

BACKGROUND GUIDELINE

THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC)

"The Urgent Humanitarian Situation in The Gaza Strip and the Need for Immediate Ceasefire and Lifting of the Blockade by Israel."

I. Introduction

In this section, you can emphasize the critical role of the UNSC within the Model United Nations (MUN). The UNSC mirrors its real-world counterpart, responsible for global peace and security. Highlight the importance of the chosen theme and the urgency of the situation in the Gaza Strip, as it reflects a significant and ongoing international crisis.

II. Historical Timeline of Conflict

- ❖ The land of Palestine has been inhabited for thousands of years by various peoples, including Canaanites, Israelites, Philistines, and others. It has been a region of historical and religious significance for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- ❖ 1897: The First Zionist Congress is held in Basel, Switzerland, marking the beginning of the modern Zionist movement.
- ❖ 1917: The Balfour Declaration is issued by the British government, expressing support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.
- ❖ 1920: The British Empire is granted a Mandate over Palestine by the League of Nations.
- ❖ 1939-1945: The Holocaust occurs, in which Nazi Germany kills six million Jews.
- ❖ 1947: The United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine is adopted, dividing the territory into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The plan is accepted by the Jewish leadership but rejected by the Arab leadership.
- ❖ 1948: The State of Israel is declared on May 14, 1948. The Arab states immediately invade, and the 1948 Arab-Israeli War begins. The war ends in 1949 with Israel in control of most of the territory that had been allocated to it under the UN Partition Plan.
- ❖ 1949: The Palestinian refugee crisis begins, with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fleeing or being expelled from their homes in what is now Israel.
- ❖ 1967: The Six-Day War is fought between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Israel defeats all three Arab states and occupies the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights.
- ❖ 1973: The Yom Kippur War is fought between Israel and Egypt and Syria. The war ends in a stalemate, but it leads to a peace process between Israel and Egypt.
- ❖ 1979: The Camp David Accords are signed between Israel and Egypt, establishing a peace treaty between the two countries.

- ❖ 1987: The First Intifada, an uprising of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip against Israeli occupation, begins.
- ❖ 1993: The Oslo Accords are signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), leading to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- ❖ 1995: The Second Intifada, another uprising of Palestinians against Israeli occupation, begins.
- ❖ 2005: Israel withdraws its forces from the Gaza Strip.
- ❖ 2007: Hamas takes control of the Gaza Strip.
- ❖ 2009: The Obama administration launches a new peace initiative between Israel and the Palestinians.
- ❖ 2013-2014: Another round of peace talks is held between Israel and the Palestinians, but they fail to reach an agreement.
- ❖ 2014: A 50-day war is fought between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.
- ❖ 2016: The Trump administration is elected and takes a more pro-Israel stance than the previous administration.
- ❖ 2017: The Trump administration moves the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
- ❖ 2018: The Trump administration withdraws the US from the Iran nuclear deal.
- ❖ 2019: The Trump administration unveils its "Peace to Prosperity" plan for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is rejected by the Palestinians.
- ❖ 2020: The Abraham Accords are signed between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, normalizing relations between the countries.
- ❖ 2021: A 11-day war is fought between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.
- ❖ 2023: The Israeli declared war on Hamas.

A. Creation of Israel and Palestinian Conflict

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 was a complex event with far-reaching consequences. It was the culmination of over a century of Zionist aspirations to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine, but it also led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians.

The circumstances surrounding the establishment of Israel are complex and contested, but there are a few key factors that are generally agreed upon.

- ❖ **The rise of Zionism:** The Zionist movement was founded in the late 19th century in response to the growing persecution of Jews in Europe. Zionists believed that the only way to ensure the safety and security of the Jewish people was to establish a homeland in Palestine.
- ❖ **The Holocaust:** The Holocaust, in which Nazi Germany killed six million Jews, had a profound impact on the Zionist movement. It strengthened the resolve of Zionists to establish a Jewish homeland where Jews would be safe from persecution.

- ❖ **The British Mandate:** After the First World War, the British Empire was granted a Mandate over Palestine by the League of Nations. The Mandate tasked Britain with helping to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, but it also stipulated that the rights of the existing Palestinian population must be protected.
- ❖ **The United Nations Partition Plan:** In 1947, the United Nations adopted a plan to partition Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The plan was accepted by the Jewish leadership but rejected by the Arab leadership.

On May 14, 1948, the day that the British Mandate ended, the Jewish leadership in Palestine declared the establishment of the State of Israel. The Arab states immediately invaded, and the 1948 Arab-Israeli War began. The war ended in 1949 with Israel in control of most of the territory that had been allocated to it under the UN Partition Plan.

The displacement of Palestinians began during the 1948 war and continued in the years that followed. There are a number of factors that contributed to the displacement, including:

- ❖ **Israeli military operations:** Israeli forces carried out a number of military operations during the 1948 war that resulted in the destruction of Palestinian villages and the expulsion of their inhabitants.
- ❖ **Fear and panic:** Many Palestinians fled their homes out of fear of violence or expulsion.
- ❖ **Direct orders from Israeli authorities:** In some cases, Israeli authorities directly ordered Palestinians to evacuate their homes.
- ❖ **Economic factors:** The loss of land and property made it difficult for many Palestinians to remain in their homes.

As a result of the displacement, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians became refugees. The majority of these refugees ended up in neighbouring Arab countries, such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The Palestinian refugee crisis remains one of the most intractable problems in the Middle East today.

It is important to note that there are different perspectives on the circumstances surrounding the establishment of Israel and the subsequent displacement of Palestinians. The Israeli narrative tends to focus on the right of Jews to self-determination and the need to establish a Jewish homeland after the Holocaust. The Palestinian narrative tends to focus on the injustice of the displacement and the right of Palestinians to return to their homes.

Both narratives are valid and complex. It is important to understand both perspectives in order to gain a full understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However the ongoing disputes, violence, and conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians are rooted in a number of complex and interrelated factors, including:

- ❖ **Competing claims to the same land:** Both Israelis and Palestinians claim the land of Palestine as their homeland. Israelis believe that they have a right to the land based on their biblical and historical ties to the region. Palestinians believe

that they have a right to the land based on their indigenous status and the fact that they have been living there for centuries.

