CIMUN XIV
CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

BACKGROUND GUIDE
Dear Delegates of the General Assembly (2017),

My name is Walker Fountain; I am the Undersecretary-General of Committees and President of the General Assembly at CIMUN XIV. I am writing you to give a brief introduction to the procedure of this year’s General Assembly. Note, the times outlined in this letter are rough, and are subject to change based on the procedure and decorum of the General Assembly and its constituent bodies.

On Thursday, the committee will meet in Plenary Session to open formal debate. Pursuant to General Assembly regulations, the Secretary-General shall deliver an opening statement, detailing her observations and reports on the various issues that the committee shall consider. Delegations will also be given an opportunity to caucus amongst their regional groups (GRULAC, WEOG, EEG, APG, African Group), to begin discussing bloc dynamics before breaking out into subcommittees.

On Friday and Saturday, delegations will spend most of their time in subcommittee, debating amongst themselves the issues relevant to their particular subcommittee. However, time will be allotted for regional groups to caucus outside of subcommittees, to keep coalition partners abreast of negotiations in every subcommittee. Subcommittees shall be responsible for drafting and passing resolutions that are focused on the topics assigned to them.

Either late Saturday or Sunday, the General Assembly shall reconvene in a plenary session to debate any draft resolutions successfully passed out of subcommittee. If a majority of states in the General Assembly Plenary vote in the affirmative to a subcommittee draft resolution, the resolution is officially adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

I am looking forward to a robust and intelligent debate about our shared global concerns this coming November. If you have any further questions, please send me an email at walker.fountain@modelun.net.

Sincerely Yours,

Walker Fountain
President of the General Assembly
Honorable Delegate,

The General Assembly of the United Nations Fourth Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL) will be called into session on Thursday, November 30th at the Hilton Hotel in Chicago, Illinois to discuss matters of international importance. The following agenda items will be discussed:

Topic 1 – Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples
Topic 2 – Protecting the Human Rights of Citizens in Occupied Territories of Palestine

For your reference, our staff archivists have compiled the following Background Guide to provide you with relevant information regarding the topics that will be debated in the upcoming session. You will need to read and understand the contents of this Guide in order to expand upon their research and represent your home government accurately and effectively.

If you have any questions regarding the operations of the committee meetings being held at Chicago International Model United Nations (CIMUN), please refer to the CIMUN MUN Toolkit which you have been provided. Should you have any questions concerning the content of your guide or questions on policy, you may consult with an official from the Department of Home Government by sending an email to homegovernment@cimun.org.

Sincerely,

Walker Fountain

President of the General Assembly
Contents

1 Topic 1 – Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples................................................................. 5
  1.1 Topic Overview........................................................................................................... 5
  1.2 Historical Background................................................................................................... 8
  1.3 Current Situation........................................................................................................ 10
    1.3.1 Western Sahara ..................................................................................................... 10
    1.3.2 Anguilla................................................................................................................ 11
    1.3.3 Bermuda............................................................................................................... 11
    1.3.4 British Virgin Islands ......................................................................................... 11
    1.3.5 Cayman Islands.................................................................................................... 11
    1.3.6 Falkland Islands (Malvinas) .................................................................................. 11
    1.3.7 Monserrat............................................................................................................ 12
    1.3.8 Saint Helena........................................................................................................ 12
    1.3.9 Turks and Caicos Islands ..................................................................................... 12
    1.3.10 United States Virgin Islands ................................................................................ 13
    1.3.11 Gibraltar.............................................................................................................. 13
    1.3.12 American Samoa............................................................................................... 13
    1.3.13 French Polynesia............................................................................................... 14
    1.3.14 Guam.................................................................................................................. 14
    1.3.15 New Caledonia................................................................................................. 14
    1.3.16 Pitcairn............................................................................................................... 14
    1.3.17 Tokelau .............................................................................................................. 15
    1.3.18 Taiwan.............................................................................................................. 15
    1.3.19 Palestine .......................................................................................................... 15
    1.3.20 Summary of Current Situation ......................................................................... 16
  1.4 Bloc Positions............................................................................................................ 16
  1.5 Discussion Questions ............................................................................................... 17
  1.6 Key Terms............................................................................................................... 17
  1.7 Resources................................................................................................................. 17
2 Protecting the Human Rights of Citizens in Occupied Territories of Palestine ............ 21
  2.1 Topic Overview......................................................................................................... 21
1 Topic 1 – Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

1.1 Topic Overview

The conclusion of the Second World War marked the beginning of the end of the age of colonialism and imperialism that had lasted since the turn of the 17th Century. In the eighty years following the end of the devastating global conflict, there took place considerable efforts, both peaceful and violent, to shape the world as we know it today. In the last days of 1960, the General Assembly of the United Nations formally adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, recognizing all peoples’ right to self-governance and independence. The assembly determined that all member states, and the United Nations itself, would take immediate steps to ensure the peaceful end to colonialism “in all its manifestations”.

