BAL BHARATI SCHOOL MUN

17TH August, 2013

COMMITTEE: SECURITY COUNCIL

AGENDA: SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ISRAEL – PALESTINE CONFLICT
**Message from the Executive Board**

**Dear Delegates,**

It is a matter of great honor and privilege for us to serve as your executive board members.

Having gained experience at various MUNs we feel that there is dire need of promoting the ideas of peace and ensuring security at international level. Pursuing dialogue with enhanced understanding of international law across generations can have great results. Model United Nations is one of the finest methods to learn about the practice of states and understand their policies.

We hope to see the delegates well versed with the international policy of their countries representing their countries with a diplomatic courtesy in the best possible manner. We also hope that you will find the issue at hand interesting.

We look forward to a successful committee.

All the best!

**Priyakansha Paul**

**Chairperson**

**Deeksha Gehlot**

**Director**
ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The Security Council has primary responsibility, under the Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is so organized as to be able to function continuously, and a representative of each of its members must be present at all times at United Nations Headquarters. On 31 January 1992, the first ever Summit Meeting of the Council was convened at Headquarters, attended by Heads of State and Government of 13 of its 15 members and by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the remaining two. The Council may meet elsewhere than at Headquarters; in 1972, it held session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and the following year in Panama City, Panama.

When a complaint concerning a threat to peace is brought before it, the Council’s first action is usually to recommend to the parties to try to reach agreement by peaceful means. In some cases, the Council itself undertakes investigation and mediation. It may appoint special representatives or request the Secretary-General to do so or to use his good offices. It may set forth principles for a peaceful settlement.

When a dispute leads to fighting, the Council’s first concern is to bring it to an end as soon as possible. On many occasions, the Council has issued cease-fire directives which have been instrumental in preventing wider hostilities. It also sends United Nations peacekeeping forces to help reduce tensions in troubled areas keep opposing forces apart and create conditions of calm in which peaceful settlements may be sought. The Council may decide on enforcement measures, economic sanctions (such as trade embargoes) or collective military action.

Functions and Powers:
Under the Charter, the functions and powers of the Security Council are:

- to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;
- to investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;
- to recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;
- to formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;
- to determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;
- to call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;
- to take military action against an aggressor;
- to recommend the admission of new Members;
• to exercise the trusteeship functions of the United Nations in "strategic areas";
• To recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.
Introduction:

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the longest and most complex conflicts in today’s world. Millions of people in this strip of land in the Middle East are currently suffering serious lack of basic goods and services. An estimated, 1.1 million people, out of the 1.5 million total population of Gaza, is said to be dependent on humanitarian aid. In other words, 1.1 million people in this territory, for one reason or another, are not able to secure for themselves basic goods such as food, water and medicines.

The current humanitarian situation in the Gaza strip has reached alarming proportions. Yet, many people consider it something completely avoidable. Since it was caused by human a reason, that is a war, it just takes some human determination to put an end to the horrifying conditions under which so many people are living right now. The complexity of the underlying conflict is possibly a reason why this determination has not yet been formed. It is then important to understand the roots of the conflict in order to better understand the current humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Background:

The current situation in the Gaza strip can be traced all the way back to the late 1800s and early 1900s. Before the existence of a country named Israel, there was one called Palestine in that territory. Not entirely an independent country, Palestine was first part of the Ottoman Empire. After the end of World War I, when the Ottoman Empire was defeated, it then was assigned under the British rule. The British played a very important role in the beginning of the conflict. On the one hand, they supported Palestine as an independent State. However, they also publicly supported the creation of a Jewish State in that same territory.

At that time, a big movement known as Zionism was taking place, which caused migration of large numbers of Jewish people, to what is now the State of Israel. Zionism was mainly driven by religious ideas, since Jerusalem and other parts of that territory are considered holy ground in Judaism. However, the persecution of the Jewish community during the times of and prior to World War II by the Nazi regime, exacerbated the migration phenomenon and caused even a larger numbers of people moving to Palestine. All this combined caused a conflict where both groups of people, the Jewish and the Arab community claimed rights to establish an independent State in the same territory. Since both groups could not agree on something and external factors, such as the British
government, were only complicating the situation, a final plan was actually proposed by the newly created United Nations in 1947. According to this plan, strongly backed by the United States, the disputed territory was to be divided to create two independent States: Palestine and Israel and having Jerusalem be international territory. However, the partition plan failed and the Jewish community took over in entirety all the territory, thus founding the State of Israel.