- ❖ **The establishment of the State of Israel:** The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. This displacement is known as the Nakba, and it is a central source of trauma and resentment for Palestinians.
- ❖ **The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip:** Israel has occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip since the 1967 Six-Day War. The occupation has been accompanied by a number of human rights abuses, including land confiscation, house demolitions, and restrictions on movement.
- ❖ **The Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip:** Israel has imposed a blockade on the Gaza Strip since 2007. The blockade has severely restricted the movement of people and goods into and out of the Gaza Strip, and it has led to a humanitarian crisis.
- ❖ **The Palestinian refugee crisis:** The Palestinian refugee crisis is one of the longest-running refugee crises in the world. There are currently over five million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The refugees have a right to return to their homes in Palestine, but Israel has refused to allow them to do so.
- ❖ **The rise of Hamas:** Hamas is a Palestinian militant group that controls the Gaza Strip. Hamas is opposed to the existence of the State of Israel and has carried out numerous attacks on Israeli civilians.
- ❖ **The Israeli-Palestinian peace process:** The Israeli-Palestinian peace process has been ongoing for over three decades, but it has failed to produce a lasting peace agreement. The parties remain deeply divided on a number of key issues, including the status of Jerusalem, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, and the borders of a future Palestinian state.

The ongoing disputes, violence, and conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians have had a devastating impact on both communities. Thousands of people have been killed and injured, and millions of people have been displaced. The conflict has also had a negative impact on the economies of both Israel and Palestine.

Here are some of the major wars and confrontations that have taken place between Israelis and Palestinians in recent decades:

- ❖ 1948 Arab-Israeli War
- ❖ 1967 Six-Day War
- ❖ 1973 Yom Kippur War
- ❖ 1982 Lebanon War
- ❖ First Intifada (1987-1993)
- ❖ Second Intifada (2000-2005)
- ❖ 2006 Lebanon War
- ❖ 2008-2009 Gaza War
- ❖ 2012 Operation Pillar of Defence

- ❖ 2014 Operation Protective Edge
- ❖ 2021 Israel-Hamas War
- ❖ 2023 Israel-Hamas War

These wars and confrontations have caused a great deal of suffering and loss of life on both sides. They have also made it more difficult to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

B. Gaza Strip

Gaza is a narrow strip of land located along the eastern Mediterranean coast, between Egypt and Israel. It is approximately 41 kilometres (25.5 miles) long and between 6 and 12 kilometres (3.7 and 7.5 miles) wide, with a total area of 363 square kilometres (140 square miles).

The history of Gaza dates back to at least the 15th century BCE, when it was a major Philistine city-state. Over the centuries, Gaza has been ruled by a variety of empires, including the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Ottomans, and British.

After the First World War, Gaza became part of the British Mandate of Palestine. In 1947, the United Nations adopted a plan to partition Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The plan was accepted by the Jewish leadership but rejected by the Arab leadership.

On May 14, 1948, the day that the British Mandate ended, the Jewish leadership in Palestine declared the establishment of the State of Israel. The Arab states immediately invaded, and the 1948 Arab-Israeli War began. The war ended in 1949 with Israel in control of most of the territory that had been allocated to it under the UN Partition Plan, including the city of Tel Aviv.

Gaza fell under Egyptian control after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Egypt ruled Gaza for the next 19 years. During this time, Gaza was administered by a military governor. The Egyptian government imposed a strict security regime in Gaza and restricted the movement of people and goods.

In 1967, Israel occupied Gaza during the Six-Day War. Israel's occupation of Gaza has continued ever since.

During the Egyptian occupation, Gaza was a relatively poor and underdeveloped region. The Egyptian government did not invest heavily in Gaza, and the region suffered from high levels of unemployment and poverty.

After the Israeli occupation, Gaza's economy continued to decline. Israel imposed a strict blockade on Gaza, which restricted the movement of people and goods into and out of the region. The blockade has had a devastating impact on Gaza's economy and has led to a humanitarian crisis.

In 2005, Israel withdrew its forces from the Gaza Strip, but it maintained control of the region's borders and airspace. Hamas, a Palestinian militant group, took control of the Gaza Strip after the Israeli withdrawal.

Hamas has ruled Gaza since 2005.

The following are some of the key events in the history of Gaza since the 1948 Arab-Israeli War to the 2005 Israel withdrawal:

- ❖ 1948: Gaza falls under Egyptian control after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.
- ❖ 1967: Israel occupies Gaza during the Six-Day War.
- ❖ 1987: The First Intifada, an uprising of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip against Israeli occupation, begins.
- ❖ 1993: The Oslo Accords are signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), leading to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- ❖ 1994: Israel and Egypt sign the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, which ends the state of war between the two countries.
- ❖ 2005: Israel withdraws its forces from the Gaza Strip.

C. Blockade of Gaza

Events leading up to the blockade

- ❖ In 2005, Israel withdrew its troops and settlers from the Gaza Strip, ending 38 years of occupation.
- ❖ In 2006, Hamas, an Islamist militant group, won the Palestinian parliamentary elections.
- ❖ In June 2007, Hamas launched a coup and seized control of the Gaza Strip from the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority (PA).

Imposition of the blockade

- ❖ In September 2007, Israel declared the Gaza Strip a "hostile territory" and imposed a blockade on the movement of people and goods into and out of the Strip.
- ❖ Israel justified the blockade on security grounds, arguing that it was necessary to prevent Hamas from importing weapons and other materials that could be used to attack Israel.
- ❖ Egypt also imposed a blockade on the Gaza Strip, closing its border crossing with Gaza and preventing Palestinians from traveling to and from Egypt.

How the blockade restricted the movement of people and goods

- ❖ The blockade severely restricted the movement of people and goods into and out of the Gaza Strip.
- ❖ Palestinians were only allowed to leave Gaza for medical treatment or other humanitarian reasons.

- ❖ The blockade also made it difficult for businesses in Gaza to import and export goods, and for people to get access to essential services such as food, water, and healthcare.

Impact of the blockade

- ❖ The blockade has had a devastating impact on the economy and humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.
- ❖ The unemployment rate in Gaza is over 50%, and two-thirds of the population rely on humanitarian aid.
- ❖ The blockade has also caused a shortage of essential goods and services, including food, water, electricity, and healthcare.

International response

- ❖ The international community has widely condemned the blockade of the Gaza Strip, calling it illegal and a violation of international law.
- ❖ The United Nations has called for the blockade to be lifted, and has stated that it is a "collective punishment" of the Palestinian people.
- ❖ Israel has defended the blockade, arguing that it is necessary to protect its security.
- ❖ The blockade of the Gaza Strip remains in place to this day, and continues to have a devastating impact on the lives of Palestinians in Gaza.