On the whole, the independence of the majority of colonial possessions has been achieved, many through the process of being assigned as a United Nations Trust Territory or declared a Non-Self-Governing Territory. These two routes to self-governance were overseen by the United Nations Trusteeship Council. The UN Trusteeship Council was established as a primary organ of the United Nations in the charter, and designated with the purpose of taking trust territories and assisting in making them independent self-governing nations, with principles that adhered to those of the United Nations. The last Trust Territory on the agenda of the Trusteeship Council, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Palau), was granted independence from the United States in 1994.

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however there are still seventeen territories recognized as Non-Self-Governing Territories by the United Nations\(^3\). These territories do not fall under the governance of the UNTC due to insufficient support for them to become Trust Territories. It is these territories that must remain in the focus of this committee’s debate over this topic. These seventeen territories are as follows\(^4\)

**France** - French Polynesia

**Morocco** - The Western Sahara (Contested by the Polisario Front and the SADR)

**New Zealand** - Tokelau

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** - Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands (Malvinas, Contested by the government of Argentina), Gibraltar, Montserrat, New Caledonia, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands

**United States of America** - American Samoa, Guam, United States Virgin Islands

The work of the United Nations in bringing about the self-determination of these territories can be more complicated than it initially appears to be for a multitude of reasons. In many


territories both past and present, there are often multiple factions disputing the autonomy of the territory. There are currently two such territories on the UN’s list of Non-Self-Governing Territories where sovereignty is disputed: the Western Sahara and the Falkland Islands, or the Malvinas. In addition to political instability there are often issues of economic, social, or educational inadequacies that serve as obstacles to a smooth transition of power within a territory. However, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples clearly states that “inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence”.5

It is worth noting that there are other territories not recognized by the United Nations but whose self-determination is disputed. Of key interest is Taiwan, formally the Republic of China (but for simplicity will be referred to as Taiwan for the purposes of this guide), a territory that the People’s Republic of China claims as its 23rd province. Similarly, the ongoing Israeli-Palestine conflict and the extent to which Palestine has autonomy remains a question-mark hanging over the region as the conflict drags on.

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1.2 Historical Background

The years following the end of the Second World War marked the granting of independence to multiple key colonial holdings around the globe. The right to self-determination was written into the original Charter of the United Nations when it was created in 1945 - stating as one of its purposes, “to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace”\(^7\). When the Charter was signed and ratified by the initial fifty member-states of the United Nation, each member state agreed to respect these rights\(^8\). Accordingly, the United States granted the Philippines independence in 1946. A year later, India was granted independence following peaceful protests headed by the Indian National Congress.

The old imperial powers such as the United Kingdom and France had accumulated considerable debt during the Second World War and their economies were incapable of devoting the necessary resources to suppressing revitalized separation efforts in India and the Gold Coast, among others.

Decolonization has had a turbulent history since the United Nations began sponsoring efforts in the 1940s. The decolonization of the Continent of Africa began in 1945 and ended when Spain gave up its imperial claim on the Western Sahara in 1976\(^9\). While many newly created governments in the region provided freedom and sovereignty to native people, it also created political instability that fostered ethnic conflicts resulting in genocide. These conflicts tragically occurred across the continent in places like Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the

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Congo and the Central African Republic. In Asia, the process of decolonization has been an ongoing current process. It began before 1945 as a result of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire during the 1st World War, which freed the states of Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. This was followed several decades later by the formation of the state of Israel in 1948 through Security Council Resolution 2334, which created the controversy that is the current Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. On the opposing side of the conflict is the territory of Palestine, which was set apart separately by the United Nations but is not recognized as an independent state or Non-Self-Governing Territory. The process of decolonizing Africa is ongoing, with East Timor becoming independent as recently as 2002.

In 1960, member states of the United Nations agreed that decolonization was not occurring at a rapid enough rate. To combat this, 43 African and Asian states sponsored the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. This Resolution 1514 IV was adopted on 14 December 1960. The Declaration was passed with 89 votes for to 0 against, with nine abstains. Of the nine abstainers, eight were colonial powers: Austria, Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. The Dominican Republic also abstained. Through this additional principles and goals were outlined for how the United Nations could sponsor and enable independence in the future.