The current territory of Gaza was first controlled by Egypt after the partition plan failed and Israel was established as a State in 1948. However, in 1967, during the six day war, Israel acquired important territories from its neighboring countries such as the West Bank, Golan Heights and Gaza. In 1993, some progress was made with the signing of the Oslo Accords in which Israel authorized the Palestinian Liberation Organization some administrative autonomy to govern the occupied territories, including Gaza. Furthermore, in 2005, Israel pulled out its troops along with a lot of Israeli settlers from Gaza claiming an end to the occupation. This however, is not recognized internationally since Israel still continues to exercise effective control over the air and maritime space of Gaza, as well as the borders. Since then, two main political groups that have disputed the government of Gaza, are the Fatah and Hamas, with the first one being more neutral and the second one being more extremist. Fatah was in power until mid-2007, when Hamas took over the government. This only intensified the fight and further complicated things since Israel’s view of Hamas is that of an extremist group. Many governments around the world consider Hamas to be a terrorist organization and thus the Hamas led government in Gaza has very little support from the international community, including other occupied territories that are still governed by Fatah, such as the West Bank.

Israel has always been very restrictive when it came to the movement of people and goods in and out of Gaza. However, after Hamas took power in Gaza, the situation has exacerbated and the blockade imposed on Gaza by the Israeli government became much stricter. At first, after pulling out of Gaza, Israel had declared that it would allow the entrance of humanitarian aid and other goods into Gaza. However, shortly after

Hamas took over power in 2007, Israel declared Gaza a hostile territory and imposed severe restrictions on the goods that could enter and leave Gaza. Rocket attacks have been fired on Israeli population from Gaza, presumably by Hamas. In fact, in a period of six months after Hamas took over, 697 rockets and 822 mortar bombs were fired against Israeli towns. On December 2008, Israel responded with the deadliest attack on the population of Gaza to this day. Also known as operation Cast Lead, Israel launched a full front attack against Gaza, which lasted 22 days which comprised of air strikes and land excursions into Gaza. This intense military campaign against Gaza left big areas of the strip destroyed. Combined with the strict blockade imposed by the Israeli government, the
current situation in Gaza is really alarming. Many sources claim that Gaza is facing the worst humanitarian crisis since the Israeli-Palestinian conflict began.

**Peace Initiatives**

**Resolution 338**

This Resolution, adopted during the Yom Kippur War, established the dialogue process.

**Resolution 3236**

On November 22, 1974, The United Nations General Assembly met to consider the rights of the Palestinian people. The result was Resolution 3236, which “Reaffirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including: The right to self-determination Without external interference; the right to national independence and sovereignty.” It also includes clauses such as the right of return for Palestinian refugees displaced during the war.

However, perhaps the most significant establishment of this Resolution was the official United Nations Recognition of the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people. While they have not obtained full membership in the United Nations, they are an observing member, allowed to participate in debate at sessions, without the right to vote.

**Madrid Conference**

In 1991, the Madrid Conference was convened by the United States and Russia in order to encourage the Arab states to begin bilateral agreements with Israel. Nations present included Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Egypt. Major concessions came from Jordan, which agreed to commence peace talks Israel in turn agreed to a withdrawal from the Golan Heights, and this led to a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan in 1994. Jordan became the second Arab country to recognize Israel’s right to exist.