2. Humanitarian Consequences of The Blockade on Gaza's Population.

1. Food insecurity

One of the most immediate consequences of the blockade was a sharp increase in food insecurity. Prior to the blockade, Gaza was already dependent on imports for over 80% of its food. The blockade made it even more difficult to import food, and prices for food items in Gaza skyrocketed. As a result, many Palestinians in Gaza could not afford to buy enough food to eat.

2. Healthcare

The blockade also had a devastating impact on the healthcare system in Gaza. The blockade made it difficult to import medical supplies and equipment, and to bring in medical personnel from outside of Gaza. As a result, hospitals in Gaza were often unable to provide adequate care to patients.

3. Water and sanitation

The blockade also had a negative impact on water and sanitation in Gaza. The blockade made it difficult to import spare parts and fuel for water and sewage treatment plants. As a result, there were frequent water and sewage outages in Gaza, which posed a serious health risk to the population.

4. Power shortages

The blockade also led to frequent power shortages in Gaza. The Gaza Strip has its own power plant, but it is not able to generate enough electricity to meet the needs of the population. Prior to the blockade, Gaza imported electricity from Israel. However, the blockade restricted the import of electricity, leading to frequent blackouts.

5. Impact on the economy

The blockade also had a devastating impact on the economy of the Gaza Strip. The blockade made it difficult for businesses to import and export goods, and for people to get to and from work. As a result, the unemployment rate in Gaza skyrocketed, and many businesses were forced to close.

Post 2005 Situation

During this time, Gaza has been embroiled in a number of conflicts with Israel, including the 2008-2009 Gaza War and the 2014 Israel-Hamas War.

The situation in Gaza remains complex and volatile. The region is plagued by poverty, unemployment, and violence. The blockade imposed by Israel has had a devastating impact on the Gaza Strip's economy and has led to a humanitarian crisis. The ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas has also had a devastating impact on the people of Gaza.

The following are some of the key events in the history of Gaza since the 2005 take over of Hamas:

- ❖ 2006: Hamas takes control of the Gaza Strip after the Israeli withdrawal.
- ❖ 2007-2008: The Battle of Gaza takes place between Hamas and Fatah, a Palestinian political party. Hamas emerges victorious and takes control of the Gaza Strip.
- ❖ 2008-2009: The Gaza War takes place between Israel and Hamas. The war ends with a ceasefire, but the blockade of Gaza remains in place.
- ❖ 2012: Operation Pillar of Defense, a military operation launched by Israel against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, takes place.
- ❖ 2014: Operation Protective Edge, a military operation launched by Israel against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, takes place. The war ends with a ceasefire, but the blockade of Gaza remains in place.
- ❖ 2018: Israel begins construction of an underground barrier along the Gaza-Israel border to prevent Hamas from building tunnels into Israel.
- ❖ 2021: The Israel fought a 11-day war which ended with a ceasefire.

III. Current Situation

The 2023 Israel–Hamas war began on October 7, 2023. The conflict started when Hamas-led Palestinian militant groups attacked southern Israel. Hamas launched over 3,500 rockets and infiltrated Israel's Southern District. Israel responded with strikes in the Gaza Strip

A. Recent Events Summary:

- ❖ October 7: Hamas launches an attack on Israel by land, sea, and air. This was the first time Hamas directly invaded Israel.
- ❖ October 8: Israel declares war and bombards Gaza.
- ❖ October 31: According to health officials, Israeli military attacks have resulted in the deaths of 110 people and injuries to over 1,000 in the occupied West Bank.

Casualties:

- ❖ More than 1,500 dead
- ❖ Thousands injured
- ❖ Hundreds kidnapped
- ❖ 110 deaths in the occupied West Bank
- ❖ Over 1,000 injuries in the occupied West Bank

B. Attacks by Hamas-led armed groups from Gaza

- ❖ On 7 October 2023, from the early morning hours, Hamas and other armed groups from Gaza carry out an attack against Israel, firing barrages of rockets towards the southern and central part of the country.
- ❖ The armed groups cross the Gaza border fence into Israeli territory by land, air, and sea, where they injure and kill Israeli forces and Israeli and foreign civilians, including more than 260 attendees of a music festival near Re'im and residents of kibbutzim Kfar Azza and Be'eri.
- ❖ Over the course of three days, there are gun battles and hostage situations in southern Israeli towns, with the Israeli army only regaining control on 9 October. 239 Israeli and foreign hostages are taken to Gaza (number reported by the Israeli authorities), amongst them babies, children, and the elderly.
- ❖ Indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israeli cities, including Ben Gurion Airport near Lod (formerly Lydda), continue; the total number of rockets fired towards Israeli territory since 7 October is estimated to be more than 7,000, according to Israeli officials.

According to reports, first responders encounter “horrific scenes, including the slaughter of elderly people and finding bloody rooms crowded with massacred civilians”. An Israeli army spokesperson calls 7 October “by far the worst day in Israeli history”. United States (US) President Joe Biden speaks of “the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust”. The United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) documents that “[t]he reported fatality toll is over threefold the cumulative number of Israelis killed since OCHA began recording casualties in 2005 (nearly 400)”. An estimated 1,500 members of the armed groups have reportedly been killed. On 20 October, two of the hostages, US citizens aged 59 and 17 (mother and daughter), are released, reportedly after mediation by Qatar, followed by two elderly women aged 79 and 85 on 23 October. According to the Israeli authorities, around 200,000 Israelis have been evacuated from the southern and northern part of the country.

C. Unprecedented Israeli bombardment of Gaza

On the day of the initial attack, shortly before 11 am local time, Israel launches a large-scale counteroffensive on the Gaza Strip, with Prime Minister Netanyahu proclaiming that the country is “at war”; the government declares a state of war the following day.

The Israeli military carries out heavy, near-constant, “unprecedented” bombardment of Gaza. As of 29 October 2023 (numbers reported by the Gaza Ministry of Health), 8,005 Gaza residents have been killed (amongst them at least 3,324 children), and around 20,242 injured;

around 1,800 more “may be trapped or dead under the rubble”, and “entire families” have been wiped out – it is estimated that 881 families have lost multiple family members.

The Israeli military asserts that it is targeting the political and military leadership of Hamas, with a military spokesperson claiming on 8 October that “Israeli intelligence indicates that Hamas are hiding among Gazan civilians, inside Gazan homes and schools, hospitals and mosques”.

Israel hits high-rise buildings, including those housing apartments, the Rimal neighbourhood in Gaza City, the Jabalia and Shati refugee camps, and in close proximity to the Rafah crossing with neighbouring Egypt, amongst others, wreaking devastation. According to OCHA, “[e]ntire neighbourhoods have been destroyed”. There are also reports about damage to hospitals, water and sanitation facilities, telecommunications lines, schools and educational facilities, mosques, and churches, as well as fatal attacks on journalists, healthcare workers and ambulances, and humanitarian workers, including staff of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 53 of whom have been killed.

