses a wide range of human rights issues, including discrimination, freedom of expression, the rights of minorities, and the impact of armed conflicts on civilians. It reviews the human rights records of all UN member states through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and investigates allegations of human rights violations through special procedures like fact-finding missions and independent experts.

By fostering international dialogue and cooperation, the UNHRC aims to uphold the principles of dignity, equality, and justice for all.



Introduction

The Israel-Gaza conflict has been a focal point of international concern for decades, marked by recurring violence, deep-rooted political disagreements, and immense human suffering. Amidst these hostilities, the protection of fundamental human rights has emerged as a critical challenge. Civilian casualties, restrictions on humanitarian access, displacement, and destruction of infrastructure highlight the urgent need for addressing human rights violations and enforcing international law.

This guide aims to equip delegates with an in-depth understanding of the issue, its implications, and possible avenues for resolution.

Historical Context

The roots of the Israel-Gaza conflict trace back to the early 20th century, with the establishment of Israel in 1948 and subsequent regional disputes. Gaza has been under a blockade since 2007, creating severe economic and social hardships. Numerous armed conflicts between Israel and Hamas have further exacerbated the situation, often resulting in widespread civilian casualties and destruction.

Key Events:

- 1948 Arab-Israeli War: Establishment of Israel; displacement of Palestinian populations.
- 1967 Six-Day War: Occupation of Gaza by Israel.
- 2007 Onward: Hamas control over Gaza and imposition of the blockade by Israel and Egypt.
- Recent Escalations: Conflicts in 2008–09, 2012, 2014, 2021, and 2023, resulting in significant human and material losses on both sides.

International Legal Framework

Key Instruments:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Geneva Conventions: Protection of civilians during war.

Rome Statute: Addressing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

UN Security Council Resolutions on Israel-Palestine.

Violations Alleged:

Targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Use of disproportionate force.

Denial of basic humanitarian aid and services.

Role of International Stakeholders

United Nations:

- Regular condemnation of violations through resolutions.
- Provision of humanitarian aid through agencies like UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency).

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):

- Advocacy for human rights and documentation of abuses.
- Direct aid and support to affected populations.

Regional Actors:

- Egypt, Jordan, and other neighboring countries mediate peace efforts and provide humanitarian aid.

Introduction to the Agenda

The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 is a landmark event that fundamentally altered the political landscape of the region. Following the United Nations' partition plan to create separate Jewish and Arab states, the declaration of independence by David Ben-Gurion led to a war involving neighboring Arab states. This resulted in the displacement of approximately 750,000 Palestinians, a condition referred to as the Nakba, or "catastrophe," by the Palestinian population. This mass displacement established a narrative of loss and dispossession that continues to resonate among Palestinians and shapes their identity, grievances, and claims for self-determination.

Six-Day War in 1967 The Six-Day War, fought in June 1967, was a pivotal conflict where Israel gained control over several territories, including the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Sinai Peninsula, fundamentally altering the regional power dynamics. This war not only solidified Israeli control over occupied territories but also intensified Palestinian identity and national consciousness. The occupation facilitated the expansion of Israeli settlements and military presence in these areas, which has been a source of ongoing tension and conflict, contributing to Palestinian feelings of disenfranchisement and oppression.

Decline of Peace Processes

The failure of peace initiatives, particularly the Oslo Accords signed in the 1990s, represents a significant decline in hope for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. While the Oslo Accords established a framework for Palestinian self-government and mutual recognition, the expectations for peace were not realized. The accords were marred by continued violence, settlement expansion, and political fragmentation among Palestinian factions, particularly between Fatah and Hamas. As the hope for a two-state solution diminished, resentment and discontent increased.

Oslo Accords - The Oslo Accords were a series of agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) that aimed to provide a framework for peace and a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They were signed in 1993 and 1995, with the first agreement occurring after secret negotiations in Oslo, Norway, which led to the Oslo I Accord. Key features included-

Palestinian self-government: The accords created the Palestinian Authority (PA), which was given limited control over certain areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while Israel maintained control over other areas and security.

Withdrawal: Israel agreed to withdraw from some parts of the West Bank and Gaza, transferring responsibility to the Palestinian Authority.