One key aspect to the decolonization of many of these territories was the creation of Post-Colonial Organizations. The Commonwealth of Nations is an example of one such organization. The majority of the 52 member states were once British colonial possessions, not bound together by law, but rather by history, language, and culture on a voluntary basis. Such organizations can

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10 UN Yearbook of 1960; https://goo.gl/XuLYq9
be helpful in promoting trade agreements, and globalization among old colonial territories and their former mother countries.\textsuperscript{11}

In an attempt to finally eliminate colonialism though the granting of independence to the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, the General Assembly named 1991 - 2000 the “International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism”. As there were still territories on the UN’s list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, the years from 2001 - 2010 were named the “Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism”. Similarly, the years from 2011 - 2020 have been named the “Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism”\textsuperscript{12}. These decades have been named as such to encourage member states to intensify their efforts on the decolonization of their remaining colonial holdings. As of 2017, there are still seventeen territories that the UN identifies as Non-Self-Governing Territories.

1.3 Current Situation

1.3.1 Western Sahara

Currently the Western Sahara is partially controlled by Morocco and partially controlled by the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic backed by Algeria\textsuperscript{13}. The United Nations has intentionally remained neutral in this conflict. In 2016, former Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki Moon referred to the Moroccan presence in the region as an “occupation”, but later apologized for his statement\textsuperscript{14}. Since 1991, a UN sponsored ceasefire has put a stop to much of the violence.

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\textsuperscript{11} BBC Profile of the Commonwealth of Nations; http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-16842428
\textsuperscript{12} UN Resolution naming the decade as such; https://goo.gl/pe1haV
\textsuperscript{13} Article on Algeria’s backing of SADR; https://www.spsrasd.info/news/en/articles/2016/06/04/2232.html
\textsuperscript{14} Article on Former Secretary General Ban Ki Moon’s statements; https://goo.gl/XL6iGF
1.3.2 Anguilla

Anguilla has made no efforts to become an independent state since becoming a British Dependent Territory (now referred to as a British Overseas Territory) in 1980. In contrast, revolts took place in 1967 and 1969 to return the island to British control after being placed under the administrative control of Saint Kitts.15

1.3.3 Bermuda

Bermuda held a referendum for independence in 1995 where 73.6% of voters voted against independence from the United Kingdom16. Polls from 2012 to 2015 indicate that a consistent ~73% of Bermudans oppose complete independence.17

1.3.4 British Virgin Islands

The British Virgin Islands have made no effort to become an independent nation, nor has any referendum taken place to assert whether or not the Islands should be granted independence from the United Kingdom

1.3.5 Cayman Islands

The Cayman Islands decided to remain a British Overseas Territory when Jamaica chose to become independent in 196218. At this time, there is no desire among the residents of the Cayman Islands to become independent from the United Kingdom.

1.3.6 Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

The United Kingdom claims the Falkland Islands as an Overseas Territory. Argentina also

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15 A brief history on the politics of Anguilla; http://www.caribbeanelections.com/ai/education/history.asp
16 A BBC article on the Bermudan referendum; https://goo.gl/zVnUVT
17 Recent poll regarding Bermudan independence; https://goo.gl/b4NGtZ
18 Brief history of Cayman Islands’ politics; https://caymanresident.com/about/government-history-politics/
claims the Falkland Islands, or the Malvinas, as their territory\textsuperscript{19}. In 2013, an independence referendum was held to decide whether or not the Falkland Islands should remain under British control. Out of 1,516 votes, only three were in favor of leaving the sovereignty of the United Kingdom\textsuperscript{20}. As recently as 1982 the United Kingdom and Argentinian Governments engaged in military conflict over the islands. Since then while the U.K. has retained control of the islands, the Argentine government has persisted with claims that the islands are rightfully theirs. While the British Government has not softened its stance over the islands, key states supporting them like the United States have wavered on their stance in recent years.

1.3.7 Monserrat

Monserrat has suffered greatly since a volcanic eruption in 1997 that rendered much of the island uninhabitable and caused half of the island’s population to relocate. Volcanic activity continues on the island. There are little-to-no calls for independence among the inhabitants of Monserrat\textsuperscript{21}.

1.3.8 Saint Helena

There have been no attempts by Saint Helena to become independent from the United Kingdom nor referendums held in regards to independence. Saint Helena is classified as a British Overseas Territory.