A situation report from UNRWA, dated 15 October, observes that “the number of killed is increasing. There are not enough body-bags for the dead in Gaza”. Around 100 persons are reportedly buried in a mass grave in Rafah “due to the lack of refrigerated space to store them until recognition procedures are conducted”, with OCHA raising “environmental and human indignity concerns related to the decomposition of the bodies”. The Israeli air force announces that between 7 and 12 October, it has dropped around 6,000 bombs on Gaza; during the intervention in Libya, which lasted from March until October 2011, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) reportedly dropped an estimated 7,700 bombs.

On 10 October, an Israeli military spokesperson proclaims that in his view the parliament and civilian ministries in Gaza constitute legitimate targets “if there’s a gunman firing rockets from there” and indicates a lesser “level of fidelity” as regards warnings given to civilians prior to an attack. On the same day, the military announces that “the emphasis is on damage, not precision” in the bombardment. Hamas threatens to start executing hostages in retaliation for attacks resulting in civilian deaths that are carried out without warning. On 12 October, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports, and Amnesty International later reports as well, that the Israeli military has used white phosphorus, an incendiary weapon, prompting grave concerns about harm to civilians. The Israeli military denies this claim. Dr. Ghassan Abu Sitta, a surgeon at Al-Shifa Hospital, has testified treating patients with burns that he deems characteristic of exposure to white phosphorus.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog suggests that “it’s an entire nation out there that is responsible. It’s not true, this rhetoric about civilians ... not aware, not involved, it’s absolutely not true. They could have risen up, they could have fought against that evil regime which took over Gaza in a coup d’état”. On 13 October, the Israeli army announces that it has conducted “localized raids within Gaza”. Hamas reportedly fires a long-range missile towards the Galilee. On 14 October, the Israeli military says that it is getting ready for a new phase, including “significant ground operations”. On 17 October, Israel hits an UNRWA school in al-Maghazi refugee camp, killing at least six people, injuring dozens more, including

UNRWA staff, and severely damaging the building. According to UNRWA, around 4,000 Gazans had been sheltering there, who “had and still have nowhere else to go”; UNRWA “provides the coordinates of its facilities to relevant parties on a daily basis”. On 19 October, the Israeli military strikes the Saint Porphyrius Greek Orthodox Church, where hundreds had reportedly been sheltering, with 16 killed according to the Gaza Health Ministry. In a statement dated 19 October, the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem condemns the airstrike, stressing that “targeting churches and their institutions, along with the shelters they provide to protect innocent citizens ... constitutes a war crime that cannot be ignored”. On 20 October, Defence Minister Gallant announces that Israel’s military campaign in Gaza will culminate in “the creation of a new security regime in the Gaza Strip, the removal of Israel’s responsibility for life in the Strip and the creation of a new security reality for the citizens of Israel”. On 21 October, the Israeli military says that it will intensify its airstrikes on Gaza going forward. On 22 October, an Israeli soldier is reportedly killed during a raid in Gaza. On 25 October, reports emerge that Hamas has fired long-range rockets towards Haifa in Israel’s north and Eilat in the south. Hamas officials reportedly claim that they will release no more hostages until there is a ceasefire.

On 27 October, “landlines, cellular and internet services” are cut off across the Gaza Strip following a barrage of heavy Israeli airstrikes, with the main telecommunications tower reportedly being hit. Bombardment and ground raids by the Israeli military into Gaza intensify despite repeated calls for a humanitarian ceasefire, with chief of staff Herzl Halevi reportedly declaring on 28 October that “the objectives of the war require a ground operation”. On the same day, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu gives a public address confirming “the widening of the ground invasion” as part of a new phase in the hostilities, which he referred to as Israel’s “second war of independence”. Netanyahu also proclaims: “You must remember what Amalek has done to you, says our Holy Bible, and we do remember, and we are fighting”, invoking reference to the Amalekites, a biblical archenemy of the Israelites, whom they were told to destroy and whose memory they were commanded to eradicate. Starting on 29 October, communications in Gaza are reportedly “gradually restored”, apparently following US pressure.

D. Explosion at Al-Ahli Hospital, 17 October 2023

The evening of 17 October, reports emerge of a powerful explosion at Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City killing hundreds, with images depicting “fire engulfing the hospital halls, shattered glass and body parts scattered across the area”. According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, the explosion left 500 persons dead and was caused by an Israeli airstrike; they later revise the estimate of fatalities to 471. The Israeli military, which has been pummelling the Gaza Strip with near-constant heavy bombardment since the start of hostilities, laying waste to refugee camps and residential neighbourhoods, denies responsibility and indicates that a failed rocket launch by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) armed group is to blame for the carnage. PIJ rejects this claim, alleging that Israel “is trying hard to evade its responsibility for the brutal massacre” by means of a “fabrication of lies”; they point out that Israel bombed the hospital already on a previous occasion, and that it had been subject to an ‘evacuation order’ from the

Israeli military. On 18 October, a spokesperson for the Israeli military asserts that Hamas “understood it was a Palestinian Islamic Jihad misfire, then launched a global media campaign with inflated numbers of casualties”. The military releases a video allegedly showing “footage from the area around the hospital before and after the failed rocket launch by the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization” and suggesting that there are “[n]o visible signs of craters or significant damage to buildings” as would in their view be consistent with an Israeli airstrike.

The World Health Organization (WHO) says that an ‘evacuation’ of Al-Ahli Hospital “has been impossible to carry out given the current insecurity, critical condition of many patients, and lack of ambulances, staff, health system bed capacity, and alternative shelter for those displaced”.

In the aftermath of the explosion, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres calls for “an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the Middle East to ease the epic human suffering”. Several countries in the region declare days of mourning. Protests erupt in the occupied West Bank, Lebanon, and Jordan, where demonstrators try to storm the Israeli embassy, amongst other places. Protesters in Ramallah are reportedly dispersed with stun grenades and tear gas by security forces of the PA; similar incidents are reported in Jenin, Nablus, and Tubas. The Lebanese armed group Hezbollah calls for “a day of rage against the enemy”.

There is still no certainty as to what caused the explosion, with several analyses pointing in different directions. A video investigation by Al Jazeera, published on 19 October, presents evidence to suggest that a rocket launched from Gaza which is visible on video recordings and which the Israeli military claims misfired was instead intercepted by Israel’s Iron Dome missile defence system prior to the explosion.