**Oslo Accords**

In 1993 agreements took place in Oslo to solve a key issue: Israel and Palestine’s acknowledgement of each other’s legitimacy. The main agreements established were that Israeli troops would withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza. In addition, a ‘Palestinian Interim Self-Governing Authority’ would be set up for a five-year transitional period, leading to a permanent settlement based on resolutions 242 and 338. This agreement also pointed toward a two-state solution. Diplomatically and politically, this was a success, but could not be fully implemented due to the violent opposition from Hamas.
**Camp David Accords 2000**

In 2000, Israeli and Palestinian authorities met to discuss critical final status issues: a one-state versus a two-state solution, the status of Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees’ right of return.

During the negotiations, Israel offered the Gaza Strip, a territory of mostly Palestinian people, a significant portion of the West Bank, and Islamic guardianship of significant sites in Jerusalem, along with a promise to contribute finances to a fund for Palestinian Refugees. Yasser Arafat offered Israeli control of the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem in exchange for the “right of return” for Palestinian refugees. However, in the end, neither side was satisfied, nor was any agreement reached. During these negotiations, the issues discussed were more precise than ever, and it brought to light the key themes of conflict that are still on the table today.

**Saudi Peace Plan**

In 2002, the League of Arab States gathered to discuss the issue of Israel’s borders, and its relationship to its Arab neighbors. Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah introduced what became known as the Saudi Peace Initiative. Under this agreement, Israel’s borders would be redrawn to its original 1967 boundaries, there would be an appropriate solution found for the refugees including a right of return. In exchange Israel would gain recognition by Arab States. Israel found itself unable to negotiate because of pressure from the United States who advised Israel against concessions that would have been crucial for the agreement.

**The Roadmap to Peace**

In 2003, the U.N., along with Russia, the United States, and the European Union, established the “Roadmap to peace” process, which called for the creation of a Palestinian State along with recognition of Israel’s right to exist (the two-state solution). The Roadmap to Peace proposed a 3-phased process:

“1) Both sides would issue statements supporting the two-state solution, the Palestinians would end violence, act against ‘all those engaged in terror’, draw up a constitution, hold elections and the Israelis would stop settlement activities and act with military restraint. 2) Would see the creation, at an international conference, of a Palestinian state with ‘provisional borders.’ 3) Final agreement talks.

The plan was originally designed to be implemented in 2005, but has yet to have any effect. The “Roadmap to peace” was a plan initiated by U.S. president George W. Bush that was
meant to be completed in 2005. However, these attempts were largely diverted by the international community and the United States by the war in Iraq. This also generated a general mistrust in the United States intentions in the Middle East.

Today the Roadmap to Peace functions as a basis for Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. The Israeli government has claimed that the Palestinians have failed to subdue suicide bombers and gunmen of Hamas and other extremist groups that claim to represent the Palestinian cause; the Palestinians argue that Israel was never genuinely committed to ending its expansion of settlements despite having promised to do so. The death of Yasser Arafat in 2004, his replacement by Mahmoud Abbas, and Israel’s withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005 has raised mild hopes that the road map process may potentially be revived.

Recent Conflicts

The Rise of Hamas, and the Hamas-Fatah Conflict.

In December 1987, the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza started a mass uprising against the Israeli occupation and settlement in Palestinian lands known as the First Intifada. The frustration felt by many caused the Palestinian people to turn to Hamas. Hamas is an Islamic militant group founded in 1987 with the stated goal to “liberate Palestine through violent jihad.” Unlike the more moderate Fatah, which agreed to work towards peace with Israel, Hamas has yet to recognize Israel’s right to exist. Its members have carried out many suicide bombings against Israel, and this group receives support from Iran and Syria. The international community has largely recognized it as a terrorist organization.

In 2006, Hamas won a majority of seats in parliamentary elections, but failed to take control of the Palestinian Authority, led by current President Mahmoud Abbas, a member of Fatah, the main rival party, and representative of the PLO. Since June 2007, Hamas has been in control of the Gaza Strip after winning a majority of seats in Parliamentary elections.

The United Nations continues to recognize the PLO as the representatives of the Palestinian people. Since the election of Hamas in 2006, the United States and the European Union halted financial assistance to the Gaza Strip.