1.3.9 Turks and Caicos Islands

Independence from the United Kingdom is a goal for the Turks and Caicos Islands, however this goal has been severely hindered by a corruption scandal in 2009. This scandal saw the local governor voluntarily returning direct control of the island to British rule until 2012

\textsuperscript{19} Source on Argentina’s claim on the Falkland Islands (Malvinas); https://goo.gl/wobE1T
\textsuperscript{20} Results of Independence Referendum in the Falkland Islands; http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-21750909
\textsuperscript{21} BBC Country profile of Montserrat; http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-20256517
when a new constitution was implemented and a degree of local autonomy restored\textsuperscript{22, 23}.

1.3.10 United States Virgin Islands

The US Virgin Islands held a referendum in 1993 to determine the status of the islands relationship to the United States. Due to a low voter turnout, the results were invalidated. Of those who voted, 82\% voted in favor of becoming a territory of the United States\textsuperscript{24}.

1.3.11 Gibraltar

For all intents and purposes, Gibraltar is a self-governing island, with very few powers remaining in the hands of the United Kingdom. In 2002, Gibraltar held a referendum on whether Gibraltar should enter a joint-sovereignty agreement with Spain to share ownership of Gibraltar. 99\% of voters voted against this action\textsuperscript{25}. In tandem with this, all major political parties in Gibraltar are in favor of self-determination. In 2008 the United Kingdom declared that Gibraltar should no longer be included on the UN’s list of Non-Self-Governing Territories due to its high degree of self-determination\textsuperscript{26}.

1.3.12 American Samoa

American Samoa has had mixed responses to the idea of independence in the past. In 2010, voters rejected a set of constitutional amendments that would have added the right to self-determination for American Samoa\textsuperscript{27}. This has not stopped several key figures in the American Samoan political scene in calling for American Samoa to seriously consider independence\textsuperscript{28}.

\textsuperscript{22} Article on corruption scandal; https://goo.gl/qcU2jm
\textsuperscript{23} Article on corruption scandal; https://goo.gl/SysRER
\textsuperscript{25} Article on Gibraltar referendum; https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2002/nov/08/uk.gibraltar
\textsuperscript{26} Source for British declaration; https://goo.gl/Qhcrwv
\textsuperscript{27} Constitution of American Samoa; https://goo.gl/fjiuibj
\textsuperscript{28} Article on said statements; https://goo.gl/4afMSB
1.3.13 French Polynesia

France adheres to the fact that French Polynesia should not be on the UN’s list of Non-Self-Governing Territories after it was re-added to the list in 2013. In the 2007 French Elections, French Polynesia’s electorate voted heavily in favor of center-right Nicolas Sarkozy who was against French Polynesian independence.

1.3.14 Guam

Guam is currently identified as an unincorporated and organized territory of the United States. To date, there has not been a referendum on whether or not Guam should declare itself independent of the United States. In 2013, a committee was established to educate the populace about the possible self-determination that Guam could request if it so desired. However, recent security concerns regarding North Korea give reason for Guam to remain under the protection of the United States.

1.3.15 New Caledonia

New Caledonia held an independence referendum when it was first added to the UN’s list of Non-Self-Governing Territories in 1986, where it overwhelmingly decided to remain a territory of France. Another independence referendum is set to take place by late 2018.

1.3.16 Pitcairn

Pitcairn is similar in status to Gibraltar after adopting a constitution in 2010 forming a representative democracy on the island. Pitcairn’s low population makes any proposal of complete independence from the United Kingdom difficult.

29 Source: https://goo.gl/fWW6gq
30 Article on establishment of committee; https://goo.gl/xzJYBV
31 Article on referendum; https://goo.gl/yBnU4h
32 Constitution of Pitcairn; https://goo.gl/TRPSVQ
1.3.17 Tokelau

Tokelau is currently in a voluntary “free association” with New Zealand, where Tokelau manages its own laws and internal affairs and New Zealand provides defense and economic assistance. In both 2006 and 2007, Tokelau held referendums on whether Tokelau should exit this agreement and become a fully independent state. In both referendums, the remain vote won by a narrow margin.

1.3.18 Taiwan

Although not on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, Taiwan’s autonomy is highly disputed. Taiwan is not recognized as an independent state by the United Nations, but rather as a province of the People's’ Republic of China despite having its own government and being in complete control of its own affairs. Refraining from recognizing Taiwan as an autonomous country is commonly viewed as a bargaining chip that the United States holds over China, something that cannot be forgotten when it comes to negotiating security of the South China Sea region.

1.3.19 Palestine

Palestine is another highly disputed region that is not listed on the UN’s list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Palestine is currently under the jurisdiction of Israel but the legality of

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33 Summary of Treaty; https://goo.gl/L1mD9E
34 Referendum results; https://goo.gl/RWDLpK
35 Article on Taiwan’s use as a bargaining chip; http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38229654
Israel’s recent operations in Palestine has fallen under question by the UN. For detailed information regarding the situation in Palestine, see the following Background Guide.