Analysis by the Associated Press, made public on 21 October, concludes that “the hospital explosion was most likely caused when part of [a] rocket [visible on materials examined as part of the investigation] crashed to the ground”. A Wall Street Journal video analysis strongly suggests that “the explosion was caused by a failed rocket launched from inside Gaza”. French and Canadian authorities similarly indicate that they deem a failed rocket launch the likelier cause, rather than an Israeli airstrike.

The New York Times points out inconsistencies in the version of events presented by both the Israeli military and the Hamas-controlled de facto authorities in Gaza, and is especially critical of the latter’s claim that “[t]he missile has dissolved like salt in the water”, meaning that there is no projectile left to examine, which “[m]unitions experts dismissed”. On 24

October, US officials say they have “high confidence” in the assessment that a failed rocket launched by armed groups from Gaza was the cause.

Experts agree overwhelmingly that there can be no definitive conclusion until a thorough, independent investigation is conducted and forensic evidence from the site analyzed, which seems unlikely to happen anytime soon given the ongoing hostilities.

Israel Imposes a Complete Siege on Gaza, After 16 Years Of Blockade

On 9 October, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant orders a “complete siege” of Gaza, specifying “no electricity, no food, no water, no fuel, everything is closed”. He claims that Israel is “fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly”. On 7 October, Israel had already cut off electricity and fuel. As of 11 October at 2 pm local time, Gaza is without electricity. On 11 October, Prime Minister Netanyahu, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and Netanyahu rival Benny Gantz – the leader of the opposition Kahol Lavan party who is also a former chief of staff of the Israeli military and Defence Minister – form an emergency war cabinet, with Gallant vowing to “wipe [Hamas] off the face of the Earth”. Israel mobilizes around 360,000 reservists and amasses around 100,000 troops near Gaza, raising the spectre of a ground invasion. On 12 October, the Israeli military’s chief of staff, Herzl Halevi, pledges that “Gaza will never look the same”. On the same day, Israel Katz, Israel’s Energy Minister, threatens that no “electrical switch will be turned on, no water hydrant will be opened and no fuel truck will enter” until the hostages are released, a position reportedly shared by Defence Minister Gallant. Hamas asserts on several occasions that Israel’s attacks on Gaza have killed some of the hostages. On 14 October, UNRWA warns that “[c]lean water is running out in the Gaza Strip, after its water plant and public water networks stopped working”; Gaza residents are reportedly forced to consume “brackish water from agricultural wells”. Humanitarian organizations raise alarm that the lack of clean water for drinking and personal hygiene severely increases the risk of infectious disease outbreaks, such as cholera. According to the UN, Gazans only have around three litres of water at their disposal, while the recommended minimum is between 50 and 100 litres; for purposes of illustration, it is estimated that an adult in the United Kingdom (UK) uses around 142 litres of water in a day. On 22 October, UNRWA warns that fuel in Gaza will run out in three days, which would mean “no water, no functioning hospitals and bakeries” as well as “no humanitarian assistance”. Due to the shortage of water, fuel, electricity, and medical supplies, doctors in Gaza are forced to operate on patients without sufficient anaesthetics, and to use “clothes for bandages, vinegar for antiseptic, sewing needles for surgical ones”, according to reports. This is only a small part of the picture: Gaza’s entire health care system is “on the brink of collapse”.

Displacement And Unprecedented Humanitarian Catastrophe

The destruction of homes and infrastructure, shortage of water, food, electricity, and fuel, as well as the threat of near-constant heavy bombardment leads to the displacement of more

than 1.4 million Palestinians in Gaza, as of 29 October, around half of whom are sheltering in UNRWA facilities. On 10 October, Egypt closes the Rafah crossing to Gaza residents for an indefinite time period; the Israeli military had suggested previously that Gazans should leave through there to escape the bombardment, only to reverse course. From 8 October until 21 October, the Rafah crossing remained fully closed (with the Egyptian Foreign Ministry denying a closure and clarifying repeatedly that the crossing was damaged by Israeli airstrikes), while the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings have been closed since the start of hostilities on 7 October. On 13 October, the Israeli military reportedly directs the more than 1 million residents of northern Gaza to 'evacuate' south, prompting concerns of an imminent land offensive and drawing international outrage. Gaza's biggest hospital Al-Shifa is located in this area, in Gaza City. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warns that such an 'evacuation' is "extremely dangerous" and may not be "possible", urging the Israeli authorities to "reconsider", while numerous organizations, including the WHO, Amnesty International, and the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) call for the order to be rescinded with immediate effect. Many Palestinians fear a second Nakba, a majority of Gaza residents being refugees or descendants of refugees who were displaced during the 1948 war that led to the establishment of the State of Israel and concomitant mass exodus of over 700,000 Palestinians from their homes across Mandatory Palestine. One resident interviewed by Amnesty International remarked: "We went to sleep in 2023 and woke up in 1948".

UNRWA relocates its foreign staff and central operations centre to the south of Gaza, urging the Israeli military "to protect all civilians in UNRWA shelters including schools". The WHO says that moving critically ill patients from hospitals in north Gaza "is a death sentence" and that "[a]sking health workers to do so is beyond cruel". On the same day, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reports being given two hours for an 'evacuation' of Al-Awda Hospital in north Gaza, which is then postponed until 6 am local time on 14 October. Hamas instructs Gazans to "remain steadfast in [their] homes and to stand firm in the face of this disgusting psychological war waged by the occupation". On 12 October, Egyptian President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi had reportedly said that Palestinians in Gaza should "stay steadfast and remain on their land". Gazans are seemingly left with two options: mass displacement, which for many of them calls to mind painful memories of the Nakba, or staying in their homes under bombardment. UNRWA cautions in stark terms that Gaza is "becoming a hell hole and is on the brink of collapse". On 14 October, the Israeli military announces that it will allow Gazans to safely travel southwards until 4 pm local time; tens of thousands reportedly make their way south. There are indications that fleeing civilians may have come under attack. On 16 October, the European Union (EU) announces that it is setting up an air bridge to transfer humanitarian supplies to Gaza via Egypt. King Abdullah II of Jordan indicates that neither his country nor Egypt are willing to host refugees from Gaza. On 18 October, the Israeli military publishes a call for the residents of northern Gaza "to evacuate towards the area of Al-Mawasi, south of Wadi Gaza", where allegedly "international humanitarian aid will be provided as needed". On 17 October, OCHA documents that fatalities from recent Israeli airstrikes have "included people moving southward in compliance with the Israeli military

order to evacuate the northern Gaza Strip”; it is also reported that some of those who fled to the south of Gaza are returning north because of ongoing airstrikes also in the south and lack of shelter. Hundreds of displaced Palestinians who wound up in Khan Younis in the south of Gaza are reportedly forced to live in tents provided by the UN, an image which for many is yet another painful reminder of the Nakba. A spokesperson for UNRWA states that “[n]owhere today in Gaza is safe”. At a peace summit in Cairo, King Abdullah II of Jordan warns that “the forced or internal displacement of Palestinians would be a war crime”. PA President Mahmoud Abbas declares: “Ladies and gentlemen, we will not leave, we will not leave, we will not leave, and we will remain on our land”.