The Arab Spring in 2011 led many Palestinians to express a desire for the two groups to consolidate. In May, 2011 the two rival parties signed a reconciliation accord in Cairo, recognizing the removal of Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands as a common cause.
The unity between Fatah and Hamas has been fragile, and provides a challenge for Israel, the United States, and the European Union, who regard Hamas as a terrorist organization. However, Hamas’ supporters see it as a legitimate fighting force defending Palestinians from a brutal military occupation and providing badly-needed social services. This has raised intense debate in the United Nations about the definition of an organization as terrorist, rather than as pursuing national liberation. With Hamas in control of the Gaza Strip and Fatah in control of the West Bank, this division has also hindered the pursuit of Palestinian statehood.

The 2000-2005 Second Intifada

For many who had hoped that progress in Israeli-Palestinian relations would follow from the Oslo Accords, the subsequent period of violence was a demoralizing defeat.

The ongoing violence was viewed by the Palestinians as part of their ongoing struggle for national independence, justice, and an end to Israeli Occupation. In Israel, the Second Intifada is viewed as yet another wave of attacks of Palestinian terrorism.

This conflict was devastating due to the amount of casualties. The conflict took the lives of an estimated 5,500 Palestinians and 1,100 Israelis. On November of 2004 Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat died, which suddenly rendered an internal conflict between Hamas and Fatah. During this time Israel also unilaterally disengaged from the Gaza Strip. In 2005, the Sharm El-Sheikh Summit resulted in Abbas declaring that the use of violence would come to an end. In return Ariel Sharon agreed to release 900 Palestinian prisoners.

Israel and Lebanon

Hezbollah was founded in 1982 in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, as a Lebanese militant resistance group which has been supported by Iran and Syria. Today the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, Australia, and Canada have classified Hezbollah as a terrorist organization (although the European Union remains divided on this classification).

In July 2006, Hezbollah attacked Israeli civilian areas using rockets, killing eight. Israel responded by bombing and invading Lebanon, with the intention to eliminate Hezbollah. After a month of conflict, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved UN Resolution 1701. The Resolution was approved by Israeli and Lebanese governments and called for the disarmament of militant groups including Hezbollah, and withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon.
Hezbollah still plays a significant role in Lebanese politics. It was able to engage Lebanon into a war against the will of the sovereign government. Despite two United Nations Security Council Resolutions (1559 and 1701) calling for the disarmament of all Lebanese militias, but it has thus far refused to cooperate with United Nations Policy.

**Main Issues Today**

**Israeli Settlements**

Perhaps the issue that is most divisive between the government of Israel and the Palestinian Authorities are Israel’s continued settlements in the West Bank. It is also a great source of tension within Israel itself, and between Israel and the international community.

The settlements first came about in the aftermath of the Six Day War of 1967 which left Israel in control of Gaza, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights, in which Israel subsequently built communities to expand the Jewish homeland and improve Israel's bargaining position in future peace talks.

The territory captured is considered occupied territory, and settlements continue to exist in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. Settlements existed in the Sinai Peninsula as well as the Gaza Strip, however residents were evacuated following agreements with Egypt in 1979.

Approximately 280,000 Israeli citizens live in 121 settlements in the West Bank and another estimated 190,000 Israelis live in East Jerusalem. These settlements place civilians into occupied territory, which is a violation of international law.

Whether in the West Bank or East Jerusalem, Israeli settlements are widely regarded as violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibition on colonizing occupied territories. The 2003 Roadmap for Peace stipulated a freeze on settlement construction. Settlements have rendered it significantly more difficult to envisage a Palestinian state, due the massive apparatus of roads, military infrastructure and protected land that services the Israeli communities.

Nabil Shaath, leader of the foreign affairs department of Fatah has said, “We want to generate pressure on Israel to make it feel isolated and help it understand that there can be no talks without a stop to settlements. This statement was reaffirmed by Mahmoud Abbas who said that negotiations would not commence until settling in the West Bank had frozen.
Although this is a large impediment to peace, there are many who remain optimistic and believe that the international community, and particularly the United States has the power to persuade Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu to put a halt to settlements, thus recommencing peace talks. Other optimists point to the withdrawal of settlements from Gaza.