1.3.20 Summary of Current Situation

As the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, SPECPOL is responsible for discussing and setting precedent on issues including decolonization, human rights, peacekeeping, and any other political or unique conflict. While these are the 17 primary territories that still are recognized as having legitimate independence claims, that does not mean that there are no other current disputes or groups that in the future could be recognized as having one of these claims as well. As a result, the actions taken in this committee will set a strong precedent for the role SPECPOL plays in facilitating and managing these relationships, and if they can be successful in the post UNTC world.

1.4 Bloc Positions

When it comes to the matter of decolonization, states in ownership of those territories listed on the UN’s list of Non-Self-Governing Territories would agree that they are providing the necessary assistance for the territories in question to pursue routes to independence. Multiple referendums have been offered to the territories in question regarding their autonomy. By merely being listed as a Non-Self-Governing Territories, the United Nations offers each territory a UN sponsored referendum on this matter if the populace so desires.

However, those countries that were once colonial possessions, primarily in Africa and Asia, would be more likely to disagree with the old-imperial powers, arguing that colonialism in all its forms should be eradicated and each territory granted independence no matter its size or

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Discussion Questions

- Why are these territories still governed by former colonial powers and why has independence not happened?
- Given the current framework for decolonization, are there any policy gaps that could be closed to further independence for these non-self-governing territories?
- Based on other colonies/gaining independence, what pitfalls have they experienced since independence and how can they be prevented for non-self-governing territories?

Key Terms

- Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples
- Non-Self-Governing Territory
- Trusteeship Council
- British Overseas Territory
- Self-Determination
- Post-Colonial Organizations

Resources

- United Nations Cartographic Section
- Declaration for the Independence of Colonial Countries and Peoples
- Full list of all United Nations Trust Territories and Non-Self-Governing Territories since the Charter’s ratification (1945 - 1999);
- UN Resolution naming the decade as such; https://goo.gl/pe1haV
- Article on Algeria’s backing of SADR;
- Article on Former Secretary General Ban Ki Moon’s statements; https://goo.gl/XL6iGF
- A brief history on the politics of Anguilla;
  http://www.caribbeanelections.com/ai/education/history.asp
- A BBC article on the Bermudan referendum; https://goo.gl/zVnUVT
- Recent poll regarding Bermudan independence; https://goo.gl/b4NGiZ
- Brief history of Cayman Islands’ politics;
  https://caymanresident.com/about/governmenthistory-politics/
- Source on Argentina’s claim on the Falkland Islands (Malvinas); https://goo.gl/wobE1T
- Results of Independence Referendum in the Falkland Islands;

• Article on corruption scandal; https://goo.gl/qcU2jm

• Article on corruption scandal; https://goo.gl/SysRER


• Article on Gibraltar referendum; https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2002/nov/08/uk.gibraltar

• Source for British declaration; https://goo.gl/Qhcrwv

• Constitution of American Samoa; https://goo.gl/fjuibj

• Article on said statements; https://goo.gl/4afMSB

• Source; https://goo.gl/FWW6gq

• Article on establishment of committee; https://goo.gl/xzJYBV

• Article on referendum; https://goo.gl/yBnU4h

• Constitution of Pitcairn; https://goo.gl/TRPSVQ
2 Protecting the Human Rights of Citizens in Occupied Territories of Palestine

2.1 Topic Overview

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL) considers a broad range of issues including decolonization, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), and the Report of the Special Committee on Israeli Practices.\(^{37}\) Thus the situation of the territory of Palestine falls into the purview of this committee in multiple contexts. The previous topic invites this committee to consider the question of Palestine in the context of Non-Self-Governing Territories through the lens of decolonization. The following topic aims to discuss the multiple human rights issues present in the region.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has been a defining feature of the Middle East in the 20\(^{th}\) and now the 21\(^{st}\) century. The area of land bordering the Mediterranean Sea that is currently controlled by the Jewish-homeland of Israel is also referred to by Muslim populations in the region. Both populations are able to trace back their history in the region thousands of years, and both claim to be the rightful rulers of the territory. In 1947, the United Nations proposed a plan to partition the territory into a Jewish Israel and an Arab Palestine. This plan failed, and the creation of Israel in

1948 following the rapid collapse of British empire in the wake of World War II galvanized a series of wars in the region. The conflict is colored by debates over religion, territorial claims, regional alliances and the involvement on non-state actors. Peace processes have been initiated and have failed many times over. At present, conflict continues between the Palestinian people and Israeli citizens in the regions of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Golan Heights.