On 21 October, an aid convoy consisting of 20 trucks enters via the Rafah crossing “for the first time since 8 October”; according to the Associated Press, “[m]ore than 200 trucks carrying 3,000 tons of aid have been waiting nearby for days”. The trucks carry more than 44,000 bottles of drinking water, reportedly sufficient for 22,000 people for one day, “60 metric tonnes of emergency food” provided by the World Food Programme (WFP), as well as some medical supplies, for a total of around 1.4 million displaced persons. Martin Griffiths, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, expresses the hope that “this delivery will be the start of a sustainable effort to provide essential supplies – including food, water, medicine and fuel – to the people of Gaza” who “have endured decades of suffering”. UN Secretary-General Guterres calls for “a commitment for much, much more – a continuous delivery of aid to Gaza at the scale that is needed”. One aid worker quoted in The Guardian says that “what’s being delivered today is barely a drop in the ocean. Before this crisis began, around 500 aid trucks would normally cross the border every day providing a vital lifeline to millions of Gazans who were already facing a humanitarian crisis”. Humanitarian operations inside Gaza still face significant challenges.

Also on 21 October, Israel reportedly doubles down on its ‘evacuation orders’ for the residents of northern Gaza; according to Politico, the military dropped leaflets in the area indicating that “[a]nyone who chooses not to evacuate from the North of the Gaza Strip to the South of the Gaza Strip may be identified as a partner in a terrorist organization”. On 22 October, a second aid convoy consisting of 14 trucks reportedly passes through the Rafah crossing into Gaza. There are reports about a third convoy on 23 October. On 27 October, it is reported that a first medical team comprised of international specialists was allowed to enter Gaza, alongside 10 trucks with aid. As of 29 October, the total number of aid convoys that have entered Gaza since 21 October is 117; around 500 trucks reportedly reached Gaza every working day before the hostilities. None so far have included fuel; UNRWA Secretary-General Philippe Lazzarini reiterates that fuel imports must be allowed, otherwise “there will be no humanitarian response, no aid reaching people in need, no power for hospitals, no water, no bread”. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reports on 27 October that the weeks of 7 to 27 October were “the deadliest period for journalists covering conflict since CPJ began tracking in 1992”, with at least 29 journalists killed.

The afternoon of 28 October, while Gaza is under communications blackout, the Israeli military publishes an announcement on X (formerly Twitter) in English, calling upon the residents of north Gaza “to temporarily relocate south”, claiming that “[m]oving back to northern Gaza will be possible once the intense hostilities end” and that “your window to act is closing”. According to the Palestinian Red Crescent, on 29 October the military requested an immediate ‘evacuation’ of Al-Quds Hospital in Gaza, prompting WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus to warn that “it’s impossible to evacuate hospitals full of patients without endangering their lives”. OCHA reports as well that “[a]ll 13 hospitals still operational in Gaza city and northern Gaza have received repeated evacuation orders in recent days”, and that the Israeli military has reportedly struck the areas around Al-Quds and Al-Shifa Hospitals in Gaza City, as well as the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahia. A document drawn up by the Israeli Ministry of Intelligence reportedly proposes relocating residents of Gaza to the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt.

Developments on the Lebanese border

The Israeli-Lebanese border has become another “area of operations”, with rocket fire, missiles, and infiltration from southern Lebanon reported as well as Israeli shelling, raising fears of a wider regional conflagration, including the entry into the war of the Iran-sponsored Lebanese armed group Hezbollah, deemed to be amongst the best equipped and most powerful militias in the world.

- ❖ On 10 October, shells and missiles are reportedly launched from Syria, drawing responding fire by the Israeli military.
- ❖ On 12 October, Israel strikes the airports in Damascus and Aleppo.
- ❖ On 13 October, reports indicate that Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian met with Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut, with the former warning that the war could spill over to other parts of the region should Israel’s attacks on Gaza continue.
- ❖ On the same date, Israeli shelling of southern Lebanon kills Issam Abdallah, a journalist from Reuters, and injures six others. An investigation by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) suggests that the journalists were hit by precise targeting.
- ❖ On 14 October, rockets are reportedly fired from Syrian territory, drawing Israeli artillery fire; the Israeli military again strikes Aleppo airport. Clashes along the Israeli-Lebanese border intensify; Israel reportedly sets up a 4 km ‘buffer zone’ along the border and prepares to evacuate residents.
- ❖ On 19 October, Hezbollah and Hamas fire dozens of rockets from Lebanon towards northern Israel; the Israeli military strikes back.
- ❖ On 21 October. Israel’s Minister, Nir Barkat, threatens that if Hezbollah joins the war, Israel will not just retaliate against the group but also attack Iran.
- ❖ On 22 October, Syrian State media reports that the Israeli military has again hit the airports in Aleppo and Damascus. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the clashes along the Israeli-Lebanese border have led to the displacement of almost 29,000 persons inside Lebanon.

- ❖ On 27 October, the US attacks targets in Syria that are allegedly tied to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and allied militias, in response to earlier attacks on US bases in Syria and Iraq.
- ❖ On 29 October, the Israeli military strikes targets in Lebanon following earlier rocket fire.
- ❖ On 30 October, Israel again carries out strikes in Syria and Lebanon in response to rocket fire.