Failure of Oslo Accords

- Continued violence and terrorism: After the Oslo agreements, violence continued on both sides. Palestinian militants, including groups like Hamas, carried out attacks against Israelis, while Israeli military operations and airstrikes in response led to Palestinian casualties. This violence undermined trust and the possibility of peace, especially among Israelis who felt threatened by terrorist attacks.
- Settlement expansion: Israel continued to expand settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which was seen as a direct challenge to the accords' goal of creating a Palestinian state. These further escalated tensions and made Palestinians feel that Israel was not serious about peace.
- Lack of a final-status agreement: The Oslo Accords were meant to be a framework leading to final-status negotiations on crucial issues like the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, border demarcation, and security. However, these final-status negotiations failed to yield a comprehensive agreement, with major disagreements remaining between both sides.
- Political divisions among Palestinians: Within Palestine, political divisions were particularly between the Fatah party (which was in control of the Palestinian Authority) and Hamas. Fatah, under Yasser Arafat, supporting the accords, was opposed by Hamas, who rejected Israel's right to exist. This internal split undermined the Palestinian side's unity and ability to implement the accords.
- Political instability: The death of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 created political instability in Israel. Rabin had been a key figure in the Oslo process, and his assassination by a right-wing Israeli extremist caused a major setback. Political changes in Palestine, including the rise of Hamas, also added to the complexity of the situation.

Escalations in War

Hamas' rise to power: In 2007, Hamas, an Islamist militant group that opposes Israel's right to exist, took control of the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian political party that favors peace talks with Israel. This political split created a situation where the West Bank remained under the control of the Palestinian Authority (Fatah), while Gaza fell under Hamas' rule. The presence of Hamas in Gaza has been a major factor in the escalation, including military actions.

Blockade of Gaza: Israel and Egypt have imposed a blockade on Gaza since Hamas took power in 2007, citing security concerns and preventing weapons from entering the territory. The blockade has led to severe economic hardships and a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, fueling resentment and anger among the Palestinian population. The blockade has also created a sense of isolation in Gaza, increasing antipathy toward Israel and promoting extreme measures.

Military response and civilian casualties: Israel's military responses to rocket attacks from Gaza often involve airstrikes, which can cause significant damage and civilian casualties in the densely populated Gaza Strip. The high number of civilian deaths and injuries fuel international outrage and promote further escalations. The destruction of infrastructure in Gaza, including schools, hospitals, and homes, worsens the humanitarian situation and causes long-term resentment.

Recent escalation triggers: The trigger for the latest wave of violence was the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, which left over 1,200 Israelis dead and marked a significant escalation of hostilities. In retaliation, Israel launched extensive military operations in Gaza that have generated substantial Palestinian casualties, with estimates exceeding 46,000 dead as of January 2025. On that day, Hamas launched an unprecedented assault on Israel, which resulted in the deaths of approximately 1,200 individuals, primarily Israeli civilians. This attack was characterized as the deadliest for Israel since its establishment. The scale and coordination of the assault, involving simultaneous rocket strikes and ground incursions, overwhelmed Israel's defense systems and caught the Israeli military off guard.



Humanitarian Impact of War

The Gaza Strip and Israel war has caused a lot of suffering for people on both sides. Here are some of the main humanitarian impacts:

For people in Gaza: Thousands of people have been killed or injured. This includes many civilians, like women and children. Many people have been forced to leave their homes because of the fighting. They are now living in temporary shelters or with relatives. Homes, schools, and hospitals have been damaged or destroyed. This makes it hard for people to live their lives and get the help they need. There is a shortage of food, water, medicine, and fuel. This is because the fighting has made it difficult to bring these things into Gaza. Hospitals are overwhelmed with patients and don't have enough supplies. This means that people are not getting the medical care they need. There is a risk of diseases spreading because people are living in crowded shelters and don't have access to clean water and sanitation. Many people are experiencing psychological trauma because of the violence and destruction they have witnessed. This is especially true for children.

For people in Israel: Thousands of people have been forced to flee their homes in southern Israel because of rocket attacks from Gaza. Businesses and schools have been forced to close because of the fighting. Many people are living in fear of rocket attacks. Some people have been killed or injured by rocket attacks. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire and continues to deteriorate. The need for humanitarian assistance is urgent.

Humanitarian Violations

“Hospitals have become a battleground.”

Direct/indirect targeting of healthcare services during a wartime scenario is a direct violation of both the Geneva Convention. It has been committed mainly by the Israeli side with Palestinians suffering from 654 attacks on healthcare services confirmed from the WHO.

- Article 18 of Geneva Convention IV provides that hospitals and medical units must be respected and protected during armed conflict. They can only be attacked if they are being used for military purposes, and even then, the attacking force must take precautions to avoid harm to civilian lives.
- Article 12 of Additional Protocol I states that medical units shall not be the object of attack, and their protection must be respected unless they are used to commit acts harmful to the enemy.

“Illegal Occupation of Lebanon”

UNIFIL also continues to urge the timely withdrawal of the Israeli defense forces (IDF) and deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces in southern Lebanon, and the full implementation of resolution 1701.

- The continued occupation and annexation policies of the Israeli government have been deemed unlawful under international law, violating the principles of the UN Charter.

