

# Security Council

## **Topic B: Maintaining Political Stability in the Israel–Gaza Region Whilst Ensuring the Safety and Protection of Endangered Civilians**

### **I. Introduction**

The Israel–Gaza conflict remains one of the most volatile crises in the Middle East. Rooted in historical, territorial, and political disputes, the ongoing tensions between Israel and Palestinian groups, particularly Hamas, have repeatedly escalated into cycles of violence resulting in severe civilian suffering and regional instability.

The Security Council has long grappled with balancing Israel's right to security with the protection of Palestinian civilians and the humanitarian situation in Gaza. This issue is further complicated by the involvement of non-state actors, regional political rivalries, and the breakdown of ceasefire mechanisms.

As of 2025, following the escalations of October 2023 and subsequent military operations, Gaza faces widespread humanitarian collapse, while Israel continues to experience security threats from rocket attacks and cross-border incursions. The international community's challenge is to achieve sustainable de-escalation, humanitarian access, and progress toward political stability, while preventing further civilian harm.

### **II. Definition of Key Terms**

#### **Ceasefire:**

A temporary suspension of fighting between conflicting parties, often brokered through international mediation. Ceasefires may be humanitarian (limited in duration and scope) or political (as part of broader negotiations).

#### **Humanitarian Corridor:**

A secure demilitarised passage established to deliver aid and evacuate civilians during armed conflicts.

#### **Non-State Actor:**

An organization or group not affiliated with a recognized state but capable of exerting political or military influence (e.g., Hamas or Islamic Jihad.).

#### **Collective Punishment:**

A situation in which civilians are penalized for actions committed by individuals, prohibited under international humanitarian law. It is explicitly prohibited under Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

**Two-State Solution:**

A proposed resolution envisioning Israel and an independent Palestinian state existing side by side within mutually agreed borders.

**Occupation:**

The control of a territory by foreign military forces; in this context, referring to Israeli control of Palestinian territories since 1967.

**UNRWA:**

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, it provides assistance and protection to Palestinian refugees.

**IDF (Israel Defense Forces):**

The combined military forces of the State of Israel, responsible for national defense and conducting operations in and around Israeli territories, including Gaza and the West Bank.

**Hamas:**

An Islamist political and militant organization founded in 1987. It governs the Gaza Strip and maintains an armed wing known as the 'Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades'. Considered a terrorist organization by several countries including Israel, the United States, and the European Union.

**Palestinian Authority (PA):**

The self-government body established under the Oslo Accords (1993), exercising limited administrative control over parts of the West Bank. Led by President Mahmoud Abbas and associated with the Fatah party.

**Fatah:**

A major Palestinian political faction, secular in orientation, historically dominant in the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Often at political odds with Hamas.

**PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization):**

An umbrella organization founded in 1964 to represent the Palestinian people and their national aspirations. Recognized by the UN as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

**Blockade:**

A military and economic measure restricting the movement of goods, people, and aid into or out of a specific area. Israel's blockade of Gaza, implemented in 2007, aims to prevent the transfer of weapons to Hamas but has also severely limited civilian access to resources.

**Displacement:**

The forced movement of people from their homes due to conflict, violence, or natural disasters. The ongoing conflict has displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians in Gaza and southern Israel.

**War Crimes:**

Serious violations of international humanitarian law during armed conflict, including the deliberate

targeting of civilians, use of human shields, or obstruction of humanitarian relief. Defined under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998).

**International Humanitarian Law (IHL):**

A set of rules governing armed conflict, designed to protect civilians and those no longer participating in hostilities. It includes the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols.

**UNR (United Nations Relief Operation):**

Temporary emergency programs established by the UN or its agencies to deliver humanitarian aid in crisis zones.

**De-escalation:**

Actions aimed at reducing tension and violence between conflicting parties, such as the withdrawal of troops, reduction in airstrikes, or establishment of dialogue.

**Humanitarian Access:**

The ability of international organizations and agencies to reach populations in need of aid during armed conflict, typically negotiated with both sides of the conflict.

**Reconstruction Aid:**

Financial or material support directed toward rebuilding civilian infrastructure (such as housing, hospitals, and schools) following conflict.

**Normalization (of relations):**

The establishment or restoration of diplomatic, economic, and political relations between former adversaries. In this context, it refers to Israel's normalization with Arab states under the Abraham Accords.

**Mediator:**

A neutral third party, often a state or international organization, facilitating negotiations between conflicting sides to reach a peaceful settlement. Egypt, Qatar, and the UN frequently act as mediators in the Israel–Gaza context.

**Refugee Status:**

The condition of individuals forced to flee their country due to conflict or persecution. Many Palestinians possess refugee status recognized by UNRWA under Resolution 302 (1949).

**Human Shield:**

The use of civilians to deter attacks on combatants or military targets, prohibited under international humanitarian law.

## **III. Background Information**

### **Historical Context**

The roots of the conflict trace back to the early 20th century with competing national movements :

Zionism and Palestinian nationalism seeking self-determination in the same territory.

In 1948, the State of Israel was established following the UN Partition Plan, triggering the first Arab–Israeli war and the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians, known as the Nakba.

In 1967, the Six-Day War resulted in Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip. Despite Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, it maintains control over Gaza’s borders, airspace, and maritime access, leading the UN to still consider Gaza as occupied territory.

## **Rise of Hamas and Recurrent Conflicts**

Since 2007, Hamas has been the de facto governing authority in Gaza after a violent split from the Palestinian Authority (PA). Israel and Hamas have engaged in repeated conflicts in : 2008, 2012, 2014, 2021, and most recently 2023–2024, each resulting in significant civilian casualties and destruction of infrastructure.

The October 2023 escalation, initiated by Hamas attacks on Israeli territory and subsequent large-scale Israeli operations in Gaza, led to one of the most severe humanitarian crises in the region’s history. Over a million Gazans were displaced, hospitals were overwhelmed, and access to food, fuel, and water became critical concerns.

## **Humanitarian and Political Dimensions**

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that 80% of Gaza’s population now depends on humanitarian aid. Meanwhile, UNRWA faces funding shortages and political scrutiny.

Politically, peace negotiations have stagnated since the failure of the 2014 U.S.-brokered talks, and current regional alignments (such as Israel’s normalization with Arab states through the Abraham Accords) have further shifted dynamics, often sidelining the Palestinian issue.

# **IV. Relevant UN Actions and Treaties**

## **Recent UN Resolutions and Actions**

- UNSC Resolution 2712 (Nov 2023): Called for “urgent and extended humanitarian pauses and corridors” in Gaza to allow aid delivery and medical evacuations.
- UNSC Resolution 2720 (Dec 2023): Demanded opening of all Gaza border crossings (like Kerem Shalom) for humanitarian aid (food, fuel, medicine) and appointed a Senior Humanitarian & Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza.

- UNSC Resolution 2728 (Mar 2024): Demanded an *immediate ceasefire* in Gaza, including during Ramadan, and called for the unconditional release of all hostages.
- UNSC Resolution 2735 (Jun 2024): Supported a three-phase ceasefire-and-hostage deal: (1) immediate ceasefire + hostage release, (2) prisoner exchange + Israeli withdrawal from populated areas, (3) reconstruction + long-term stability.
- UN General Assembly Emergency Session Resolution ES-10/21 (Oct 2023): Called for an “immediate and sustained” humanitarian truce, condemned violence against civilians, and demanded all parties obey international law.
- UN General Assembly Resolution (June 2025): Demanded Israel immediately end the blockade of Gaza, open all border crossings, and ensure humanitarian access “at scale.” The resolution also strongly condemned the use of starvation as a method of warfare.
- UN Human Rights Council Resolution (2024): Called for a halt to weapons shipments to Israel amid concerns over violations in Gaza. It also requested reports on "dual-use" items that could be used militarily.
- UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (2025): Urged Israel to stop attacks on UNRWA operations, demanded that Israel respect international law, and called for a lasting ceasefire and reconstruction based on a two-state solution.

## **UN Resolutions general**

- Resolution 242 (1967): Called for Israel’s withdrawal from territories occupied in the Six-Day War and the acknowledgment of every state’s right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.
- Resolution 338 (1973): Called for a ceasefire in the Yom Kippur War and the implementation of Resolution 242.
- Resolution 446 (1979): Established a commission to examine the situation relating to settlements in the Arab territories occupied by Israel.
- Resolution 681 (1990): Urged Israel to integrate the principles of the 4th Geneva Convention (1949)
- Resolution 1515 (2003): Emphasized the need for a two state solution (Israel and Palestine) and stressed the importance of ceasing all violence in this geographical area
- Resolution 1860 (2009): Demanded an immediate ceasefire during the Gaza War and unimpeded humanitarian assistance.
- Resolution 2334 (2016): Reaffirmed that Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories have “no legal validity” and constitute a violation of international law.
- Resolution 2728 (2024): Stressed the importance of a long and durable ceasefire during, in particular during religious events such as the Ramadan
- Resolution 2735 (2024): Included the demand for a ceasefire, hostage and prisoner exchanges, return of displaced persons and withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza.

## **International Humanitarian Law**

- The Fourth Geneva Convention (1949): Protects civilians in conflict zones, prohibiting collective punishment and targeting of noncombatants.
- Rome Statute (1998): Defines war crimes including the targeting of civilians and the obstruction of humanitarian aid.

## **UN Agencies and Humanitarian Coordination**

- **UNRWA** provides health, education, and relief services to Palestinian refugees.
- **OCHA** coordinates humanitarian response and monitors civilian protection.
- **WHO** and **WFP** assist with emergency medical supplies and food distribution.

## **V. Major Countries and Groups Involved**

### **Israel:**

Maintains the right to defend its citizens from attacks by Hamas and other armed groups. Faces international scrutiny for civilian casualties and blockade policies. Domestic politics remain divided regarding Gaza policy and ceasefire conditions.

### **Palestine (Hamas and Palestinian Authority):**

Hamas controls Gaza and has conducted rocket attacks and cross-border raids, while the Palestinian Authority (based in the West Bank) advocates for political resolution and international recognition. Internal division weakens unified Palestinian representation.

### **United States:**

A permanent member of the Security Council and a key ally of Israel. Often uses its veto to block resolutions perceived as disproportionately targeting Israel. Supports humanitarian assistance and promotes regional normalization.

### **Egypt:**

Serves as a principal mediator between Israel and Hamas. Controls the Rafah border crossing, a critical humanitarian access point.

### **Qatar:**

Provides financial support to Gaza's reconstruction and plays a mediating role in ceasefire talks.

**Iran:**

Supports Hamas and other militant groups as part of its regional strategy to challenge Israel, heightening regional tensions.

**European Union:**

Supports the two-state solution, provides humanitarian aid, and often calls for restraint and adherence to international law.

**Russia:**

Israel has repeatedly been a strategic partner for Russia in the Middle East. Israel and Russia have repeatedly relied on each other for economic, military and diplomatic support. However, due to Moscow's rapprochement with Hamas as well as its alignment with Iran and its allies, the ties with Israel have weakened. This could represent the loss of an important ally for Russia, being Israel, one of the few Western states that had not distanced itself from Moscow after the invasion of Ukraine.

**Colombia, Nicaragua and Bolivia:**

These Latin American countries have cut diplomatic ties with Israel in late 2024 and have recently reiterated their condemnation of Israel's actions.

## **VI. Possible Solutions**

**Humanitarian Ceasefire and Monitoring Mechanisms**

- Immediate and verifiable ceasefire agreements supervised by UN observers or neutral mediators.
- Establishment of humanitarian corridors for aid delivery and civilian evacuation.

**Strengthening International Humanitarian Access**

- Expand UNRWA and OCHA operational capacity through guaranteed funding.
- Coordinate with neighboring states (Egypt, Jordan) to facilitate medical and food aid.

**Political Dialogue and Confidence-Building Measures**

- Renew international diplomatic engagement toward a revived peace process, potentially via a multilateral framework involving the UN, EU, and Arab League.
- Promote intra-Palestinian reconciliation between Hamas and the PA to enable unified representation.

### **Accountability and Civilian Protection**

- Strengthen mechanisms for investigating alleged violations of international humanitarian law.
- Deploy peacekeeping or observer missions (if agreed by the Council) to monitor civilian safety zones.

### **Regional Stability and De-escalation**

- Encourage dialogue between Israel and Arab states to use normalization frameworks for de-escalation.
- Reduce arms flows to non-state actors through regional cooperation and sanctions enforcement.

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