Increasing violence and oppression in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

Outrage about the catastrophic consequences of hostilities in Gaza and Israel have sparked altercations between Israeli forces and Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank, including annexed East Jerusalem. As of 29 October, Israeli forces and settlers have killed 115 Palestinians, including 33 children; they injured 2,150 others, amongst them at least 193 children. The week of 9 to 15 October marked “the deadliest ... for West Bank Palestinians since OCHA began recording casualties in 2005” (reported on 16 October). Hamas calls for a ‘day of rage’

- ❖ On 13 October; overnight and on this day alone, Israeli forces kill 13 Palestinians, amongst them four children and one woman, across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, most during protests.
- ❖ On 19 and 20 October, Israeli forces conduct an operation in Nur Shams refugee camp near Tulkarm in the northwestern West Bank. According to OCHA, 13 Palestinians, amongst them six children, are killed and 62 injured; one member of the Israeli forces is killed, and nine others are injured. The Israeli military reportedly strikes the camp from the air; UNRWA documents extensive damage to homes and infrastructure.
- ❖ On 22 October, the Israeli military carries out an airstrike in Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank, citing an “imminent terror attack” being planned from a compound underneath Al-Ansar Mosque allegedly belonging to Hamas and PIJ operatives, which is hit; two people are reportedly killed. The strike marks “the first Israeli use of a warplane in the West Bank since the second intifada in the early 2000s”.
- ❖ On 25 October, it is reported that Israeli forces conducted another raid in Jenin refugee camp and carried out a drone strike, killing four Palestinians, including two children aged 15 and 17.

Access and movement restrictions for residents of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including “closures, checkpoints and roadblocks”, are reported as well. It is estimated that more than 1,000 Palestinians have been arrested in the West Bank. There are increasing reports of Israeli police detaining East Jerusalemites and Palestinian citizens of Israel over social media posts as well as workers and students being suspended, amongst other concerning measures. There are serious concerns over the physical safety and well-being of Gazans who work in Israel, around 4,000 of whom (figure quoted by the Israeli media) are reportedly being detained by the Israeli authorities after their work permits were revoked in the wake of the 7 October attacks by armed groups from Gaza; testimonies indicate that persons in detention have been subjected to ill-treatment.

There are also reports about continued attacks by violent settlers, with 167 attacks in total documented since 7 October out of which 26 resulted in casualties, 113 in property damage, and 28 in both. In one instance, five Palestinians (amongst them one child) were killed by settlers in Qusra, near Nablus; settlers also threatened the entire village.

- ❖ On 12 October, Israeli soldiers and settlers reportedly detain three Palestinians over the course of several hours, handcuff them, strip them to their underwear, subject them to severe beatings, and photograph them, amongst other ill-treatment; they also detain, handcuff, and threaten Israeli activists, who are let go after three hours.
- ❖ On 13 October, it is reported that a settler shot a Palestinian at point blank near Hebron, with an Israeli soldier standing by. OCHA estimates that settler violence, threats thereof, and access restrictions have led to the displacement of at least 800 Palestinians from 15 herding communities in Area C; a further 121 Palestinians have been displaced due to home demolitions carried out by the Israeli authorities.
- ❖ On 28 October, a settler reportedly shoots and kills a Palestinian who had been harvesting olives.
- ❖ On 29 October, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues a statement condemning violent attacks by settlers and calling upon the Israeli authorities to protect the affected Palestinian communities.
- ❖ On the same date, a group of civil society organizations registered in Israel publishes a joint letter urging “clear, strong and direct intervention by the international community” in light of the settler violence, which they argue the Israeli government has failed to rein in and supports.

International Reactions

A number of Israel’s Western allies declare their solidarity in the wake of the Hamas attacks. On 9 October, US President Biden, UK Prime Minister Sunak, French President Macron, German Chancellor Scholz, and Italian Prime Minister Meloni release a joint statement indicating their “steadfast and united support to the State of Israel, and ... unequivocal condemnation of Hamas and its appalling acts of terrorism”.

On 9 October, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres remarks to the press that “this most recent violence does not come in a vacuum. The reality is that it grows out of a long-standing conflict, with a 56-year long occupation and no political end in sight”.

The EU announces that it will review development aid to Palestinian authorities, revising an earlier announcement that such payments had been suspended. A statement released by the EU on 15 October emphasizes, amongst other points, “Israel’s right to defend itself in line with humanitarian and international law” and “the importance to ensure the protection of all civilians at all times in line with International Humanitarian Law”.

On 19 October, the European Parliament adopts a resolution which “calls for a humanitarian pause, de-escalation and full respect of international humanitarian law”, amongst a long list of other issues.

On 24 October –UN Secretary-General Guterres delivers a speech to the Security Council, noting that he has “*condemned unequivocally the horrifying and unprecedented 7 October acts of terror by Hamas in Israel*” and that “*nothing can justify the deliberate killing, injuring and kidnapping of civilians – or the launching of rockets against civilian targets*”. He observes that “*the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum*” – the “*Palestinian people have been subjected to 56 years of suffocating occupation*” – while clarifying that “*the grievances of the Palestinian people cannot justify the appalling attacks by Hamas. And those appalling attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people*”.

US President Biden says that “*there’s no going back to the status quo as it stood on October the 6th*” and that “*when this crisis is over, there has to be a vision of what comes next*”, which should be “*a two-state solution*”.

The Security Council – which is the UN body tasked with “*maintaining or restoring international peace and security*”, being endowed with enforcement powers under Chapter VII of the UN Charter – fails twice to adopt a resolution on the hostilities.

On 27 October, the UN General Assembly passes a resolution with a majority of 121 out of 193 member States voting in favour, which calls for “*an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities*”, full compliance with international law by all parties, “*the immediate and unconditional release of all civilians who are being illegally held captive*”, and “*the immediate, continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision of essential goods and services to civilians throughout the Gaza Strip*”, amongst other points.

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Karim Khan, visits the Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza, reflecting sombrely on the fact that “*the international architecture built on the rubble of the Second World War ... was meant to create institutions that would ensure never again would we see abominations where people could be targeted because of their race, their religion, their culture, where they come from, or what passport they hold*”. He emphasizes that “*there should not be any impediment to humanitarian relief supplies going to children, to women and men, civilians. They are innocent, [and] they have rights under international humanitarian law*”, the denial of which may give rise to individual criminal responsibility under the Rome Statute.

IV. Past UNSC Actions

Here are some specific examples of how the UNSC has sought to address the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip in the past:

- In 2014, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2160, which demanded an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. The resolution also called for the opening of all crossing points into the Gaza Strip to allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- In 2018, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2425, which expressed deep concern about the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and called for urgent action to address the crisis. The resolution also called for the opening of all crossing points into the Gaza Strip and the lifting of the blockade.
- In 2020, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2532, which called for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and the resumption of intra-Palestinian dialogue. The resolution also called for the full implementation of Resolution 2425.

Despite these efforts, the UNSC has been unable to prevent the recurrence of violence in the Gaza Strip.

However, the UNSC remains an important forum for addressing the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. By raising awareness of the crisis and mobilizing international support for a peaceful resolution, the UNSC can help to create the conditions necessary to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people.