2.2 Historical Background

2.2.1 An Abbreviated Timeline of Colonialism and Conflict

The idea for a Jewish ancestral homeland in that is today Israel began in the late 19th century in response to rampant anti-Semitism and paralleling the rise of nationalism throughout Europe. The secret Sykes-Picot agreement made during World War I divided the Middle East between Britain, France and Russia following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In 1917, as part of the Balfour Declaration, the British established rule over Palestine with the stated mission of supporting the region as a national home for Jewish people. The British Mandate of Palestine was approved by the predecessor of the United Nations, the League of Nations in 1922. Protests against Jewish immigration to Palestine began shortly after.

Following World War II and the realization of the global community of the horrors of the Holocaust, the United Nations recommended the partition of Palestine into two separate states in

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38 https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/palestinermix/timeline_main.html
40 https://www.britannica.com/event/Sykes-Picot-Agreement
resolution 181. This solution is known as the two-state solution, and gave control of part of the territory to the Arab population and part to the Jewish population, and kept the cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem under international control. The plan received many critiques and was ultimately rejected by the Palestinians.

On May 14th, 1948, the British Mandate of Palestine ended and the state of Israel was born. The first Arab-Israeli began almost immediately after the official creation of Israel. Forces from Syria, Egypt, and Jordan attacked Israel through the Arab-controlled Palestinian territories. After ten months of fighting, the conflict ended with Israel controlling more of the territory originally allotted to Palestine under the partition plan. Syria, Egypt, and Jordan also gain territory. Approximately 750,000 Palestinian refugees fled the region and in response the United Nations General Assembly establishes the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA).

In 1956, Israel collaborates with Britain and France during the Suez Crisis to re-establish shipping through the Suez Canal.

In 1964, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is formed. It is later recognized by the Arab League as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in 1974.

The Six Day War of 1967 begins with the Israeli invasion of Egyptian-controlled Sinai following the Egyptian closure of the Straights of Tiran to Israeli trade vessels. Jordan and Syria ally with Egypt. At the end of the six days, Israel has gained control over East Jerusalem, West Bank, Gaza, Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula. The 1967 UN Security Council Resolution 242 calls for Israel to withdraw from these territories.
In the October War or Yom Kippur War of 1973, Egypt and Syria attack Israel, no territorial changes occur. The UN Security Council responds with Resolution 338 calling for a ceasefire and Israeli withdrawal from territories gained in 1967.

In 1978, Egypt and Israel sign the Camp David Accords, ending the state of war between the two countries. Israel withdraws from Sinai and resumes normal diplomatic relations with Egypt.

In 1982, Israel invades Lebanon following an assassination attempt by the PLO, in an attempt to expel PLO leadership. The invasion continues until 1985, when Israel withdraws the majority of its forces.

In 1987, the First Intifada begins. Palestinians rise up in protest of Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank and attack Israel. The Muslim Brotherhood forms Hamas, a political and military organization.

In 1988, the PLO accepts UN Resolutions 242 and 338.

In 1991, the United States and Soviet Union sponsor peace talks in Madrid between Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine. The talks end with no resolution.

In 1993, Oslo I, formally the Declaration of Principles, is signed by Israeli and Palestinian leaders. The agreement set a timetable for Middle East peace, Palestinian elections, and the withdrawal of Israel from the majority of Gaza and the West Bank. Yasser Arafat established the Palestinian National Authority. In 1995, Oslo II, formally the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza was signed setting expectations for further withdrawal of
Israeli forces from the West Bank.\textsuperscript{41} Further cooperation occurs with the 2000 Camp David II Summit.

In 2002, the Israeli army responds to Palestinian Suicide bombings with the largest military operation in the West Bank since 1967 and begins to build a barrier around the West Bank to prevent further attacks. The barrier is not in accordance with established ceasefire lines, and some view the construction as a method to gain territory. In 2004, the barrier is deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice.

In 2003, the Roadmap to Peace is presented by the United States, Russia, European Union, and United Nations and accepted by Israel and the Palestinian National Authority. The plan requires Israel to stop building settlements in the West Bank and Palestine to stop attacking Israel. In 2005, Israel withdraws from Gaza but invades again in 2008 to stop attacks from Hamas and other non-state actors. Despite talks in 2010, attacks on Gaza by Israel continue in 2012 after attacks on Israeli settlements in the region increase. 2013 saw another series of failed talks hosted by the United States. Missile attacks from Gaza prompted an Israeli military campaign again in 2014, this time ended by a ceasefire agreement arranged by Egypt.

\subsection*{2.2.2 Human Rights Violations in Israel & Palestine}

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,\textsuperscript{42} created in 1948, establishes a common standard for universally protected human rights. Based on this declaration, both Israeli and Palestine have violated the human rights of each other’s citizens on multiple accounts throughout their history and continuing through the present.

\textsuperscript{41} http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/03/world/meast/oslo-accords-fast-facts/index.html
Per the Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories\textsuperscript{43}, human rights abuses in the region include: “unlawful killings; forced displacement; abusive detention; the closure of the Gaza Strip and other unjustified restrictions on movement; and the development of settlements, along with the accompanying discriminatory policies that disadvantage Palestinians.”\textsuperscript{44} The follow details some of the specifics of these abuses. It is not a comprehensive list, and does not include the abuses perpetrated by non-state actors, included Hezbollah and Hamas.

2.2.3 Unlawful Killings and War Crimes

Despite international law specifying the need to “take all feasible precautions to spare civilians,”\textsuperscript{45} thousands of Israeli and Palestinian citizens have been killed in conflicts since 2000. Israeli security forces have been found to have used excessive force on demonstrators and at checkpoints, while armed Palestinians have been noted to target civilian centers with rockets. Authorities on both sides have repeatedly failed to investigate those responsible.

2.2.4 Forced Displacement and Illegal Settlements

Occupation of the territories allotted to Palestine in the original partition of Palestine and Israel has continued since the end of the First Arab-Israeli War in the 1940’s, with establishment of Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory beginning in 1967. Currently, there are at least 237 settlements and over half a million Israeli settlers. International organizations, including the United Nations, have declared these settlements illegal. The settlements create a situation of separate but unequal – settlers have civil law, legal protection, and infrastructure provided by the Israeli

\textsuperscript{43} https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/267/89/PDF/N1626789.pdf?OpenElement
\textsuperscript{44} https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/04/israel-50-years-occupation-abuses
\textsuperscript{45} https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/04/israel-50-years-occupation-abuses
government, but Palestinians in the same areas do not. Many Palestinians have been displaced to make room for the settlements, and building permits are severely restricted to curtail legal Palestinian expansion.

### 2.2.5 Movement Restrictions

Strict restrictions on movement exist between Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. The Israeli government maintains the restrictions are for security purposes, while international organizations believe that the restrictions are beyond those required for security and detrimental to the Palestinian people living in those territories. The barrier built by Israel in the West Bank serves as a particularly egregious example of the movement restriction and was declared illegal by the International Court of Justice. Restrictions on travel have had major impact on economics in the West Bank and Gaza, and restrict access to education and medical resources.

### 2.2.6 Abusive Detention and Torture

Both the Israeli government and the Palestinian National Authority have been noted to detain dissidents without a true charge or trial. Those cases that do go to trial have extremely high conviction rates and many trials have been found to be flawed. Harsh treatment is common on both ends, and the Palestinian National Authority and Israeli soldiers have been accused of torturing detainees. Detention of children, journalists, and humanitarian workers have also been cited as concerns.

### 2.2.7 LGBTQ and Women’s Rights

Same-sex relations remain illegal and punishable in Gaza and the West Bank. There are reports of executions for violating these laws.
At least 21 women in Palestinian communities were killed by family members or by abusive partners last year, some after reporting a concern to the police.46

2.3 Current Situation

In recent history, the United Nations had done its best to facilitate the peace process in Israel and Palestine. This has been done with varying degrees of success, especially when the United Nations has attempted to bring attention to some of the questionable methods Israel has used in the surrounding area. A prime example from the recent past comes from the resolution passed by the UNESCO executive committee in May 2017. The resolution was critical of Israel’s actions in Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip and calls upon Israel to cease “persistent excavations, tunneling, works, and projects in East Jerusalem.”47 The language in the resolution is certainly critical of Israel, and some states have deemed the criticism excessive, especially by Israel’s allies.

The resulting backlash from the resolution can teach a valuable lesson to others who debate this highly contentious topic: the United Nations can be tough, but it also must be fair. Any perception that the United Nations is being one-sided on this issue, regardless of whether it is real or imaginary, can be a detriment to the peace process. Given the perpetually fragile state of affairs, it is important that the United Nations continue its effort to find a political solution to the conflict.

In this section, recent developments related to the peace process and other events in Israel will be outlined. While the information presented may include some bias due to the sources used, it is not intended to force member states into a certain stance. The information on the topic will be

presented, but the decision of how the information is used and translated into policy shall be left as an exercise to the reader.