**The Israeli West Bank Barrier**

Starting in 2002, Israel has constructed a barrier to separate Israeli settlements from Palestinians in the West Bank. According to Israel, the purpose of these walls is to protect Israelis from terrorist attacks. Israel has said that attacks from the West Bank have dropped 90% thanks to the wall, however, the wall has been declared illegal by both the International Court of Justice and the Israeli Supreme Court.

For the Palestinians, the barrier has cut Palestinians off from 17% of land that is rightfully theirs. In 2004, the United Nations General Assembly passed a Resolution asking Israel to tear down its wall and made a reference for an Advisory Opinion to the International Court of Justice.

**The Palestinian Bid for Full U.N. Membership**

Frequent debate about UN reform surrounds the fact that the Security Council has five permanent members: the United Kingdom, France, the United States, Russia, and China, each of whom have veto power, meaning that they can block the passage of any resolution (this power is not reflected in General Assembly meetings). When the United Nations Security Council convened in September 2011 to discuss Palestinians’ bid for full membership in the United Nations, the United States wielded the threat of its veto to obstruct the Palestinian Authority's ambitions for full United Nations membership.

In a statement explaining the United States position, President Barack Obama addressed world leaders in the General Assembly, stating that, “Peace will not come through statements and resolutions at the U.N... If it were that easy, it would have been accomplished by now.”

Mr. Obama asserted that the international community must keep pushing towards Israeli and Palestinian talks on four key issues that have challenged peace since 1979: the borders of a new Palestinian state, security for Israel, the status of Palestinian refugees and the fate of Jerusalem which is disputed as the capital for Israelis and Palestinians alike.
While President Obama congratulated the democratic movements in the Ivory Coast, Tunisia, South Sudan, Egypt, and Libya, President Obama has insisted that the Palestinians must make peace with Israel before gaining statehood themselves. He concluded, “Israelis and Palestinians have grievances and the United Nations must be an arbiter.”

The Status of Palestinian Refugees

UN Resolution 194, adopted on December 11, 1948, called for the return of Palestinian refugees to their place of origin. So many had fled, that the warranting the creation of the United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). UNRWA defines Palestinian refugees as people whose original place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost their homes as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. The descendants of the original Palestinian refugees are also eligible for protection. From 1950 until the present day, the number of registered Palestinian refugees has risen from 750,000 to nearly 5 million. Today, one-third of the registered Palestine refugees live in 58 recognized refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Upon the creation of the Israeli state, the Jewish Agency had agreed to allow Palestinian Arabs that did not flee during the war the opportunity to become full citizens of the State of Israel. But the refugees and their descendants do not have Israeli citizenship.

Arab League members, such as Egypt, Syria and Jordan, have also denied citizenship to Palestinian Arab refugees, in order to avoid the dissolution of their identities, and thus their claim to their homeland. This position has been widely criticized as it forces Palestinian refugees to live as second class citizens.

Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which declares that "Everyone has the right to leave any country and to return to his home country." Furthermore General Assembly Resolution 194 "Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return.” This is a non-binding resolution, but it is significant in that it reflects the basic values of the international community.

Jerusalem

Since biblical times, Jerusalem has represented a holy site for Muslims, Jews, and Christians alike. In 1947, the General Assembly (Resolution 181) established a
demilitarized Jerusalem as a separate entity to be managed under the aegis of the United Nations Trusteeship Council. This plan failed in light of the Six Day war and subsequent conflicts.

Israel has currently announced plans to build 1,300 housing units for Jewish settlers in occupied East Jerusalem, a move that has been seen as an aggressive attempt to strengthen its claims to Jerusalem.

The Palestinians also have claimed East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state, but the Israelis have maintained that they alone will control the city. For each side, the claims to this city come from deep religious and historical ties.

**Bloc Positions**

**Israel**

Today Israel continues to face a problem of legitimacy from its Arab neighbours, many of whom do not recognize Israel’s right to exist. However, Israel has been given overwhelming support from the United States, which shares “common democratic values, religious affinities, and security interests.” The Israeli Defence Force has close ties to the United States, which ensures that it is a considerable force in the Middle East.