IV. Key Actors and Stakeholders

Highlight the major players involved in the crisis:

1. Israel
2. Palestinian Authorities
3. Egypt
4. Syria
5. United states of America
6. Russia
7. France
8. China
9. United Kingdom
10. United Arab Emirates
11. Qatar
12. Japan
13. Iran

V. Proposed Solutions

Delve into potential solutions that delegates will need to consider and discuss:

A. Immediate Ceasefire

The need for a ceasefire in Israel is to reduce the number of casualties and minimize the suffering of civilians on both sides of the conflict. The ongoing violence between Israel and

Palestine has caused a great deal of pain and loss, and a ceasefire would be a step towards peace.

There are several reasons why a ceasefire is necessary at this time. First, the current level of violence is unsustainable. Every day, more people are killed or injured, and the situation is getting worse. Second, the conflict is having a devastating impact on the civilian population. People are unable to access basic necessities such as food and water, and schools and hospitals have been destroyed. Third, the conflict is destabilizing the region and making it more difficult to achieve a lasting peace.

A ceasefire would allow for a cooling-off period and give the two sides time to engage in meaningful dialogue. It would also provide an opportunity to address the underlying causes of the conflict, such as the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and the lack of a two-state solution.

It is important to note that a ceasefire is not a complete solution to the conflict. It is only a first step towards a more lasting peace. However, it is a necessary step, and it is the only way to stop the current bloodshed.

The following are some of the benefits of a ceasefire in Israel:

- ❖ It would reduce the number of casualties and minimize the suffering of civilians on both sides of the conflict.
- ❖ It would allow for a cooling-off period and give the two sides time to engage in meaningful dialogue.
- ❖ It would provide an opportunity to address the underlying causes of the conflict.
- ❖ It would help to stabilize the region and make it more difficult for terrorist groups to operate.
- ❖ It would create a more conducive environment for the pursuit of a lasting peace.

It is important to note that a ceasefire is not a permanent solution to the conflict. However, it is a necessary first step towards a more lasting peace.

B. Lifting the Blockade

A phased approach to lifting the blockade of the Gaza Strip is feasible, but it would require careful planning and coordination between Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and the international community.

One possible phasing plan could be as follows:

- ❖ Phase 1: Israel would lift the blockade on essential goods, such as food, medicine, and fuel.
- ❖ Phase 2: Israel would lift the blockade on construction materials, allowing for the reconstruction of homes and infrastructure damaged in the conflict.
- ❖ Phase 3: Israel would lift the blockade on exports from the Gaza Strip, allowing the Palestinian economy to grow.
- ❖ Phase 4: Israel would lift all remaining restrictions on movement of people and goods between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Each phase would be implemented only after the parties had demonstrated that they were able to meet certain conditions. For example, in Phase 1, Israel would need to ensure that essential goods were reaching the people of the Gaza Strip without being diverted to Hamas or other militant groups. In Phase 2, the Palestinian Authority would need to commit to preventing the smuggling of weapons and explosives into the Gaza Strip.

A phased approach to lifting the blockade would have a number of advantages. First, it would allow for a gradual easing of the blockade, which would help to avoid any sudden shocks to the Gazan economy or society. Second, it would allow the parties to build trust and confidence in each other, which would be essential for a lasting and sustainable solution to the conflict. Third, it would allow the international community to monitor the situation and provide assistance as needed.

However, there are also a number of potential challenges to a phased approach to lifting the blockade. First, it would require a high level of cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, which has been lacking in recent years. Second, it would be difficult to prevent the smuggling of weapons and explosives into the Gaza Strip, even if the Palestinian Authority committed to doing so. Third, the international community would need to provide significant financial and technical assistance to the Gaza Strip in order to support its reconstruction and economic development.

Overall, a phased approach to lifting the blockade is feasible, but it would require a significant commitment from all parties involved.

C. Long-term Political Resolution

- ❖ Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with land swaps to ensure that both states are contiguous and viable. The specific borders of the two states would be negotiated between the parties, but the 1967 borders would serve as a starting point.
- ❖ The establishment of a Palestinian state with full sovereignty and East Jerusalem as its capital. The Palestinian state would be a member of the United Nations and other international organizations.
- ❖ A just and equitable resolution of the refugee issue. This could involve a combination of repatriation, resettlement, and compensation.
- ❖ Security guarantees for both states. This could include demilitarized zones, international peacekeeping forces, and other measures to prevent future conflict.

In addition to these core elements, a comprehensive two-state solution would also need to address a number of other complex issues, such as:

- ❖ The status of holy sites. Jerusalem is a holy city to Jews, Muslims, and Christians, and the status of its holy sites is a highly sensitive issue. A comprehensive two-state solution would need to ensure that the rights of all religious groups are respected.
- ❖ Water sharing. Water is a scarce resource in the region, and both Israelis and Palestinians rely on the same water sources. A comprehensive two-state solution would need to include a fair and sustainable water-sharing agreement.

- ❖ **Economic cooperation.** Both Israelis and Palestinians would benefit from increased economic cooperation. A comprehensive two-state solution would need to include measures to promote trade, investment, and other forms of economic cooperation between the two states.

Achieving a comprehensive two-state solution will require difficult compromises from both sides. However, it is the only realistic way to achieve a lasting and just peace in the region.

VII. Conclusion

The UN Security Council (UNSC) plays a significant role in addressing the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. As the primary body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the UNSC has the power to take a range of actions to address the crisis, including:

- ❖ **Demanding an immediate ceasefire.** The UNSC can use its power to demand that all parties to the conflict immediately cease hostilities. This is essential for allowing humanitarian workers to access the Gaza Strip and provide assistance to those in need.
- ❖ **Imposing targeted sanctions.** The UNSC can impose targeted sanctions on individuals and entities that are responsible for prolonging the conflict or committing human rights abuses. This can help to deter further violence and create an environment conducive to a peaceful resolution.
- ❖ **Deploying a peacekeeping mission.** The UNSC can deploy a peacekeeping mission to the Gaza Strip to help protect civilians and monitor the implementation of a ceasefire. This can help to create a more stable environment and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

In addition to these specific actions, the UNSC also plays an important role in raising awareness of the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and mobilizing international support for a peaceful resolution.

Diplomatic collaboration and cooperation among delegates is essential to seeking resolutions to the complex and urgent issue in the Gaza Strip. The UNSC is made up of 15 member states, each with its own unique perspective on the conflict. In order to reach consensus on a resolution, delegates must be willing to compromise and work together. This can be challenging, but it is essential for the UNSC to play its role effectively.