Impact of other Countries in the Gaza and Israel War

International diplomacy and political tensions: Countries around the world have taken sides or called for ceasefire, with global diplomatic tensions increasing. Nations such as the United States have supported Israel, while countries in the Middle East and many in the Global South have voiced strong support for Palestinians. This has led to political divides, with some countries condemned for their stances or actions while others have pushed for peace talks.

Refugee crisis: The escalation of violence has caused many Palestinians to flee Gaza, leading to an increase in refugees in neighboring countries such as Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon. These countries face the challenge of providing humanitarian aid and shelter to displaced people, straining their resources and infrastructure.

Humanitarian aid and international relief efforts: Countries and organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been working to provide aid to both Gaza and Israel, including medical assistance, food, water, and shelter. The conflict has mobilized global efforts, but the restricted access to Gaza has made it difficult to provide effective relief.

Impact on international law and human rights: The conflict raises serious questions about international law, particularly regarding human rights, war crimes, and the rule of law. International bodies, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), may become involved, leading to pressure on countries to comply with human rights standards.

Current Human Rights Challenges

Civilian Protection:

High civilian casualties during military operations.

Targeting and destruction of homes, schools, and healthcare facilities.

Humanitarian Access:

Restrictions on movement of goods and people due to blockades.

Limited access to healthcare, clean water, and education.

Freedom and Security:

Arbitrary detention, suppression of free speech, and lack of accountability.

Discrimination and unequal treatment under military occupation.

Psychological and Societal Impact:

Traumatization of children and families.

Long-term impact on education, livelihood, and societal structures.



Points for Preparation

To help you prepare, we recommend focusing on the following areas:

- 1. Understanding the Context:** Research the historical background of the Israel-Gaza conflict and its impact on human rights.
- 2. National Positions:** Develop a clear understanding of your assigned country's policies, alliances, and interests related to the conflict.
- 3. International Law and Human Rights Frameworks:** Familiarize yourselves with key treaties, conventions, and United Nations resolutions relevant to this issue.
- 4. Solutions-Oriented Thinking:** Consider innovative and pragmatic approaches to address human rights violations and promote conflict resolution.

During the sessions, your ability to collaborate, debate constructively, and demonstrate leadership will be key to the success of the committee. We encourage you to listen actively, articulate your arguments persuasively, and uphold the principles of diplomacy and mutual respect.

Questions to Address

Q1. How can the safety and rights of civilians on both sides be better protected during hostilities?

Q2. What measures can ensure humanitarian access to all affected regions?

Q3. How can accountability for human rights violations be enforced impartially?

Q4. What steps can the UNHRC take to promote long-term solutions to the conflict while respecting the sovereignty and security concerns of all parties?

Q5. How can international cooperation contribute to a sustainable resolution?

Delegate Preparation

Research Focus:

- Historical and political background of the conflict.
- Your country's stance on the Israel-Gaza issue and its involvement in international forums.
- Relevant international legal frameworks, including human rights and humanitarian laws.
-

Position Paper Guidelines:

- Clearly state your country's position on the conflict and proposed solutions.
- Address subtopics such as civilian protection, accountability, and humanitarian access.

Committee Guidelines

This committee focuses on only the humanitarian rights of the people in Gaza and Israel and not war part of it. Delegates are requested to refrain from going into the war part of this agenda.

It is requested for them to only discuss solution for the human rights and not the solution for war between Israel and Gaza.

Delegates are also requested to use only parliamentary language. Delegates are not allowed to use words such as 'dumb', 'stupid' etc.

Delegates must respect other delegates. Delegates cannot interrupt others during a speech and must respect other's opinion.

It is advised to always raise the pluck card and only after recognition by the EB to convey anything to the committee.

Delegates are requested to **WEAR WESTERN FORMALS** such as a shirt, a blazer, a tie, formal trousers etc.

Delegates are also not allowed to bring any electronic devices such as mobiles, laptops etc.

Registration link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/12hQyTDS1tZPAmAKBeScf97iaEzFcyPGoX15Hs5rTTho/edit?ts=677cddb3>

Conclusion

The Israel-Gaza conflict presents a challenging yet vital topic for the UNHRC to address. Delegates must approach the issue with empathy and impartiality, recognizing the suffering on both sides and working towards sustainable peace and justice. Let this discussion be a platform for constructive diplomacy and meaningful progress.

Recommended Reading:

1. UN Reports on the Israel-Gaza Conflict
2. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch Reports
3. Historical Overviews and International Law Frameworks

Contact Information:

For guidance, contact the Executive Board at



Few reliable sources

<https://www.aljazeera.com/tag/israel-palestine-conflict/>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-palestinian-dispute-hinges-statehood-land-jerusalem-refugees-2023-10-10/>



Thank You!



We hope you have an
enriching and memorable
experience at the UNHRC!