In a United Nations meeting in November 2011, the Israeli delegation stated, “Time and again, we have extended our hand in peace to the Palestinians. Prime Minister Netanyahu declared his commitment to the cause of Palestinian self-determination - and his vision for establishing a Palestinian state, alongside the Jewish State of Israel - two states for two peoples. Yet, today we wait for the Palestinians to give up the false idol of unilateralism - and get back to the real hard work of direct negotiations.” Israel also greatly fears the power of Hamas, Hezbollah, and the states that continue to support these organizations such as Syria and Iran.

Israel bases its claims to its land on four premises: first, the religious premise that God promised the land to the patriarch Abraham; second, that the Jewish people rightfully settled and developed the land; third, that the international community granted political sovereignty in Palestine to the Jewish people and lastly, that the territory was captured in defensive wars.
The United States

Although the United States is frequently seen as an uncompromising ally of Israel, it has played a more nuanced role in negotiations with both sides during the conflict. The United States makes up part of the Quartet (EU, Russia, US and the UN) that aims to structure negotiations to resolve the Arab-Israeli disputes.

Meetings of the United Nations are frequently hostile to Israel and the United States often stands as Israel’s sole supporter. Israel has responded by voting with the United States in virtually all issues.

However, just as Israel is often the target of hostilities, the United States receives an equal amount of criticism for its continued support to Israel, regardless of the international laws that Israel breaks. In light of recent of Israeli attacks on heavily populated civilian areas of the Gaza Strip in 2009, Amnesty International called for the United States to suspend military aid to Israel on human rights grounds. The United States has done no such thing and has continued its support for Israel.

The International Community has accused the United States of merely pumping billions of dollars worth of advanced weaponry into lands that can be used as an outpost with which to extend its foreign policy ambitions into the Middle East.

In 2009, President Barack Obama declared that “America’s commitment and my commitment to Israel and Israel’s security is unshakable.”

In February 2011, the United States vetoed a Security Council Resolution that would have made Israeli Settlements in the West Bank illegal. While the United States officially recognizes the settlements in the West Bank as illegal, it vetoed the resolution on the grounds that it would hinder the peace process, and that agreements made outside of the United Nations would be more conducive to negotiations and concessions. President Barack Obama maintains relations with PLO leader Mahmoud Abbas, and has stated that he is open to negotiations outside of the Security Council.

EU Nations

“EU–Israel Action Plan” serves to intensify political and security cooperation, introduce a significant element of economic integration, boost socio-cultural and scientific cooperation and share responsibility in conflict prevention and resolution.
The European Union is also the largest donor of aid to Palestinian communities. In regards to Israeli Settlements in the West Bank and elsewhere, the High Representative of the E.U commented that the “EU position on settlements is clear. Settlements are illegal, they constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible. A solution that the Israeli Prime Minister says he supports. He is right, and these talks are urgent.”

Most EU member states wish to see Israeli borders returned to their pre-1967 boundaries, though many states differ on their policy regarding the matter.

**The Arab League**

This regional organization has played an important role in the Arab-Israeli conflicts, and taken a strong stand on the question of Palestinian statehood. Many nations within the Arab League tend to vote as a block. The Arab League has always maintained a close connection to the Palestinian cause. In 2010, the Arab League urged Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to abandon the Peace Process.

While the Arab League supports the Palestinian cause, the extent of its support can fluctuate. For example, after the Yom Kippur war, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat’s desire to negotiate with Israel earned him fierce opposition and even economic isolation from the Arab League.

Egypt and Jordan are among the few nations who have pursued diplomatic relations with Israel.

Recently Arab foreign ministers have decided to reject a demand made by Israel that Palestinian negotiators recognize Israel as a Jewish state, arguing that a Jewish state would compromise the possibility of the right of return for non-Jewish refugees.

Arab League chief Amr Moussa has addressed the Hamas-Fatah conflict, stating that Arab governments should consider sanctions against the fighting Palestinian political factions Fatah and Hamas if they hinder reconciliation efforts by the League.