As mentioned previously, the United Nations has favored the two-state solution. As early as August 2017, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made a public statement reaffirming the institution’s commitment to a political solution as he believes it is the most viable option for peace. Guterres added that the solution would be the best way to improve the current situation for the Palestinian people in a concrete way. Moreover, he noted that Israel’s settlement activity and its activities in the Gaza Strip are detrimental to the peace process.\(^4^8\) Guterres ended the statement by encouraging the creation of conditions that would allow a cohesive Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and Gaza. Other United Nations officials have reaffirmed the need for a political solution as well. In September 2017, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process echoed the belief that settlement expansion is making Palestinians lose confidence in peace efforts and the two-state solution overall. Since June of this year, Israel has planned for adding at least 2,300 housing units, primarily in East Jerusalem.\(^4^9\) While the housing plans are a concern for some, there are other factors that must be considered in this situation. First, the housing expansion is typically coupled with evictions of Palestinian people, which can create tensions between developers and residents. Second, continued violence can also exacerbate conflict in the area as Palestinians and Israelis clash. For example, over the reporting period, it was reported that 19 Palestinians and eight Israelis died during incidents. While the level of fatalities is relatively low, the number of violent incidents has increased.

Since the reporting period from July, tensions have increased throughout September. On September 26, an attack committed by a man from Beit Surik resulted in the deaths of three Israelis. The attack occurred in the settlement of Har Adar, which the attacker had a work permit for. As a result, Israel closed its borders for the entirety of Sukkot. While Israel regularly seals off territories during Jewish holidays, the decision to seal the settlements for the entire holiday is due to the attack.\textsuperscript{50} The closures affected 4 million Palestinians, many of which have work permits that are necessary to enter Israel. As a result, as many as 58,000 Palestinians with work permits will have to go without a job from October 4 to October 14. While humanitarian and medical aid will be allowed to cross the borders, the cases must be approved by the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories.\textsuperscript{51} These border closings also affect Gaza. Critics, such as Palestinians and the human rights NGO Al-Haq, have called the closure illegal and may also constitute a war crime. While these claims ought to be investigated further, it is undeniable that the humanitarian issues in the settlements are directly related to the peace process. A solution to the conflict could alleviate undue pressure on many Palestinian families and reduce violence in the region, which would benefit Israelis as well.

In essence, SPECPOL cannot expect to solve the entire crisis in one general meeting. However, ideas for facilitating the peace process can be explored while concrete solutions for giving the Palestinians short-term relief can be outlined. Delegates should explore the political and humanitarian aspects of this crisis and find areas in which actionable items can be proposed and passed while other more contentious facets can be addressed at a higher level.


\textsuperscript{51} (see iv)
2.4 Bloc Positions

Countries that do not recognize Israel as a state: Algeria, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Brunei, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Other countries recognize Israel but do not maintain diplomatic relations.52

Countries that do not recognize Palestine as a state: Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, South Korea, and others.

52 http://brilliantmaps.com/israel-foreign-relations/
Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Myanmar, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Portugal, St. Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Singapore, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Switzerland, Tonga, United Kingdom, and United States. Other countries recognize Palestine but do not maintain diplomatic relations.

The Israel-Palestine conflict is complex and contentious; many countries have taken a hardline stance in support of one side or the other. But the human rights violations in the territory are clearly present and need to be addressed at an international level. While it is unlikely that any country will defend human rights abuses in the region, any resolution passed will need to carefully balance regional politics and biases to craft a document that can solve the abuses and foster international collaboration.

2.5 Discussion Questions

- Which human rights issues should be the priority for this committee to address?
- Who should supply funding and resources for any mission to address human rights?
- Is soft power enough to make an impact on the conflict?
- Can human rights issues be addressed while fighting continues in the region?
- Which diplomatic strategies have been most effective in this conflict in the past? Which have not been effective?

2.6 UN Resolutions

- S/RES/2334 – Israeli Settlements
- S/RES/1860 – Call for Ceasefire in Gaza
- S/RES/1850 – Support for Peace Process
- S/PRST/2014/13 – Respect International Humanitarian Law
2.7 Key Terms

- Zionism
- Two-State Solution
- Hamas
- PLO
- Sykes-Picot Agreement
- Palestinian National Authority
- Gaza Strip
- Hezbollah
- Balfour Declaration
- Suez Crisis
- Annapolis Resolution

2.8 Resources

- http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/a_69_301.pdf
• http://pov-tc.pbs.org/pov/pdf/promiese/promises-timeline.pdf
• https://www.vox.com/cards/israel-palestine
• https://www.britannica.com/event/Sykes-Picot-Agreement
• https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/04/israel-50-years-occupation-abuses
• https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/israel/palestine