The recent Arab Spring has affected Arab League-Israeli relations, as new, more democratically-accountable governments form. The Arab League has “fallen out” with Syria, due to its violent suppression of popular protests, barring it from meetings of the Arab League.

The Arab League has boycotted Israeli goods, and defends its decision to do so by pointing to Israel’s refusal to cooperate with international law, past U.N. resolutions, and peace talks.
Iran

Iran (along with Syria) constitutes Israel’s greatest security threat in the Middle East. Ever since the Islamic Revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran has severed all diplomatic relations with Israel, and has even condemned those who enter into negotiations with Israel. It actively supports Hamas and Hezbollah, claiming that they are “freedom fighters,” and not the “terrorists” the Western nations insist they are.

Iran equates the term “Zionism” with racism. Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini has recently stated “Today Palestine is the symbol of life, determination, faithfulness, diligence, and dignity.”

Official Iranian policy sustains that the September 11 terrorist attacks were a plot by the US government, to create an excuse for supporting Israel and extending its reach into the Middle East.

Among the most controversial policies include Iran’s denial of the Holocaust. In a statement to the United Nations, President said, “they (the Western powers) launched the myth of the Holocaust. They lied, they put on a show and then they support the Jews

The Palestinian Liberation Organization

The PLO is the governing body that is dominant in the West Bank despite the election of Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip. The PLO has been recognized as the official representative of the Palestinian people and maintains relations with the West and has been the chief negotiator on behalf of the Palestinian people.

Though many believed the divisions between Hamas and Fatah (the PLO political arm) to be grave, due to differences in diplomatic styles (or Hamas’s relative unwillingness to negotiate), the two sides came together in 2011, where a statement of reconciliation was signed in Cairo recognizing each other’s power, and realizing a common struggle. The Western powers are highly critical of the deal, however Mahmoud Abbas insists that forging Palestinian unity is essential for prospects to become an independent state.

PLO priorities include freezing Israeli settlements in the West Bank, maintaining control of Jerusalem, removal of the West Bank Barrier wall, and the return for displaced Palestinian refugees

Asia
In **East Asia**, a plethora of views can be found on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indonesia has faced much the same hindrances in developing a relationship with Israel as have other Muslim-majority nations of Asia. While not hostile to Israel, Indonesia places a higher value on avoiding tensions with Islamist factions at home than it does on establishing relations with Israel. Indonesia, like many other south-east Asian nations has adopted a pro-Arab policy as part of an overarching anti-colonialist worldview. These policies have been mirrored by Malaysia and Bangladesh.

**China** has continued to maintain relations with both Arab states as well as Israel and Western nations. Recently tensions have emerged over Israel’s sale of arms to the Chinese. Recently, however, China has backed a U.N. statement condemning Israel’s attacks on the flotilla bringing aid supplies into the Gaza strip.

**India** is a country with a long history of enmity with many of the nations that threaten Israel’s interests. India and Israel have had a long-standing military alliance. India prioritizes Israel’s security.

**Latin America**

With the exception of Venezuela, Cuba and Bolivia, the Latin America states have relations with both the Arab states and Israel. In 2009, Venezuela joined Bolivia in severing ties with Israel in protest against its war in the Gaza Strip, which left more than 1,000 Palestinians dead. Venezuela was trying to make a larger statement against “imperial western powers.”

Brazil’s former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was the first Brazilian president to visit Israel officially. He also dramatically changed Brazilian policy towards Israel when he officially recognized the Palestinian state, and recognized the land gained by Israel in 1967 as occupied territory. Israeli-Brazilian relations have been tense ever since. Brazil has also promoted a policy of dialogue with Iran, frightened both Israel and the United States. Argentina has followed this policy as far as recognition of Palestinian Authorities.

Israel signed a free-trade agreement with the Mercosur, the fifth-largest bloc in terms of gross domestic product in the world. This has been unfavourable to the Palestinians, who identify the Free Trade

**LINKS:**

Here is a list of important links that may help you in the research process. The list is tentative and non-exhaustive:
