

Agenda Item: Enhancing international cooperation to evaluate peace and intercept specific conflicts in the Middle East region

Table of Contents

- 1. Letter from the Secretary General**
- 2. Letter from the Under Secretary General of DISEC**
- 3. Introduction to the Committee**
 - a. What is DISEC?
- 4. Introduction to the Agenda Item**
 - a. Key terms and concepts
 - b. Historical background
 - i. Palestine-Israel
 - ii. Yemen
 - c. Current situation in the region
 - i. Israeli-Hamas war
 - ii. Yemen crisis
 - d. Background of the issue
 - i. Key regional tensions
 - ii. Intentions of actors
 - e. Major parties involved
 - i. Regional actors
 - ii. International actors
 - iii. Non-state regional actors
- 5. Previous UN Actions and Resolutions**
 - a. Israel-Palestine
 - b. Yemen
- 6. Key Challenges**
 - a. Israel-Palestine
 - b. Yemen
- 7. History of Conflicts in the Middle East region**
- 8. Humanitarian Effects of the Conflicts**
- 9. Questions to Consider**
- 10. Bibliography**

1. Letter from the Secretary General

Dear delegates,

It's an indescribable honour to welcome you to the AKA Model United Nations 2025. As the Secretary General of this conference, I am truly excited to witness your debates as you work to find meaningful solutions to global issues.

As you attend this conference, I strongly encourage you to open your mind to new ideas. This year, our academic team has worked diligently to provide you with guidelines that will support your MUN journey. We advise you to approach the agenda earnestly. Over many years, the world has changed in both bitter and hopeful ways, and through this conference, we aim to emphasize the importance of world peace more than ever.

AKA Model United Nations is a place where your voice can be heard. We believe that this conference is a great opportunity for you to express yourselves and discuss current topics. Our hope is that AKA Model United Nations will open new doors for you.

I look forward to meeting you all and witnessing the remarkable debates ahead.

Warm regards,

Oğuz TEKİNSOY

Secretary General

tekoguz40@gmail.com

2. Letter from the Under Secretary General of DISEC

Esteemed delegates,

I wholeheartedly welcome all of you to one of the most complex and heavy committees in the United Nations. Let this sentence not intimidate though, I believe all of the delegates here are fulfilled with ambition and ready to work on the agenda.

If you managed to get chosen to DISEC, it means you are expected to debate fluently, work hard and act the best version of yourselves for the whole conference. The study guide I prepared is to help you in every aspect and help you understand how complicated the agenda is. I believe the agenda we have is the most sensitive one in the conference, and I can't explain how honoured I am to represent this issue, which should include the whole communities' work and focus to solve for the rights of the human.

Preparing the study guide was seminal and I believe after this conference, all of the delegates will be informed how cruel and difficult the world can get for some people. I believe our first goal is to understand the hardship of the situation and be reminded there are millions of people living in inhuman conditions, maybe getting more and more overwhelmed every ascending second. I hope before getting into the debating part, all of my delegates realize this and move on with their life more conscious about destiny and its cruelty.

Sincerely,

Adal ÇAVUŞLU

Under Secretary General of DISEC

cavusluadal@gmail.com

3. Introduction to the Committee

What is DISEC?

The United Nations (UN) Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) was created as the first of the UN's Main Committees when the UN Charter was signed in 1945. Because of this, DISEC is also known as the First Committee. DISEC was set up to provide countries with a space to discuss issues related to peace and security.

According to the UN Charter, DISEC's role in the General Assembly is to help set "general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security," including disarmament and arms control. DISEC can also make recommendations to the UN members or the Security Council.

While DISEC cannot directly influence the Security Council's decisions, it can suggest topics for the Security Council to consider. DISEC works closely with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), which was created in 1998. The UNODA focuses on all levels of disarmament, such as nuclear weapons and conventional weapons, and helps DISEC achieve its disarmament goals.

4. Introduction to the Agenda Item

Key terms and concepts

- ***Conflict prevention***: Measures to stop disputes from escalating into armed conflict. Within the UN framework, preventive diplomacy is a major component of conflict prevention.
 - *Structural conflict prevention*: Structural conflict preventions are long term strategies and solutions such as economic development and governance support efforts.
 - *Operational conflict prevention*: Operational conflict prevention means short-term effective prevention methods, such as ceasefires and mediation.
- ***Genocide***: On March 2024, Francesca Albanese, the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory, issued a report stating that there are "reasonable grounds" to believe Israel is committing genocide in the besieged Palestinian enclave of the Gaza Strip. According to the [United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect](#), genocide is defined as "a crime committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, in whole or in part." You will see the term genocide mentioned throughout this guide.

- ***Apartheid:*** As recently as March 2022, and in reference to actions taken by Israel dating back to 1967, Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, issued a report stating that “apartheid is being practiced by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory.” According to the [United Nations](#), apartheid is “inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them.”
- ***Proxy Conflict:*** A proxy conflict occurs when external powers support different sides in a local or regional war to advance their own strategic interests.
The Middle East has been a primary arena for such proxy wars — particularly between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and previously between the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.
Proxy conflicts often complicate peace processes, as they extend beyond domestic disputes to global geopolitical rivalries.
- ***Antisemitism:*** Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.
- ***Islamophobia:*** An outlook or world-view involving an unfounded dread and dislike of Muslims, which results in practices of exclusion and discrimination.
- ***Non-state actors:*** Non-state actors are groups that influence international relations without being official state entities, including armed militias, terrorist organizations, NGOs, and multinational corporations. In the Middle East, groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis significantly affect the security environment.
Their participation (or exclusion) in peace processes often determines the success of conflict resolution efforts.
- ***Belligerency:*** Belligerency is the condition of being in fact engaged in war. A nation is deemed a belligerent even when resorting to war in order to withstand or punish an aggressor. A declaration of war is not required to create a state of belligerency. A state of belligerency consists of an armed struggle, carried on between two political actors, each exercising *de facto* authority over persons within a determinate territory, and commanding an army prepared to observe the laws of war. It requires, then, on the part of insurgents a level of

organization, governance capacity, and territorial control that resembles a government.

- ***Insurgency:*** An insurgency is a violent, armed rebellion by small, lightly armed bands who practice guerrilla warfare against a larger authority. The key descriptive feature of insurgency is its asymmetric nature: small irregular forces face a large, well-equipped, regular military force state adversary.
- ***Non-state Armed Group (NSAG):*** In international relations, violent non-state actors (VNSAs), also known as non-state armed actors or non-state armed groups (NSAGs), are individuals or groups that are wholly or partly independent of governments and which threaten or use violence to achieve their goals.

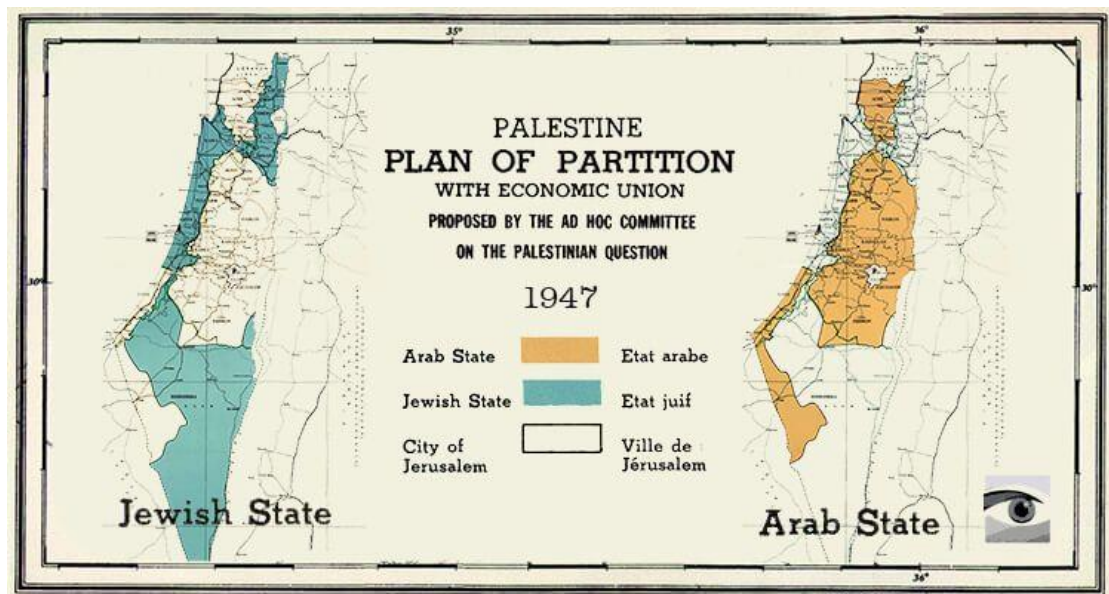
The history of conflicts

History of conflicts between Palestine-Israel

1917 – 1947, British mandate: Palestine was among former Ottoman territories placed under UK administration by the League of Nations in 1922. All of these territories eventually became fully independent States, except Palestine, where in addition to “the rendering of administrative assistance and advice” the [British Mandate](#) incorporated the “[Balfour Declaration](#)” of 1917, expressing support for “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”. During the Mandate, from 1922 to 1947, large-scale Jewish immigration, mainly from Eastern Europe took place, the numbers swelling in the 1930s with the Nazi persecution. Arab demands for independence and resistance to immigration led to a rebellion in 1937, followed by continuing terrorism and violence from both sides. UK considered various formulas to bring independence to a land ravaged by violence. In 1947, the UK turned the Palestine problem over to the UN. [Read more.](#)

1947 – 1977; Partition plan, 1948, 1967, 1973 wars, inalienable rights: After looking at alternatives, the UN proposed terminating the Mandate and partitioning Palestine into two independent States, one Palestinian Arab and the other Jewish, with Jerusalem internationalized ([Resolution 181 \(II\)](#) of 1947). One of the two envisaged States proclaimed its independence as Israel and in the 1948 war involving neighbouring Arab States expanded to 77 percent of the territory of mandate Palestine, including the larger part of Jerusalem. Over half of the Palestinian Arab population fled or were expelled. Jordan and Egypt controlled the rest of the territory assigned by resolution 181 to the Arab State. In the 1967 war, Israel occupied these territories (Gaza Strip and the West Bank) including East Jerusalem, which was subsequently

annexed by Israel. The war brought about a second exodus of Palestinians, estimated at half a million. Security Council [Resolution 242 \(1967\)](#) formulated the principles of a just and lasting peace, including an Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in the conflict, a just settlement of the refugee problem, and the termination of all claims or states of belligerency. The 1973 hostilities were followed by [Security Council Resolution 338](#), which inter alia called for peace negotiations between the parties concerned. In 1974 the General Assembly reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence, sovereignty, and to return. The following year, the [General Assembly](#) established the [Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People](#) and conferred on the PLO the [status of observer](#) in the Assembly and in UN conferences. [Read more.](#)



1977 – 1990; Lebanon, ICQP, Intifada: In June 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon with the declared intention to eliminate the PLO. A cease-fire was arranged. PLO troops withdrew from Beirut and were transferred to neighbouring countries. Despite the guarantees of safety for Palestine refugees left behind, a large-scale massacre took place in the Sabra and Shatila camps. In September 1983, the International Conference on the Question of Palestine (ICQP) adopted the following principles: the need to oppose Israeli settlements and Israeli actions to change the status of Jerusalem, the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, and the attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. In 1987, a mass uprising against the Israeli occupation began in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (the intifada). Methods used by the Israeli forces resulted in mass injuries and heavy loss of life among the civilian Palestinian population. In 1988 the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers [proclaimed](#) the establishment of the State of Palestine. [Read more here](#) and [here](#).



Javier Perez de Cuellar, Secretary-General of the United Nations, meets with Yasser Arafat, Chairman of Palestine Liberation Organization, in Geneva. 27 June 1988. UN Photo.

Historical background of the Yemen crisis:

Saudi Arabia-Yemen Relations: In 1934, resulting the Treaty of Taif 2, the Saudi-Yemen relations were established first time after a brief Saudi-Yemen border war. Beside the border dispute, Yemen's support of an Asiri prince against Ibn Saud was another cause of war. In that brief conflict, Saudis were generally considered victorious. Following the war, the treaty calls for the withdrawal of forces and ends the war. Apart from normalization of relations and respecting sovereignty, it also provided a boundary mechanism to demark the border between the conflicting parties which is the most significant part of this treaty. However, the treaty of Taif was not very comprehensive. Hence, in 2000, both the countries have concluded another international boundary treaty which is known as Treaty of Jeddah that cover many new areas which were not concluded in the Treaty of Taif.

To understand the roots of recent interventions from different regional states and actors, it is pertinent to discuss the early history of Yemeni civil wars. In 1962, after a revolt and the removal of the Zaydi Imam, Ahmed bin Yahya of the Mutawakkilite, a war broke out between Republican and Royalist in Yemen, which led to intervention by many states. One hand, Egypt supported the Republican forces. While Saudi Arabia, with the support of Jordan and Britain, supported the Mutawakkilite Royalists. Saudi Arabia supported the Royalists with military and financial aid but, unlike Egypt, did not send any force. However, in 1967, resulting the defeat by Israel, Egypt withdrew its troops, but eventually the Republicans went on to win the civil war. Consequently, in 1970 Saudi Arabia recognized the Yemen Arab Republic.

In 1967, after the departure of British army from northern Yemen, a Marxist state named the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen came into being in the Southern part. Consequently, during the war between north and southern Yemen, Saudi Arabia supported the north Yemen due to its anti-communist stance during that period. During that era, both the countries expressed their willingness for unification. Resulting the unification talks between the two parts in 1990 Unification was declared. For the unified Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh became the president for newly state. Saudi Arabia's relations with Yemen have changed drastically due to Ali Abdullah's stance in regional conflicts. During the Saddam Hussein's reign, resulting the strong ties with Saddam, Yemen's relation with Gulf and Saudi Arabia became worse. At this point of time Yemen also became the member of UN and formed Arab Cooperation Council in 1989. Resulting the Yemeni support for Saddam, Saudi Arabia expelled thousands of Yemenis working in Saudi Arabia which led the Yemeni economy into serious crises⁵. During that era, The Saudi relations with Yemen were greatly intensified because of Saudi's support for southern forces against Abdullah's regime. However, Abdullah Saleh prevailed and successfully succeeded his rule. Later, in 2004, Saudi Arabia again supported the Abdullah Saleh against the Houthis rebellion. Abdullah Saleh launched six brief wars against them and also against Al-Qaeda with the help of Saudi Arabia.

Rise of Houthis: Shiite minority of Yemen's Zaidi community consist of 35 percent of Yemen's total population. Mostly habitant of northern part of Yemen. Generally, Zaidi community considered as Shiite, but they are distinct from Shia majority. The Houthi movement were found in late 1990s by the Houthi family to secure the interests of the Zaidi community as a religious group named Ansar Allah.

The Houthi's anti-US sentiments, the group came into conflict with the Saleh government. Due to its alliance with Saudi and the US the Saleh government was keen to restrain the extremists influence in the region including the Al-Qaeda and the Houthis with the US support. In 2004, resulting the political rift the hostilities with the Saleh government broke out. In the same year, the Houthi leader Hussein al-Houthi who was the original leader of Ansar Allah was killed by the Yemeni forces. After his death, Hussein's position was replaced by his brother Abd al-Malik al-Houthi as the supreme leader.

Fearing the US-Saleh alliance which was a mostly pro Sunni segment of Yemen, the Houthis demanded for equal rights for Zaidi community complaining discrimination against the community. Consequently, the protest movement erupted in 2011, provided the opportunity for the Houthis to launch an anti-government movement against Saleh's rule. Eventually the Houthis established a firm control of the Sa'ada governorate and significantly enhanced their power. Therefore, during 2012-2014 clashes between Ansar Allah (the Houthis) and Saleh forces with alliance on other Sunni groups continued in south Sa'ada region.

Initially, the Houthis, established as a reformist movement of Shia Islam that is largely unique to northern Yemen, have evolved themselves over the past decade into an armed group. In 2015, the Houthis takeover has plunged the state into chaos.

Current situation in the region

The Israeli-Hamas War:

The Israel-Hamas War is a war between [Israel](#) and Palestinian militants, especially [Hamas](#), that began on [October 7, 2023](#), when Hamas launched a land, sea, and air assault on Israel from the [Gaza Strip](#). The next day, Israel declared war for the first time since the [Yom Kippur War](#) (1973), seeking to [dismantle](#) Hamas and bring back the more than 240 people taken [hostage](#) during the October 7 attack. The war has led to widespread destruction throughout the Gaza Strip and the deaths of tens of thousands of Gazans according to official numbers. By mid-2025 the war had caused a “catastrophic level” of [food insecurity](#), according to the [United Nations](#), and [famine](#) was confirmed in [Gaza City](#). The growing humanitarian crisis led to intensified pressure for a permanent ceasefire, and in late September the [United States](#) put forward a proposal to end the war with broad international backing. In October 2025, just after the war reached the two-year mark, Israel and Hamas agreed to carry out the initial steps of the U.S. proposal. On October 10 a ceasefire went into effect and on October 13 the final living hostages were released.



In the Gaza Strip, the conflict has resulted in severe humanitarian consequences. Large parts of the enclave's infrastructure—including hospitals, schools, water systems, and housing—have been destroyed or heavily damaged. The population faces shortages of basic necessities such as food, clean water, and medical supplies. According to reports from United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations, displacement levels are among the highest in the region's recent history, with a majority of Gaza's residents forced to flee their homes.

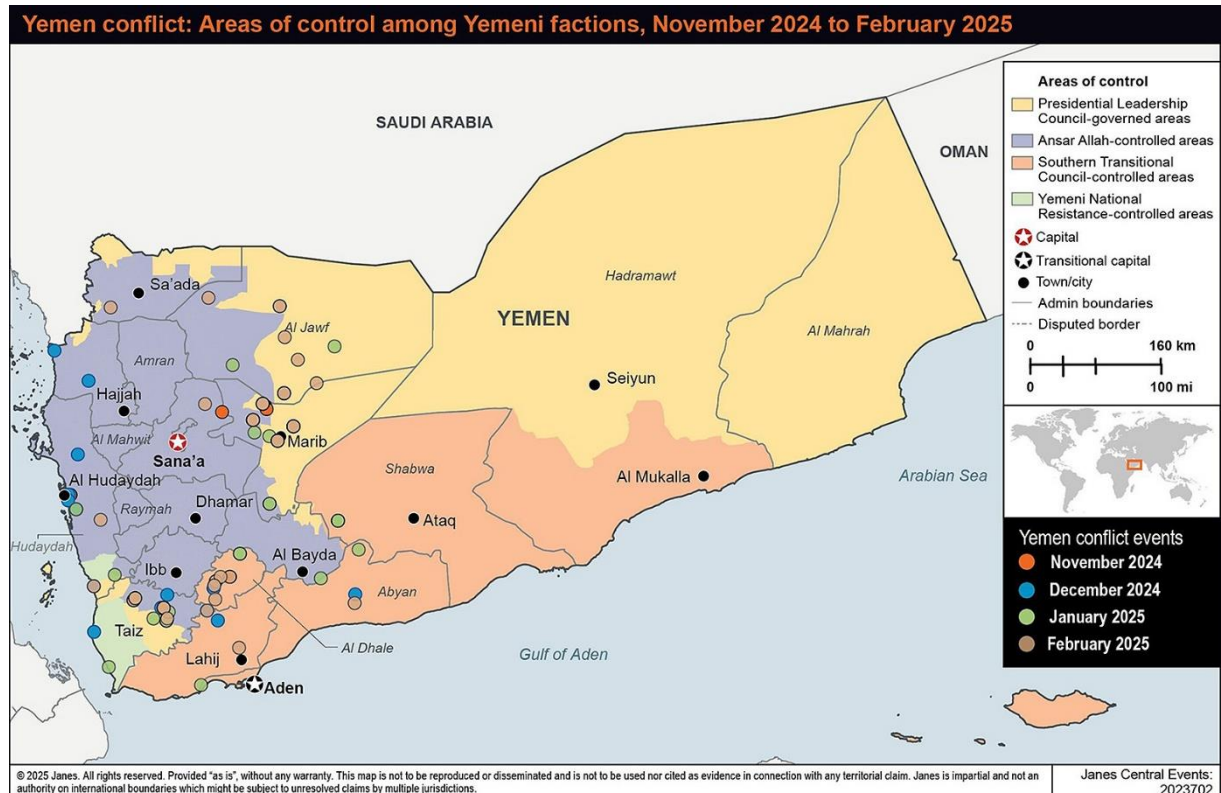
Overall, the current state of the region reflects a fragile balance between military escalation and diplomatic restraint. The humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate, while political and security pressures in Israel remain high. Without coordinated international engagement focused on both immediate relief and long-term conflict prevention, the prospects for sustainable peace in the near future remain uncertain.

The Yemen Crisis:

The civil war broke out in 2014 when [Houthi](#) insurgents seized control of Yemen's capital, Sana. President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi was placed on house arrest, ultimately resulting in his resignation and the subsequent takeover of the government by the Houthis (Montgomery, 2022). President Hadi fled to Saudi Arabia, where he requested aid in reinstating his presidency. As a result, a coalition was formed tasked with ousting the Houthis from power. The coalition originally involved nine states: Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Sudan, and Qatar. However, since the civil war began, several states have left the coalition with Saudi Arabia and UAE leading the operation (Qureshi, 2020). In 2017, Qatar was expelled from the coalition and the UAE withdrew most of its forces in 2019 (Loft, 2023).

The Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah, are a Zaydi Shiite movement that emerged in northern Yemen in the 1980s. Their primary focus has been to challenge Yemen's Sunni-majority government since the early 2000s. Over time, tensions between the Houthis and the Yemeni government have steadily escalated, leading to armed conflict in [2004](#). During this time, former president, Ali Abdullah Saleh began arresting hundreds of Houthis, while fighting between the two groups further intensified after the [Arab Spring](#) (Montgomery, 2022).

Following Omani mediation, on May 6, 2025, the United States and the Houthis [agreed](#) to halt firing on each other's facilities and assets. That deal did not include Israel, but Houthi missiles against Israeli targets halted in October 2025 after Ansar Allah indicated that they would pause their attacks in recognition of the Gaza ceasefire. The fragile nature of that ceasefire and the Houthis' stated intent to resume attacks should the Gaza war restart suggests that the pause may be short-lived indeed.



Background of the Issue

The Middle East has been the most volatile part of the world since the mid-20th century, with multiple conflicts among disparate rivals. Some erupted over domestic disputes, others over regional competition, with spillover drawing in major world powers. Israel fought four major wars with Arab neighbours, including Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, between 1948 and 1973. But since the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the mid-1960s, it has increasingly faced challenges from militias or non-state actors, eventually also including Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in the Palestinian territories, and the Houthis in Yemen. The militias became major military players in the 1980s, then evolved into influential political parties in the 1990s and 2000s. In the 21st century, they have been the most consistent threat to Israel.

By 2024, 10 conflicts flared across the region. Israel faced two frontlines in the south against Hamas and in the north against Hezbollah. Both were members of the so-called "Axis of Resistance," a network of Shiite movements armed, trained, and financially

supported by Iran. Tensions also played out between Israel and the wider Arab world. In Iraq and Syria, other Iranian-backed militias attacked US forces deployed to help contain the remnants of ISIS after the Islamic State collapsed in 2019. Yemen was involved in three wars—a civil war at home, a regional confrontation with Saudi Arabia, and attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea. The undercurrent in all these conflicts was the escalating tensions between the United States and Iran. The following is the background on all ten conflicts.

Key regional tensions between actors

Israel and Hamas

With the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) sidelined after Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, tensions between the Palestinians and Israel deepened in the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank. [The first Intifada](#) erupted in 1987 after an Israeli military truck killed four Palestinians in Gaza and lasted until 1993. The protests gave rise to Hamas, an Islamist movement that shifted the goals of the Palestinian movement. It decreed, "There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through jihad. Initiatives, proposals, and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavours." The first Intifada ebbed with the 1993 peace agreement between Israel and the PLO.

A second Intifada erupted in 2000 after the collapse of U.S.-led talks between Israel and the PLO at Camp David. Violent protests continued until 2005 when Israel withdrew unilaterally from Gaza. In the 2006 Palestinian elections, Hamas won the majority of seats in parliament in a major political upset over Fatah, the dominant PLO faction. Amid disputes among the Palestinians, Hamas seized control of Gaza while Fatah led the West Bank government. Hostility between Israel and Hamas [flared into conflicts](#) in 2008, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2021, 2022 and 2023. On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas launched cross-border raids in the deadliest attack on Jews since the Holocaust. Israel's military response killed tens of thousands of Palestinians and destroyed more than half of Gaza's buildings.

Israel and Hezbollah

Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 forced thousands of PLO fighters to flee to other countries. Its ongoing occupation sparked fury among Lebanon's Shiites and the creation of Hezbollah, a militia armed, trained, and aided by Iran. It was underground for a decade, then emerged to run for parliament in 1992. Hezbollah attacked Israeli forces throughout their eighteen-year occupation of Lebanon. Under pressure from

suicide bombings and attacks, Israel opted to withdraw in 2000—for the first time in the midst of a war without a peace agreement.

At the time, then-Israeli Defence Minister Yitzak Rabin reflected, “Among the many surprises, and most of them not for the good, that came out of the war in Lebanon, the most dangerous is that the war let the Shiites out of the bottle. No one predicted it. I couldn’t find any intelligence report.” He added, “In my opinion, the Shiites have the potential for a kind of terrorism that we have not yet experienced.”

In 2006, a cross-border raid by Hezbollah sparked a 34-day war with Israel. For all the death and destruction, Hezbollah was able to rearm and rebuild. By 2024, it had an estimated 150,000 rockets and missiles pointed at Israel. After the Hamas attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, Hezbollah launched more than 700 rockets or missiles into northern Israel in the first three months—in sympathy with its Palestinian allies.

Israel and Iran

Israel and Iran had diplomatic and economic relations, including oil and arms dealings, until the monarchy was ousted in the 1979 revolution. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the revolutionary leader, condemned Israel as an “enemy of Islam” and the “Little Satan” (while the United States was the “Great Satan”). Despite a back-channel arms deal with Israel during Iran’s eight-year war with Iraq, tensions steadily escalated. After President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said in 2005 that Israel should be wiped off the map, Israeli Vice Prime Minister Shimon countered in 2006, “The president of Iran should remember that Iran can also be wiped off the map.” Iran’s threats persisted. In 2010, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei [tweeted](#), “Israel is a hideous entity in the Middle East which will undoubtedly be annihilated.”

Tensions have played out, particularly over Tehran’s support for militias in the Axis of Resistance. Iran helped create Hezbollah and helped it become the largest in the Middle East and one of the largest non-state actors in the world. The Islamic Republic also armed and aided other militias—a collection of Shiite militias under the rubric of the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq, local Muslim militias in Syria, both Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the Palestinian Authority, and the Houthis in Yemen. All share the strategic objective of eliminating Israel.

The biggest flashpoint has been Iran’s nuclear program as it advanced over the decades. For decades, Israeli leaders have vowed to stop or destroy it. Between 2010 and 2012, four nuclear physicists were assassinated in covert operations; the father of Iran’s nuclear program was assassinated in 2020. Iran claimed Israeli agents were responsible. Israel was also reportedly complicit in the Stuxnet virus that infected and delayed Iran’s centrifuge program in 2010. Key Israeli leaders opposed the 2015 Iran nuclear deal brokered by the world’s six major powers and were pleased when President Trump abandoned it in 2018. In his address to the UN General Assembly in 2023, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed, “As long as I’m prime minister of

Israel, I will do everything in my power to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons.”

The Twelve-Day War

Let me open a new title in order to further explain the tension between Israel and Iran.

The *Iran–Israel war* (13 June – 25 June 2025), also known as the *Twelve-Day War*, was an armed conflict in the Middle East. The war began when Israel bombed military and nuclear facilities in Iran in a surprise attack, assassinating prominent military leaders, nuclear scientists, and politicians, killing civilians, and damaging or destroying air defences. Iran retaliated with over 550 ballistic missiles and over 1,000 suicide drones, hitting civilian population centres, one hospital and at least twelve military, energy, and government sites. The United States intercepted Iranian attacks, and bombed three Iranian nuclear sites on 22 June. Iran retaliated by firing missiles at a US base in Qatar. On 24 June, Israel and Iran agreed to a ceasefire under US pressure.

Israel and the Arab World

For decades, the 22 members of the Arab League vowed not to deal in any form with Israel until the creation of a Palestinian state. The pact was broken when Egypt and Israel signed the Camp David Accords in 1978. In 1993, the PLO and Israel signed the Oslo Accord, which led to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Gaza. It was intended to be a first step toward the creation of a Palestinian state, although all subsequent U.S.-led efforts failed to reach a final settlement. Jordan and Israel recognized each other in 1994. Between 2020 and 2021, the Abraham Accords led to phased normalization between Israel and Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Sudan. But progress in normalizing relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia—the guardian of Islam’s holy places and the most stalwart of the Arab states—stalled after the war between Hamas and Israel erupted in 2023.

Three Houthi Wars in Yemen

The Houthi rebel movement emerged in the 1990s among a tribal Shiite sect committed to reviving cultural and religious traditions. After the Arab Spring uprising ended the 22-year rule of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Yemen imploded politically. The civil war erupted in 2014 after Houthi insurgents [seized](#) Sanaa, the capital and power from the government supported by neighbouring Saudi Arabia.

The civil war went regional in 2015 when a Saudi-led coalition imposed an economic blockade of Yemen and launched massive air strikes on Houthi-controlled areas. It supported the government that fled Sanaa. The conflict became a virtual proxy war between Saudi Arabia, a predominantly Sunni nation, and Iran, the largest Shiite country in the region, which had armed and aided the Houthis. The Saudi campaign continued into March 2023, when diplomacy led by Oman attempted to mediate a ceasefire. It stalled after the outbreak of the war in Gaza.

In October 2023, the Houthis launched a third front on commercial shipping in the Red Sea, a strategic waterway through which almost a third of international shipping passes en route to the Suez Canal. They claimed the drone and missile campaign was in support of their allies in Hamas, although the vast majority of ships targeted had no connections to Israel. The United States responded by mobilizing two international coalitions. Operation Prosperity Guardian committed to protecting international shipping. Operation Poseidon Archer intercepted Houthi drones and missiles over the Red Sea and attacked their military sites in Yemen.

Intentions of Actors

Israel-Palestinian conflict

The next stages of the conflict and any moves towards a possible resolution will be defined in the short-term by the war in Gaza and what happens in the years after it ends.

But as one of the world's longest conflicts, a host of other issues have built up over the preceding decades which also define the relationship between Israel and Palestine.

The most pressing of these is the roadmap to Palestinian statehood, which was initially set out by the Oslo Accords but momentum on which has stalled in recent decades. Progress was impeded by a lack of effort from various Israeli governments to help Palestine achieve statehood, splits among Palestinian factions, and a general lack of international support for the idea.

There are symbolic questions, like how to split the city of Jerusalem, which is sacred to both Jews and Muslims. Israel has said that Jerusalem is its capital, but this has almost no international support, with most countries recognising Tel Aviv instead. There are also geographic questions about how to form a state around the non-contiguous territories of the West Bank and Gaza (land swaps with Israel have been proposed, but whether these are feasible remains up in the air).

The latter problem has been compounded by another big issue: settlements in the West Bank, which are considered illegal under international law but which have grown significantly in the last number of decades. More than 200 settlements have been

constructed in the occupied West Bank since 1967, covering more than 10% of its territory. More than 100 of these have legal status under Israeli law.

The official boundaries of settlements are off limits to Palestinians because they are declared by Israel as 'closed military areas', even though they are home to more than 600,000 people.

Settlements are also illegal under international law, specifically Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention which prohibits the transfer of people from an occupying power – in this case Israel – into occupied territory.

The takeover of land by settlers not only deprives Palestinians of property rights and freedom of movement, but also impacts their ability to live and sustain their livelihoods by denying them access to water needed for things like livestock, irrigation and domestic consumption.

One of the biggest issues is what Palestinians call their 'right of return', the idea that tens of thousands of refugees and millions of their relatives have a right to go back to their homes and property from which they were forced to leave in 1948 and in the 1967 Six Day War. Proponents of the view also say that those who choose not to return, or who can't, should receive compensation. The view that this is a right is not accepted by Israel's Government.

P.S: The real issue between the sides is both of them not recognizing each other's sovereignty and their rights to govern in legally granted lands. Both Israel and Palestinian government tend to keep Jerusalem as a capital city, especially Israel accepting Jerusalem as a capital in internal affairs, even though most of the international community accepts the capital of Israel as Tel-Aviv is concrete evidence. Both governments can't accept a world which both of the states are active and sovereign. The concerned issue is the innocent people of neutral world that has to suffer from politic and religious disagreements.

The Yemen Conflict

Since 2004, The Houthi movement has been leading an insurgency against the military in Yemen. The movement is known officially as Ansar Allah. In 2014, tensions between Houthis and government forces escalated into outright civil war.

Protests around the 2011 Arab Spring had pressured Yemen's President Saleh to hand power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. The transition was not smooth.

As security forces withdrew from outlying provinces, the Houthi rebels took advantage and captured territory in the north. They also had growing support from Yemenis tired of Saleh's decades-long regime.

By the end of 2014, Houthi forces had occupied Yemen's capital city, Sanaa. In early 2015, President Hadi fled Yemen.

After Hadi appealed to the international community, Saudi Arabia led a coalition of Arab states to try and restore full power to the Yemen Government. Relentless airstrikes and ground offensives killed thousands of civilians. The Houthis have attacked targets in Saudi Arabia and the UAE with ballistic missiles and drones, targeting sites including oil installations but also injuring civilians. Saudi and US officials have accused Iran of smuggling weapons such as drones to the Houthis, in violation of a UN arms embargo. Iran has denied the allegation. The Saudi-led coalition has carried out thousands of air strikes which have killed tens of thousands of people, according to the UN. These include "double tap" attacks, in which the first strike hits a group of enemy troops and the second one hits the people who go to their rescue.

The UN says both sides in the civil war may have committed war crimes. Both sides deny the allegation.

Major Parties Involved

Israel-Palestine Conflict:

Regional Actors

While the Israeli–Palestinian conflict has global dimensions, it is deeply embedded within regional geopolitics. Middle Eastern and Islamic-majority states have historically claimed solidarity with the Palestinian cause, often viewing it as central to regional stability, religious identity, and legitimacy. However, regional actors have diverged in their approaches, reflecting competing national interests, ideological orientations, and shifting alliances

The Arab League:

Established in 1945, the Arab League was among the earliest regional institutions to advocate for Palestinian national rights. It collectively rejected the UN Partition Plan (1947) and coordinated Arab military engagement in the 1948 war.



The Arab League has consistently reaffirmed support for Palestinian self-determination; Endorsed UN resolutions affirming the illegality of occupation and settlements; Rejected unilateral recognition of Israeli sovereignty over occupied territories. The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, introduced by Saudi Arabia and re-endorsed multiple times, offered normalisation with Israel in exchange for a full

withdrawal from occupied territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. While the initiative was endorsed by the League, it received no formal response from Israel.

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC):

Formed in 1969 after an arson attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the OIC is composed of 57 member states and represents the collective interests of the Muslim world. The Palestinian question is central to its mission, often couched in religious solidarity and pan-Islamic identity.



The OIC regularly:

- a. Condemns Israeli actions in Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound;
- b. Issues resolutions supporting Palestinian independence;
- c. Engages in diplomacy through summits and working groups. Its Al-Quds Committee, chaired by Morocco, focuses specifically on Jerusalem and seeks to counter Israeli policies altering the city's legal, demographic, and religious status.

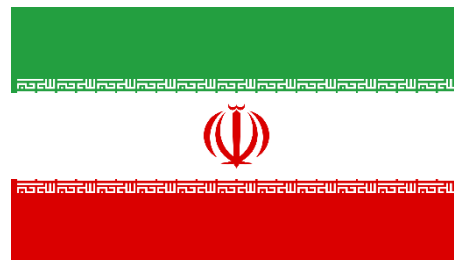
Limitations:

Despite strong rhetoric, the OIC lacks enforcement mechanisms. Member states are often divided by internal rivalries, reducing coherence. Moreover, some have developed informal or formal relations with Israel, undermining OIC unanimity.

Islamic Republic of Iran:

Iran has maintained a militant and ideologically anti-Zionist stance since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, framing Israel as an illegitimate occupier and “enemy of Islam.” Tehran views support for Palestine as a pillar of its foreign policy and revolutionary identity.

Iran provides financial and military support to Hamas, the de facto governing authority in Gaza. It also supports Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah in Lebanon, which often positions itself as a resistance movement aligned with Palestinian liberation. Iran's support is framed in opposition to Western-backed diplomacy and the Oslo process, which it views as capitulation. Its influence has created deep divisions between Palestinian factions and complicated regional peace initiatives.



Iran uses the Palestinian cause to project regional influence particularly in countering Israel, Saudi Arabia, and US-aligned blocs. Critics argue its support for Palestine is often instrumental rather than humanitarian, serving to legitimise its own regional interventions.

Republic of Türkiye:

Türkiye's involvement in the conflict has evolved significantly over the past decades. Once a close ally of Israel, particularly in the 1990s, relations soured dramatically after Israel's 2010 attack on the Mavi Marmara aid ship en route to Gaza.

Under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Türkiye has adopted a pro-Palestinian stance and framed itself as a protector of Jerusalem and Islamic heritage sites. It has criticised Israeli military actions in Gaza; supported Palestinian appeals to international bodies; increased humanitarian aid to Gaza via Turkish NGOs. Erdoğan's government frequently denounces Israeli policies as violations of international law, including accusations of apartheid and ethnic cleansing



International Actors

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict has long been shaped by the actions and interests of major global powers. These actors, through bilateral diplomacy, arms sales, economic aid, and UN voting patterns, have exerted significant influence over the trajectory of the conflict and effort at its resolution. This chapter examines the roles of four key international powers.

The United States of America:

The United States has been one of the most influential external actors in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, historically providing unwavering political, financial, and military support to Israel. This relationship is rooted in a combination of strategic, ideological, and domestic political factors.



The US has consistently used its veto power at the UN Security Council to block resolutions critical of Israel. For example, the US opposed resolutions condemning Israeli settlement activity and disproportionate use of force in Gaza. While it abstained on

Resolution 2334 (2016) under the Obama administration, that move was an exception to decades of veto use.

The US has attempted to mediate peace agreements, most notably Camp David Accords (1978) between Israel and Egypt; Oslo Accords (1993–1995), which it brokered through the "Oslo Process"; Camp David Summit (2000) under President Clinton; Annapolis Conference (2007) under President George W. Bush; Trump's "Peace to Prosperity" Plan (2020), which was rejected by Palestinians for its pro-Israel bias.

While the US has presented itself as a peace broker, critics argue its lack of neutrality caused by strong ties with Israel, and refusal to apply pressure have undermined its credibility as a mediator.

The US provides Israel with over \$3 billion annually in military aid and both countries maintain extensive arms trade agreements. While US law prohibits assistance to foreign states committing gross human rights violations, such measures have rarely been enforced in this context.

European Union (EU):

The European Union (EU) has sought to balance economic partnership with Israel and support for Palestinian self-determination. While the EU has consistently reaffirmed its support for the two-state solution, its policy has been criticised as inconsistent and weak in comparison to its economic and diplomatic capabilities.



The EU has formally declared that Israeli settlements are illegal under international law; The 1967 borders should form the basis of any peace agreement; Palestinian statehood is essential for regional stability. Despite these positions, the EU has avoided sanctions or coercive measures, largely due to internal division among member states and concern over trade relations with Israel.

The EU is Israel's largest trading partner, particularly in technology and defence sectors. While the EU has issued guidelines excluding settlement products from preferential trade, it has not suspended broader cooperation agreements, drawing criticism from human rights groups.

The EU is a leading donor to the Palestinian Authority, contributing funds for governance, humanitarian assistance, and civil society. However, the lack of political leverage has raised concerns that EU aid sustains a status quo that enables ongoing occupation.

Russian Federation:

Russia, and previously the Soviet Union has played a shifting but impactful role in the conflict. During the Cold War, the USSR was a key supporter of Arab states and the PLO providing diplomatic, military, and training support.



In the post-Cold War era, Russia's role became more nuanced: It became part of the Middle East Quartet (along with the US, EU, and UN); It established diplomatic relations with both Israel and Palestine. It has hosted reconciliation talks between Fatah and Hamas; It has sought to expand its influence in the region as a counterbalance to US hegemony.¹³ Although Russia formally supports a two-state solution, it has not invested significant political capital in resolving the conflict. Analysts note that its role is often symbolic or instrumental in broader geopolitical balancing.

People's Republic of China:

China maintains a relatively neutral and low-profile stance, often prioritising non-interference, economic engagement, and multilateral diplomacy. Beijing has cultivated relationships with both Israel and Palestine, positioning itself as a balanced actor.



China has: Supported UN resolutions affirming Palestinian rights; Recognised the State of Palestine since 1988; Advocated for a two-state solution based on 1967 borders. However, Beijing has avoided public confrontation with Israel, maintaining strong ties in technology, infrastructure, and investment.

China's primary interests are: Energy security; and access to Middle Eastern markets; Expanding the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through infrastructure deals; Countering US influence by projecting an image of responsible neutrality.

Beijing has expressed willingness to mediate the conflict, but its limited diplomatic experience in the region and its emphasis on non-intervention have constrained its influence.

Non-state Actors

Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (HAMAS):

HAMAS is the largest and most capable militant group and largest political party in the Palestinian territories. HAMAS is committed to the armed resistance against Israel and to the creation of a Palestinian state. The most recent armed engagement between HAMAS and Israel began on 7 October 2023, when HAMAS launched a surprise attack in Israel, killing nearly 1,200 people. Since the attack, Israeli operations have partially degraded HAMAS's military capabilities in Gaza. HAMAS emerged in 1987 during the first Palestinian uprising, or intifada, as an outgrowth of the Muslim Brotherhood.



HAMAS has been the de facto governing body in the Gaza Strip since 2007, when it ousted the Palestinian Authority. Although HAMAS amended its charter in 2017 to remove a call for Israel's destruction, it does not recognize Israel as a state and continues to advocate all forms of resistance against the country. The group benefits from Iranian support, such as monetary donations.

While many countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel, classify Hamas as a terrorist group, the UN views it as a political movement and does not include it on its list of designated terrorist organizations. This distinction has sparked debates and criticism, particularly from nations affected by Hamas's actions

Hezbollah:

Hezbollah, a Shia Muslim political and military organization based in Lebanon, emerged during the country's civil war in the 1980s as a resistance group against Israel's invasion. With strong backing from Iran, Hezbollah has grown into one of the most powerful non-state militias globally, playing a significant role in Lebanon's political landscape. Initially advocating for an Islamic government, the group later shifted its rhetoric to support a unified Lebanese democracy while maintaining its opposition to Israel's existence.



The group has been involved in numerous conflicts with Israel, including the 2006 Lebanon War, where it gained regional acclaim for resisting Israeli forces. Despite UN resolutions calling for disarmament, Hezbollah has continued to expand its military capabilities, often clashing with Israel over disputed territories. Its involvement in Syria's civil war further strengthened its military expertise and regional influence.

From October 2023 to November 2024, Hizballah conducted near-daily attacks on Israel in support of HAMAS. Israeli airstrikes in September and October 2024 killed several Hezbollah leaders, including Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah, who had led the group since 1992, and his designated successor, Hashim Safi al-Din. In October 2024, Israel initiated ground operations against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. In November 2024, Hezbollah and Israel agreed to a ceasefire that has largely resulted in a cessation of hostilities.

Hezbollah has stateline military capabilities, including air defence systems; antiship, antitank, and precision-guided missiles; rockets; and unmanned aircraft systems. However, these capabilities were degraded during the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict from 2023 to 2024. The fall of the Asad regime in 2024 probably diminished Iran's ability to resupply the group through Syria. Hizballah remains skilled at asymmetric and conventional warfare tactics, including ambushes, assassinations, bombings, indirect-fire attacks, and kidnappings. Hizballah's IJO has a history of caching explosives precursors and maintains clandestine infrastructure in various countries to support operations.

The United Nations does not officially designate Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. While many countries, including the United States, Israel, and the United Kingdom, classify Hezbollah as such, the UN has historically referred to Hezbollah as a "militia" or "resistance movement" in its resolutions. This distinction reflects the complex political and military role Hezbollah plays in Lebanon and the broader Middle East.

Yemen Crisis:

Regional Actors:

Maintaining a balance of power in an area governed by political and religious dominance in the region is the paradox of the relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The rivalry emerges primarily from the power struggle between the two competing states, raising influence and security dilemma. However, after the wave of the Arab Spring, the changing dynamics of the Middle East altered the essence of threats tremendously and encouraged non-state actors in state structures. Moreover, the conflict is indirect, involving proxies and the propagation of ideology.

Thus, the Yemeni scenario can be interpreted, in a broader sense, as part of Saudi Arabia and Iran's greater power struggle. As its strongest rival in the region, Saudi Arabia has accused Iran of arming the Houthis to produce a copy of Hezbollah near its southern border. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia has consistently backed the legitimate Hadi government and some political parties in the country. This section provides a critical overview of the regional actors involved in the current Yemeni conflict, highlighting their influence on the course of the war whether positively or negatively.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia has the longest borderline to Yemen. A range of variables has influenced Saudi Arabia's foreign policy towards Yemen, including the steady flow of Yemeni immigrants to Saudi Arabia, issues with security and economic, and tribal relations. In Yemen, Saudi leaders have preserved vast patronage networks, where the Saudi rulers' relations with former

Yemeni President Saleh have had ups and downs, as the Saudis worked against and with him, aligning with altering national and external dynamics.

Moreover, the Saudi ruling elites have pursued Yemen's political stability and territorial integrity, which they claim will be potential only via a powerful centric government. Therefore, Saudi Arabia is working to support the legitimate government headed by Hadi and, through its direct military intervention in Yemen, aims to restore Hadi to power.

According to Saudi Arabia's national strategic interests, there are four fundamental causes for its readiness to stabilize Yemen under the administration of Hadi's regime: "Secure its border with Yemen, curbing the regional plans of Iran for expansionism, battle against terrorist attacks and maintaining security in the area"

The Impact on the Ground: Not surprisingly, given their common borders, Saudi Arabia plays an outsized role in the internal affairs of its neighbour, Yemen. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, Saudi Arabia assumed the lead in managing Yemen's political transition from Saleh's regime. Three years later, in 2015, Saudi Arabia felt obligated to intervene militarily in Yemen to restore President Hadi's government.



United Arab Emirates:

The most powerful foreign player in the South of Yemen is the United Arab Emirates, a member of the coalition led by Saudi Arabia. However, the UAE has shrewdly built a base of loyalists in the South and west coast of Yemen and, in particular, Aden, while the Saudi Arabia has concentrated on the airstrike campaign.

They have supported and trained UAE control teams but have provided numerous armed militias with operational and material support. The UAE was criticized for utilizing the existing authority void to gain command of Yemen's vital areas, especially the ports of Yemen, as they put their hand on one of the busiest world



transportation routes, “Bab Al-Mandab”. The UAE-Hadi relationship is tense, leading to direct armed encounters between the militias backed by the UAE and the forces loyal to Hadi.

In addition to mobilizing secessionist groups against the Hadi government in the South, the UAE has also formed well trained and equipped local militias such as ‘Elite Forces’ and ‘Security Belts’. Some of those organized groups belong to Salafists who work to target those affiliated with the Islah party and loyal to the Hadi regime, in addition to the Houthis. This approach can be considered one of the long-term strategies for the UAE to protect parts of the Red Sea coastal region, along with a passage to the Horn of Africa, where Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Djibouti have already built military bases.

The Impact on the Ground: The UAE’s backing for the Southern Transitional Council (STC) lies at the heart of its strategy. The UAE provides the STC with financial and logistical assistance. It has also mobilized, trained, and equipped 90,000 troops from the southern militias with fairly strong command and control over them. In addition, on Yemen’s west coast, The UAE’s interests include the Bab al-Mandeb Strait in the southwestern corner of the country and Hudaydah, the country’s second port. The UAE’s strategy on the west coast has centred on supporting Tareq Saleh and the Giants “Amaliqah” Brigade, over which UAE command and control is not as strong as it is over southern militias. Nowadays, some territories of Yemen, particularly in the southern governorate of Aden and Mokha city, have become an Emirates control region through its local proxies, and their influence is growing by the day.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Arab Coalition:

In the regional context, the Gulf countries have continuously interfered in Yemen’s internal politics, both in the pre or post conflict periods. The military operation in which the Gulf countries, except Oman, participated against the Houthi group is an intervention with a declared aim to support and reinstall the legitimate government represented by President Hadi. Regardless of any other undeclared goals, the beginning of this intervention represents a historic opportunity for the Gulf states to bring to a halt the influence that Iran is seeking to achieve in the region.



So far, the GCC consists of Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, has pledged to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to Yemen. Most Council members, except Oman, are also participating in the Saudi-led coalition against the Houthis. However, in 2017 Qatar withdrew from the alliance after falling

into a diplomatic crisis with other Gulf countries. To oversee the transition to political stability and implement the weapons embargo on rebels in Yemen, the UN has agreed to collaborate with the GCC to the degree that it supports Saudi interference in Yemen.

The Saudi-led coalition, which was launched with the proclaimed objective of combating the Houthi rebels and reestablishing the authority of the legitimate government, has been the key external actor in the Yemeni war scenario since March 2015. Originally, it consisted of Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, and Morocco); nevertheless, after the Qatari diplomatic crisis, the latter was cast out from the coalition in June 2017.

The USA, the UK, and France contributed indirectly by providing logistic assistance and information to the coalition. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are the spearheads of the coalition's military operations, and each one of them pursues its own interests in Yemen. The airstrike operations of the coalition are operationally managed by a mutual command headed by Saudi Arabia and located in Riyadh. In addition, Saudi Arabia maintains operational control of ground operations in Marib, while the United Arab Emirates retains operational control of the ground operations in Aden and the western coast.

Iran:

It is clear that Yemen was not on the list of foreign policy goals of the Islamic Republic until recently, and there are no proofs that Iran offered any cooperation to the Houthis before the start of the 2004 war. However, since the moment of the first war between the Houthis and the Saleh regime, the Houthis and Iran had more continuing connections, and Tehran began to supply them with military, financial and political support.

In 2009, Iran began exporting low quantities of arms to the Houthis, according to a report in April 2015 to the Committee on Iranian Sanctions of the UN Security Council. The weapons transferred by sea were established, and seven potential occasions of such shipments were detailed. In one of those instances, in April 2009, a ship belonging to Iran transported arms boxes to Yemeni vessels in international waters; in the other one, a fishery ship affiliated with Iran that was confiscated by Yemeni powers in February 2011, was found to hold 900 Iranian anti-tank and helicopter missiles.

Iran's patronage of the Houthis seems to have grown beyond 2011. US officials who had previously denied the Yemeni allegations of Iranian funding for the Houthis have begun to admit that Iran is likely to offer very limited aid, including low quantities of automated weapons and grenade launchers, bombing equipment and cash in the amount of several million dollars. According to Conflict Armament Research (CAR), in contrast to the Houthi rebels' claims that they designed and built UAVs, they deployed Iranian-made missiles and drones like the Qasef-1 type UAV. According to a

July 2018 report by a UN panel of experts, despite the UN arms embargo placed on Yemen since 2015, Iran colluded in providing Yemen's Houthi rebels with ballistic missiles and drones that "display features similar" to Iranian-made weapons.

According to Western officials, Iran has increased military and financial assistance to the Houthis from the beginning of Operation Decisive Storm. Particularly since the start of the Houthi-Saleh alliance war, they said that many Iranian advisors were on the ground in Yemen. Iran allegedly sent more from Lebanon's Hezbollah.

The Impact on the Ground: After the Arab Spring uprisings, Iran's presence has increased regional political tension. It would be fair to say that the Middle East's post-revolutionary developments have expanded Iran's room for regional manoeuvring. As Broder rightly points out, contemporary politics in the region reflects Tehran's weight. Its presence extends over a strategic region from Lebanon to Syria and Iraq, and then Yemen. The religious rhetoric of Shi'a plays a significant mobilizing function behind this influence. To extend its presence in the region, Iran has established its relationships with governmental and non-governmental actors. Governmental actors, including Syria and Iraq. As for non-governmental actors, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Bahrain, and Yemen to enhance its presence in the region.

The chain of events that started with the Houthis takeover of Sana'a in September 2014 has led Iran to a greater lifting of its funding. Since mid-2014, there have been various media reports citing the US and Western officials acknowledging a higher degree of support from Iran to the Houthis. According to these reports, there could be dozens or hundreds of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) advisors in Yemen. In addition, it is alleged that Houthi fighters have travelled to Iran and Lebanon for training, as Hezbollah has played a major role in grooming the Houthis' military capabilities.

Iran also started to be more transparent about its position in Yemen around this time. For example, President Rouhani characterized the Houthi seizure of Yemen's capital in 2014 as a "splendid and thunderous victory", a statement that would have been unlikely to be made by an Iranian official in the past. Then the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister officially promised political assistance to the Houthis in February 2015. Shortly after that, a deputation of Houthis returning from Teheran in March declared the approval of Iran to supply Yemen with a package of economic support, including assistance for the expansion of Yemeni harbours and the development of power generation stations, and a one-year supply of oil. In March 2015, the establishment of two daily flights between Tehran and Sana'a was also declared by Iran and the Houthis. It is also important to state here that Iran is the only country that officially approved the legitimacy of the Houthi coup, despite its official denial of supporting them, by reopening the embassy and assigning an ambassador in Sana'a. This contradictory stand reveals the depth of the relationship between Iran and the Houthi allies.

International Actors

Besides the main domestic belligerents, minor actors, and regional actors, the Yemeni conflict drama also involved international actors, especially when the conflict expanded and became internationalized in 2015. The role of a number of countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and above all the United States in the Yemeni war whether directly or indirectly is discussed critically below.

The United States

Prior to 2015, the US primary role in Yemen was fighting against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which included mainly Unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV) strikes against terrorist cells and leaders. In addition to battling the network of terrorists and extremists, the United States funded the operations of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition in Yemen in 2015. Because of its ties with the government of President Hadi, Washington has expressed its dissatisfaction with the Houthis forces' overthrowing of the globally acknowledged legitimate government. Therefore, the US provided military logistical and intelligence assistance and deployed American warships in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea to support the Saudi-led operation against the Houthis to restore legitimacy and order to Yemen. In addition, it also supplied the fuel for coalition air forces warplanes to conduct the airstrikes in Yemen to preclude Iran from any direct involvement with the dispute.

Overall, Houthi statements and attempts to establish a government have not officially been recognized by the United States and others in the international community, maintaining that President Hadi remains Yemen's legitimate president. The United States has demanded that both parties stick to previous internationally brokered agreements, such as the transition plan for the Gulf Cooperation Council in 2011 and the Peace and National Partnership Agreement in September 2014.

The risks posed to commercial and military ships by the Houthis in the Red Sea have made the situation more serious and fragile. Consequently, in August 2018, General Votel, the Commander of the US Central Command, reported that "As far as we're concerned, Bab-el-Mandeb is open for business. And I'd say it's major waterway, not only for the United States, but in terms of going through that specific region for many countries. Therefore, one of our main missions here is to ensure freedom of navigation and trade, and we will strive to do so throughout the country".

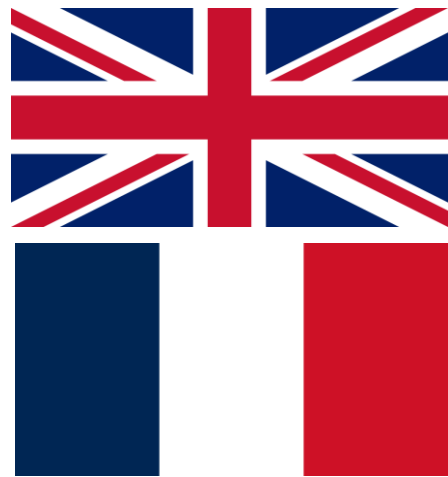
The Impact on the Ground: There is no doubt that internationally, the US is one of the most influencing actors in the current mayhem in Yemen. For the past two decades, the US has launched unilateral attacks in Yemen against what it considers to be terrorist targets. Concerning the Yemeni conflict, it has also played a crucial diplomatic role, vigorously lobbying for the execution of the "Gulf Initiative" in 2011, which resulted in Saleh's resignation in exchange for immunity. Even while the US

insists it is unbiased and acting to prevent conflict, it has recently backed the Saudi-led coalition's military action in Yemen, giving logistic and intelligence support.

The US wields considerable influence over the Saudi-led coalition and is, therefore, pivotal role in pressuring Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to reach an immediate ceasefire and political conclusion of the conflict. This also applies to Saudi Arabia, with which the United States has had the longest imprint on any Middle Eastern country, specifically in the oil and arms industries. However, the US has failed to use its diplomatic clout with Saudi Arabia to bring an end to the conflict's current course.

The United Kingdom and France

The two nations have been provisioning the coalition led by Saudi Arabia with arms and military equipment on a wide level. Since the military operation by the coalition started in March 2015, amid reports of repeated violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) by the coalition, more than £3.3 billion in weapons and military equipment has been licensed by the UK. Last July, the High Court in London dismissed a legal challenge to the UK government's weapons sales to Saudi Arabia. Besides increasing its weapons and military equipment exports to the coalition of Saudi-led since March 2015, it is reported that France has given training to the Saudi air force pilots.



Information was issued by the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary in 2016 as: “In Saudi Arabia, we have a military presence and we work with the Saudis to ensure that proper protocols are followed to prevent violations of international humanitarian law, to ensure that target sets are properly identified, and processes are properly followed and that only valid military targets are achieved. We also use the staff present as a rapid verification of international law violations. So far, our people on the ground have confirmed, in every situation, that there is no proof of intentional violations of international humanitarian law”.

The United Kingdom backed Saudi Arabia's and the United Arab Emirates' policy objectives of eliminating Iranian influence from Yemen. Since the United Kingdom realized that the resolution of conflict and rehabilitation of Yemen would take years, if not decades, they chose to constantly participate via Yemen's neighbours, who stood to gain or lose the most from their successes or failures.

The European Union:

The EU is the major Western body with a working relationship with all the main war actors. Before Griffith was appointed as the UN mediator to Yemen, Antonia Calvo Puerta, the leader of the EU Track 2 activities inclusive of many Yemeni tribes, was the only Western diplomat to visit the Houthi leadership. The EU even had the capacity to promote the mediation attempts of Griffith, in addition to collaboration with the tribes. The United Kingdom has previously voted Brussels' increased participation on several occasions, the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU implies, however, that it now has a revived chance to mediate and mediate for solutions.

Russia:

The Russians have never had a prominent presence in the Yemen war. It took part in the mediation efforts by influencing many Yemeni parties, like the Houthis and the Southern Transitional Council (STC). This is because of their strategic reasons and their links.

The Yemeni issue in the Security Council was marked by the unanimous vote of members on the resolutions issued, except in one case, as Russia was the only country that withdrew from the vote on Resolution 2216 that makes it seem quite neutral in the eyes of the Houthis, which Russia might use to its benefit to compel the Houthis to participate.

Non-state Actors

Ansar Allah (The Houthis):

The Houthi movement was founded in 2004 in the northern Yemeni governorate of Sa 'dah by members of the Houthi family. Six wars in northern Yemen were fought between the central government and the Houthis between 2004 and 2010. Although the Houthi movement initially sought to end what it saw as Saudi-backed efforts to marginalize Zaydi communities and beliefs, in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising and government collapse, its goals expanded in scope and ambition to embrace a broader populist, anti-establishment message.



On February 6, 2015, Muhammad Ali al-Houthi, the leader of the troops that had seized Sana'a, named a five-member Revolutionary Committee to serve as a

provisional parliament and a quasi-government, demonstrating the military and organisational capacity of the group. Although they have maintained control over a large portion of Yemen, including the capital, they have not received the same level of international recognition. Despite this, the Houthis have attempted to establish economic ties with the international community, particularly with Russia and China, both of which have an interest in Yemen's oil industry.

After years of military operations against the Yemeni government and the Saudi-led coalition, the Houthis appear to be better equipped with sophisticated weapons than in previous conflicts. It is widely believed that the weaponry used by them is supplied by the Iranian government.

That said, Houthis were initially an insurgent movement in the sense that they aimed to create conditions capable of destroying the existing government and establishing an alternative revolutionary government that would be acceptable to the population. The main reason for the existence of insurgent movements is politics, including, the political community, the political system, and the authority in power. In the case of the Houthis, this is no exception as they emerged to fight against the political organisation in Yemen since they consider President Saleh illegitimate due to his corrupt, ineffective, and oppressive behaviour.

The recognition of Houthis as being a belligerent group was made tacitly through the internationally recognised government of Yemen's request for aid to Saudi Arabia and it was made to get help in fighting the group.

The Houthis are an example of the scale that an NSAG can achieve since they have been operating in Yemen for 11 years and have the military and operational structure to stay in power and be one of the main actors in this conflict. They are an NSAG that demonstrates the need to talk about the responsibility of this type of group since for 11 years they have violated various IHL norms.

PS: I included the Houthis just like HAMAS even if they are not an external actor because of the complicity of a NSAG, they are officially non-government but they are a major actor and I couldn't have passed them like the Yemeni Government; even if they are an internal actor.

Al Qaeda:

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is also present in current Yemen's conflict and is considered one of the cruellest NSAGs in the world and the most dangerous unit of the Sunni Islamist global militant movement of Al Qaeda.

During the 2011 uprising, Al Qaeda took advantage of the security vacuum to seize control of



several cities in southern Yemen. By 2009, Al Qaeda in Yemen had merged with the Saudi and Yemeni branches of Al Qaeda to form the AQAP. Al Qaeda is a transnational armed group, one of the biggest problems international law has dealt with since the 9/11 attacks.

When we speak of transnational groups like Al Qaeda, we are referring to cases of terrorist groups that operate in different locations but are part of a single group, pursuing a single objective and having the same motivations and ideologies. However, not all terrorist groups can assume a transnational character having to present certain characteristics that qualify them as such.

Combating the presence of this group was not one of President Saleh's priorities and only became one in 2006 after the prison break of 23 jihadi activists who joined Al Qaeda. As the country was already showing signs of financial breakdown and instability, Saleh could not declare war on AQAP. Thus, the US entered Yemen and began to fight against terrorism on the territory of this country. This cooperation between the US and the Saleh regime generated discontent among the Yemenis and subsequently increased support for AQAP. As a result of this, AQAP declared several small Islamic emirates in 2011-2012.

While it is true that AQAP's ideology has not appealed to Yemeni society, the organisation has managed to consolidate itself due to a lack of authority and widespread dissatisfaction with the ruling regime. Due to a steady increase in power, AQAP achieved its biggest victory in the conflict to date in April 2015 when it seized al-Mukalla, Yemen's fifth-largest city, and a larger portion of the Hadramout province, where a crucial component of the country's oil infrastructure is situated, and released three hundred inmates from the city's prison, many of whom were believed to be AQAP members. As a result, it gained strength and was able to extend its control westward as far as Aden.

The truth is, today, AQAP is far from defeated and continues to exert control over certain territories in southern Yemen, in the governorates of Hadhramaut, Shabwa and Abyan. The most significant of Al Qaeda's global activities currently should be considered the AQAP activities in Yemen. Also, Yemen is the only country in the Middle East where Al Qaeda outperforms the Islamic State, which is significant given the enmity between the two terrorist groups.

5. Previous UN Actions and Resolutions

a. Israel-Palestine

In 1947, UNGA Resolution 181 proposed dividing the British mandated Palestine into two states: a Jewish and an Arab state. Palestine initially rejected the 1947 proposal, claiming the population distribution was inequitable. However, Israel relied on this proposal when declaring its independence in 1948. The following year, UNGA

Resolution 194 granted Palestinians displaced in the 1948 war the right to return home or receive compensation. The Palestinians views this resolution as the foundation of the right to return to the region.

UNSC Resolution 242 was issued in 1967 to call for Israel's withdrawal from the territories occupied during the 1967 Six Day War. 242 called for Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, end the war, and live peacefully within recognized borders. It remains a reference point for peace plans today. UNSC Resolution 478, signed in 1980, invalidated Israel's law declaring Jerusalem the eternal and indivisible capital. In 1979, UNSC Resolution 446 was issued, declaring Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem unlawful and explicitly stating that the settlements were a threat to peace. In 1980, UNSC Resolution 465 was issued, urging Israel to halt its settlement activities and international powers to refrain from supporting them.

In 2016, UNSC Resolution 2334 was issued regarding the settlements. Resolution 2334 reiterated the legal invalidity of Israeli settlements, declared them a major obstacle to peace, reiterated the call for international powers to refrain from supporting them, and declared actions that alter the status of Palestinian territories unlawful. These resolutions emphasized that the settlements were illegal and threatened peace between the parties.

Although these resolutions remain valid, they have not been implemented. In the recent Israel-Hamas conflict, UN bodies have continued to adopt new resolutions calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and seeking solutions to humanitarian problems.

These resolutions have resulted in increased support from the broader international community for addressing humanitarian issues. In recent years, many UN bodies and agencies, particularly UNRWA and OHCHR, have also engaged in mediation, special representative offices, peace initiatives, humanitarian corridors, and aid distribution.

b. Yemen

UNSC Resolution 2014, addressing the political crisis that began in Yemen during the Arab Spring, marked the UN's first serious intervention in Yemen. In this resolution, the UN condemned the escalating violence in protests against President Ali Abdullah Saleh's government, called on the parties to cease the violence and support the ongoing political transition process, and supported the transition agreement prepared by the GCC.

UNSC Resolution 2051 condemned the armed actions that opposed the transition following the adoption of the GCC transition agreement and the actors who sabotaged the reconciliation. Resolution 2051 was the first official declaration indicating the accelerating internal fragmentation in the country.

UNSC Resolution 2140 decided to establish a sanctions mechanism for Yemen. The resolution focused on imposing sanctions on those who disrupt social peace and the transition process.

In subsequent years, following the determination of the Houthis' obstruction of the peace process by UNSC Resolution 2564, the sanctions were extended and expanded. Following the Houthi takeover of the Sanaa region, the UN issued its first strong warning to the Houthis, condemning their forced overthrow of the government, calling for the withdrawal of state institutions and the return of seized military equipment, and urging the parties to return to political dialogue.

UNSC Resolution 2216, still referenced today, was issued due to the escalation of the civil war and to impose international sanctions against the Houthis. The UN demanded that the Houthis halt their military advance, withdraw from the Sanaa region, and surrender all their weapons and military equipment. It recognized President Hadi's government as the "official government." An arms embargo was imposed on the Houthis, and sanctions such as travel bans and asset freezes were imposed on Houthi leaders. These decisions are still valid and ongoing.

In 2018, the Stockholm Agreement was signed in Sweden under UN mediation between the Yemeni government and the Houthis, aiming to establish a ceasefire and reduce tensions. The agreement aims to alleviate the conflict and humanitarian crisis. The agreement included both sides agreeing to mutually release thousands of prisoners and discussing port management to support the humanitarian crisis.

UNSC Resolution 2451 officially ratified the Stockholm agreement. The UN supported the parties' withdrawal of troops from ports and agreed to deploy observers to the field to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire.

In 2019, UNSC Resolution 2452 was issued, establishing the UNMHA commission to monitor the ceasefire and enhance security on the ground. These resolutions remain valid and ongoing in Yemen. In the civil conflict in Yemen, UN has mandated numerous other field mechanisms, in addition to peace negotiations to mitigate the impact of the conflict. Organizations such as *UNICEF*, *WFP*, *UNDP*, *UNHCR*, *OCHA*, and the *UN Panel of Experts* can be counted as exemplars.

6. Key Challenges

a. Israel-Palestine

Lack of Trust

Throughout history, ongoing attacks, military operations, failed peace attempts, and tension that have harmed both communities have created serious distrust between the parties. Palestine believes that Israel does not want an equitable and reconciling solution due to the Israeli occupation, settlement policies, civilian deaths, legal

negligence, military control, and the ongoing humanitarian crisis caused by war. Israel, on the other hand, believes that peace is risky owing to security threats such as rocket attacks, the armed presence of Hamas and hostage situation caused by the war. As the political and diplomatic process reaches a deadlock, both Israel and Palestine are driven to more extreme positions, escalating violence and diminishing the prospects for compromise. The lack of faith on both sides in diplomatic and political commitments leads to the failure of peace negotiations.

Territorial Dispute and Settlements

In the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai. The UN accepts Israel's pre-war borders as the starting point for negotiations for a Palestinian state. Palestine seeks its pre-war borders and East Jerusalem as its capital. However, Israel argues that returning to these borders is not advantageous from a security perspective due to the current settlements in the area. For example, the West Bank, although occupied by Israel during the Six-Day War, is neither fully under Israeli control nor fully controlled by the Palestinian state. Because the settlements in the region are intertwined, issues such as legal and political status, sovereignty, and evictions and demolitions within the areas make the distribution of territory uncertain. The UN has made numerous decisions regarding these settlements, but these decisions have not been implemented due to the parties' policies and security priorities. Furthermore, the settlements' influence on the conflict has further expanded over the years. The Jerusalem issue, another critical issue in peace negotiations, has yet to be fully resolved to a solution acceptable to both Israel and Palestine. Due to the fact that it is considered sacred to all three major religions, due to its sacred sites and historical significance, and because the city is simultaneously considered the capital of both Israel and Palestine, it is putting peace negotiations in a stalemate.

Regional Power Rivalries

The conflict is not just between the two sides; it has also become a regional proxy war, fuelled by the struggle for benefits and influence among regional actors. External actors' interventions and support, such as weapons, logistics, food, and shelter, in line with these struggles for interests and influence, pose the risk of escalating the conflict. These situations cause foreign policy interests and regional rivalries to prioritize over peace between the parties during the debates and negotiations, diminishing transparency, permanence, and a solution-oriented perspective. ***Institutional Collapse*** Many state institutions and administrative institutions have been damaged by the war and conflict, causing serious damage to the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the state and a loss of credibility for the authority. The current situation has increased societal insecurity and chaos, making it difficult to achieve the UN's goal of lasting peace.

Humanitarian Crisis Feedback

The conflict has resulted in humanitarian consequences such as civilian deaths and disappearances, forced evictions and displacement, allegations of collective punishment and torture, the humanitarian situation in Gaza, collapsed infrastructure, the collapse of government service systems, shelter and food shortages, and the obstruction of aid. As the humanitarian crisis persists and as the priority becomes humanitarian crisis, peace efforts are bound to fail to garner the necessary public support which renders diplomatic processes ineffective

Political and Negotiation Deadlock

Peace negotiations, which have dragged on for many years, have still not reached a solution. The failures in these negotiations have strengthened the perception among both the parties and the outside world that peace is impossible. One of the problems behind the deadlock in negotiations and political processes is the lack of legitimate representation. In Palestine, the West Bank is under Palestinian Authority control, while the Gaza region is under Hamas control, making it impossible to find a single, legitimate interlocutor. Israel's coalition government system, comprised of multiple political parties, makes it difficult for ideas for peace to align with the common will of the region. Another issue is the conflicting desires of the parties. While Palestine seeks state sovereignty, removal of Israel's settlements in West Bank, East Jerusalem, and a return to pre-1967 borders, for Israel, the indispensable demands for a security guarantee, permanent settlement in the West Bank, and Jerusalem as its capital district obstacles to peace between the parties. Furthermore, the failures resulting from long-standing peace strategies and the conflicting interests of regional powers have weakened the partnership for peace among UN member states, becoming a contributing factor.

b. Yemen

Fragmented Political Structure

Fragmented political structure is one of the major factors contributing to the failure to resolve Yemen's problems. According to many official documents, Yemen's biggest structural problem is the lack of a single authority. As the war progressed, the country's political structure fragmented into the Houthis (Ansar Allah), the internationally recognized official Yemeni government, the Southern Transitional Council (STC), tribal structures, and local militias. Many political fragments mean various agendas and beliefs which complicates the process of reaching to a peace treaty that aligns with agenda and beliefs of "common will". This fragmented political structure not only makes it difficult to sign a single peace agreement, ensure public security, implement disarmament, and determine the legitimate political power in the country, but also complicates security sector reform and aid delivery within the country.

Regional Power Rivalries

While Yemen may appear to be a civil war from a distance, it is actually a regional proxy war, as we mentioned in discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The parties in the region are unwilling to compromise because they are supported by major international powers. Saudi Arabia's interests, in short, stem from its historical conflicts with Iran, and its reluctance to allow Iranian influence on its southern border, coupled with concerns about the Houthis' military capacity and border attacks. Iran primarily seeks to balance Saudi Arabia's sphere of influence and, in addition to its own regional deterrence strategy, continues to gain strategic influence along Riyadh's borders through its support for the Houthis. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), on the other hand, supports the Southern Transitional Council primarily because it seeks influence over Aden, Mukalla Ports, and trade routes. The conflicting interests of regional powers have disrupted ceasefire processes and become a major obstacle to overall peace. ***Uncontrolled Arms Flows*** Historically, civilian arms ownership has always been widespread in Yemen. With the collapse of state authority after 2014, these weapons fell into the hands of militias, and the "each tribe provides its own security" mentality began to be adopted in the country in which armament began to be normalized. The lack of port and border control in Yemen has led to accusations that Iran is transferring missile parts, drone technology, and components to the Houthis by sea; Saudi Arabia and the UAE are facilitating the supply of air defence systems, armoured vehicles, and small arms to the Yemeni government and the Southern Transitional Council, a situation that fragiles ceasefires and fuels the conflict.

Humanitarian and Security Problems' Feedback The humanitarian and security problems experienced during the crisis are not only a consequence of the conflict but also an active factor fuelling it. The loss of neutrality of some humanitarian aid due to its use by armed groups as a tool of oppression, hunger and unemployment encouraging individuals to join armed groups, the obstruction of aid delivery due to attacks, and the collapse of the state's basic healthcare, shelter, and food systems are all contributing to the fragmentation of the state and the creation of a loop in which a single, legitimate authority cannot be established.

Economic Fragmentation

Currently Yemen is economically divided into two distinct economic systems. The government established its own central bank in Aden, while the Houthis control the former central bank in Sanaa. Two different central banks managed by two different actors, different currencies printed in each bank, the country's distinct revenue streams being held by different actors, the parties engaging in smuggling and theft to generate income, and the non-payment of public employees' salaries are among the main problems of the crisis, reinforcing economic division and collapse while making a single peace agreement and the reconstruction of state institutions impossible.

Institutional and Executive Collapse

As mentioned above, the collapse of central administrative ministries, judicial bodies, health and security institutions, and education and social services due to the civil war contributes to the people's alignment with their interests and the fragmentation of the state, creating a loop that fuels the conflict. Due to the paralysis of public services, people in the region are forced to subsist on a single meal, incur debt, and resort to child labour to buy food, further affecting the humanitarian and economic crisis.

SSR Deadlock

As in many sectors in Yemen, a fragmented army and police structure is observed, primarily divided into Houthi forces, the government-aligned army, the STC security forces, tribal militias, local police, and armed units supported by external actors. The SSR is a reform initiative that supports disarmament within the UN and the unification of the security sector under centralized control during this crisis. However, factors such as the conflicting agendas and interests of the fragmented army and police structures in Yemen and the influence of external actors have prevented the realization of SSR's goal of unifying the security sector under centralized control, becoming among one of the key issues regarding the crisis.

7. History of Conflicts in the Middle East Region

The Middle East is a region with a fascinating history that goes back to the earliest known civilizations and empires. Its location at the crossroads of continents has made it a battleground for empires, religions, and ideologies. As a sad result of this, conflict has raged in the Middle East for centuries. This has shaped boundaries, politics, culture, and the lives of millions.

The history of conflict in the Middle East traces back to ancient times, marked by the rise and fall of mighty empires like the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans.

These powerful civilizations vied for control over the region. They left behind a legacy of conquest, assimilation, and cultural exchange. The shifting borders of these empires laid the foundation for modern geopolitical rivalries and territorial disputes.

Religion has played a profound role in shaping the landscape of conflict in the Middle East. The rise of Islam in the 7th century brought about a new era of conquest and expansion, as Arab armies swept across the region, establishing vast caliphates, and spreading Islamic civilization. The Sunni-Shia divide, dating back to the early days of Islam, led to further tension and conflict. The two sides (Sunni and Shia) have been at odds in various nations ever since.

The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed the emergence of European colonial powers in the Middle East, as the Ottoman Empire weakened and collapsed. Britain and France carved up the region through the Sykes-Picot Agreement, drawing arbitrary borders that disregarded ethnic, religious, and tribal realities. This colonial legacy sowed the seeds of future conflict, creating artificial nations and fuelling nationalist movements.

Israel-Iran Conflict

On June 13, 2025, [Israel](#) conducted a major operation against [Iran](#). The anticipated attack, which targeted nuclear facilities, military sites, and regime [infrastructure](#), followed nearly two years of war between Israel and [Iran-backed militant groups](#) that also saw two direct confrontations between Israel and Iran in 2024. As fighting increased on both sides, the [United States](#) got involved, targeting the most critical and fortified sites in Iran's [nuclear](#) program, which Israel was unable to destroy with its own arsenal. A ceasefire was announced on June 24, bringing the 12-day war to an end.

Once allies—from 1948 to 1979—Israel and Iran became bitter enemies after the [Iranian Revolution](#) of 1979, in which the new, anti-colonial [Islamic](#) regime blamed the [United States](#) and [Israel](#) for the region's greatest [grievances](#). Matters escalated significantly in the early 2000s when Iran was revealed to have a suspiciously secret nuclear program and, as U.S.-led forces toppled the regime of [Saddam Hussein](#) in [Iraq](#) that fiercely opposed Iran, Iran expanded its reach across the region (see [Axis of Resistance](#)).

Yemeni Civil War

Yemeni Civil War, devastating conflict in [Yemen](#) that began in 2014 when the capital, [Sanaa](#), already destabilized by the [Arab Spring](#) uprising that began in 2011, was overtaken by [Houthi rebel](#) forces. At the [war's](#) height, [exacerbated](#) by the intervention of forces from [Saudi Arabia](#) and the [United Arab Emirates](#), it brought most of the country to the brink of [starvation](#) and resulted in the worst outbreak of [cholera](#) in history. By 2020 the Houthi rebels appeared to have the upper hand in the conflict, especially as foreign forces sought to withdraw. But, as the war at home died down, Houthi forces opened a new dimension to the conflict in 2023 as it made attempts to strike [Israel](#) and attacked commercial ships passing through the [Red Sea](#) following the outbreak of the [Israel-Hamas War](#).

Ali Abdullah Saleh, as a senior military officer, became president of North Yemen in 1978—led efforts to unify Yemen in the late 1980s after the discovery of [oil](#) and [natural gas](#) in the region around [Ma'rib](#) (Marib), which straddled the border of North Yemen and South Yemen, and after the [Soviet Union](#) abandoned its support

for South Yemen. For years Saleh's government had failed to [placate](#) the demands of an unsettled [Zaydī Shi'ī](#) population, whose opposition to the [military regime](#) laid the foundation for the [Houthi movement](#) established in the early 2000s. As president of a united Yemen from 1990, Saleh struggled also to maintain support from southern factions as well as Sunni [Islamists](#) who worried that Saleh's government was conceding too much in the name of unification. Although he managed to remain in power for more than three decades, years of rule through suppression had resulted in deep-rooted divisions that surfaced after he was removed from power in 2012

Arab-Israeli Frictions

After decades of confrontations between Arabs and Jews under the British [mandate](#) of [Palestine](#), where both [communities](#) sought self-determination after the fall of the [Ottoman Empire](#) in 1922, the [United Kingdom](#) announced its intention in 1947 to withdraw its forces from Palestine and [endorsed United Nations Resolution 181](#), which partitioned the British [mandate](#) into a Jewish state and an Arab state. The plan, although accepted by the international [community](#), was rejected by the Arabs, and in May 1948, as British forces withdrew, Israel was born in a region with unresolved disputes over borders, security, land ownership, and other matters. Since that time, Israel has fought a number of conflicts with various Arab forces, most notably in 1948–49, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982, 2006, and 2023–present. This article focuses on those conflicts with significant consequences for the broader [Middle East](#) region, although the 2025 [Israel-Iran Conflict](#), which did not involve any Arab actors, is discussed separately [here](#). For coverage of clashes specific to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, *see* [Israel](#), [Palestine](#), [intifada](#), and [Gaza Strip](#).

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

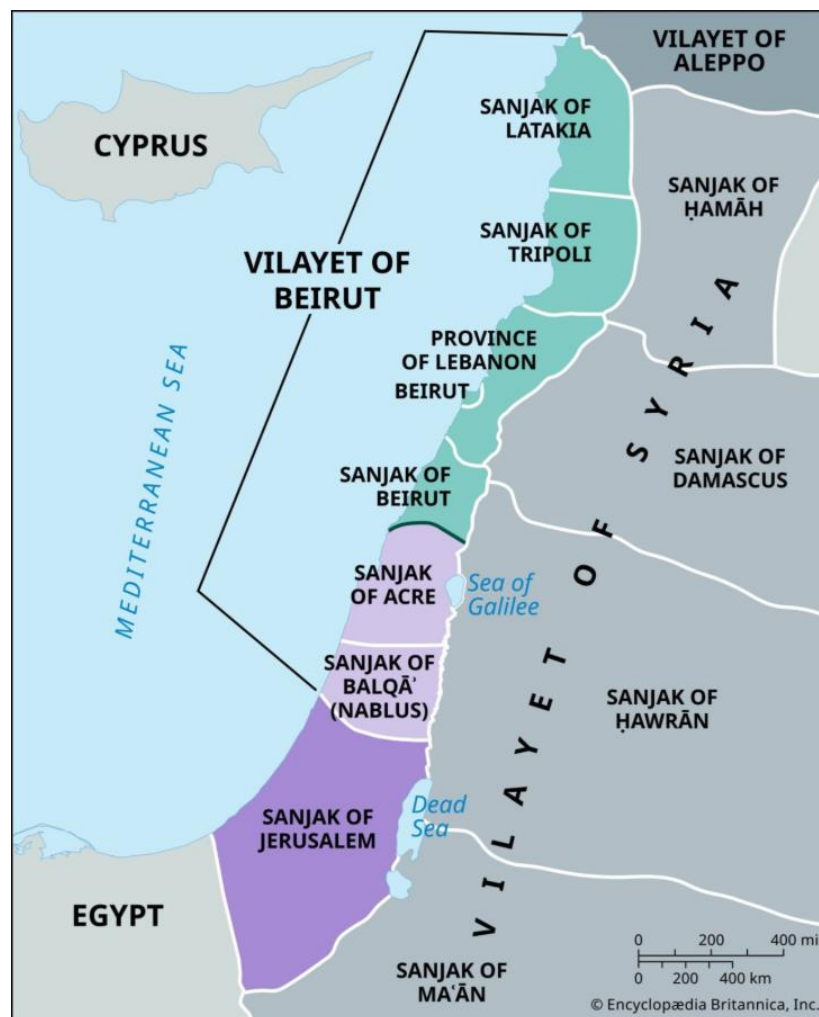
Since the [war between Israel and Hamas](#) broke out in late 2023, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East continues to dominate the world's attention. But it's impossible to understand the headlines without knowing

The “Holy Land”—a moniker that Israelis and Palestinians share for their beloved region—has been mired in conflict for more than a century. When the long-decaying [Ottoman Empire](#) collapsed after [World War I](#), both Jews and Palestinian Arabs expected a state where they could finally be in charge of their own fate. But why was a piece of land the size of Massachusetts promised to two peoples? Explore the history behind the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its key moments and figures, and the prospects and obstacles for peace.

The area that today comprises Israel and the Palestinian territories was crafted when the Ottoman Empire fell after World War I. The area occupied by the British included the Ottoman *sanjak* (district) of Jerusalem and the *sanjaks* of Acre and Balqā' in the Beirut *vilayet* (governorate), while the *sanjaks* north of Acre were occupied by the French. Since the areas occupied by the British roughly coincided with the historic

region of Palestine, the British adopted the name for its mandate—that is, its governorship of the region as authorized by the League of Nations.

The prospects for peace have been shaped by devastating wars. The [1948 Arab-Israeli War](#)—an existential one that the Israelis call the War of Independence and the Palestinians call the Nakba (“Catastrophe”)—created the borders we know today as [Israel](#), the [West Bank](#), and the [Gaza Strip](#). The [Six-Day War](#) (1967) later brought the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under Israeli military occupation. Tired of bloodshed after fighting in the [Lebanese Civil War](#) and the first [intifada](#) in the 1980s, Israelis and Palestinians formally recognized one another in the [Oslo I Accord](#) in 1993 and set out a pathway to lasting peace. Still, in the 21st century peace remains elusive.



The Oslo Accords

Oslo Accords, set of agreements between [Israel](#) and the [Palestine Liberation Organization](#) (PLO) that established a peace process for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a mutually negotiated [two-state solution](#). The agreements resulted in limited self-governance for Palestinians in the [West Bank](#) and the [Gaza Strip](#) through the creation of the [Palestinian Authority](#) (PA). Although the goal of the accords was to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by May 1999, the [complexities](#) that underlay decades of hostilities ultimately derailed the process and left the most challenging issues to smoulder in the 21st century.

The [Oslo I Accord](#) (formally the Declaration of Principles on Palestinian Self-Rule) was the fruit of secret negotiations that began in January 1993 between representatives of Israel (led by [Shimon Peres](#)) and representatives of the PLO (led by [Mahmoud Abbas](#)) in [Oslo](#). The agreement set as its basis:

1. [United Nations Resolution 242](#), which called for Israel to withdraw from territories it occupied in the [Six-Day War](#) (1967)
2. [United Nations Resolution 338](#), which reaffirmed UN Resolution 242 amid the hostilities of the [Yom Kippur War](#) (1973)

These resolutions, and their land-for-peace formulation, had been enshrined earlier in the [Camp David Accords](#) (1978) as the foundation of a broader Arab-Israeli peace process. After [an exchange of letters](#) in September 1993 affirming Israel's right to exist and the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, Israeli Prime Minister [Yitzhak Rabin](#) and PLO chair [Yasser Arafat](#) [attended](#) the accord's signing ceremony in [Washington, D.C.](#), days later on September 13.

8. Humanitarian Effects of the Conflicts

Conflicts around the world are tearing families apart and forcing people to flee from their homes and loved ones in the hope of finding safety elsewhere. In Syria alone, some 12 million people – that's 65% of the population – are internally displaced or living outside their country as refugees.

At the same time millions of children are growing up knowing nothing but war – in fact around 27 million children are out of school due to conflict. Try to comprehend that number for a minute - 27 million children are missing school because of a conflict or war and as a result, being denied an education. Sixty-five million in total have been displaced by war and conflict.

Many of these conflicts have dragged on for at least half a decade with a diverse and complex mix of warring parties. The causes are complex and multifaceted.

The conflict in Israel erupted on 7 October 2023, when Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel from the Gaza Strip. During the assault, more than 240 individuals were taken hostage. Following the attack, Prime Minister Netanyahu declared a state of war for the first time since the Yom Kippur War. Since then, Gaza has been subjected to daily strikes by the IDF, including the ongoing ground operation within the territory. Israel also issued an evacuation order affecting more than one million Palestinians residing in Gaza.

The toll of the conflict has been devastating: by January 2024, approximately 20,000 Palestinians—many of them children—had been killed, while in Israel the number of civilians killed since 7 October reached 1,200. Approximately 2.1 million people living in Gaza are facing **a severe water crisis**. Around 70% of the region's water infrastructure has been destroyed as a result of Israeli attacks. Nearly the entire population either has extremely limited access to water or relies on sources that are dangerously contaminated.

Since October 2023, the blockade on food, water, electricity, and other essential supplies has exacerbated humanitarian conditions in the area. The disruption of fuel supplies necessary for operating water treatment facilities and wells has caused the water crisis to escalate rapidly, reaching an uncontrollable scale.

This conflict carries significant implications for Western countries, particularly European states that are already contending with the ongoing war triggered by Russia's invasion of neighbouring Ukraine. The sustained instability in Ukraine has already disrupted the established international order. With the recent escalation of the conflict in Israel, the risk of further destabilization across the broader region has increased.

Following the transfer of authority in 2011—carried out with the support of the GCC—the National Dialogue Conference was established to address demands for the formation of a democratic governance structure in Yemen. Within this framework, efforts were initiated to form a new government and draft a constitution. During this process, the Houthis were uncertain about the extent to which they would be represented in the new government, and their demands centred on securing greater influence in the emerging political order.

However, voices began to emerge claiming that the Houthis' demands were not being met during the dialogue process, that they were being marginalized, and that discriminatory

practices were taking place. In line with the Houthis' requests, the National Dialogue Conference reconvened in 2013 with the aim of achieving a national consensus, but the negotiations—which continued until 2014—failed to produce an agreement. Consequently, within a matter of weeks, the Houthis initiated an uprising against the government.

The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, along with the sectarian divisions they support, has accelerated the devastation in Yemen. During the operations led by Saudi Arabia, Yemen was placed under a naval blockade as part of efforts to halt the advance of the Houthis and to prevent the delivery of any military supplies to them. Civilians were severely affected by both this blockade, commonly referred to as the “Yemen blockade”—and the accompanying airstrikes.

Essential resources and critical infrastructure, including food and water supplies, production facilities, healthcare institutions, fuel stations, and power plants, were destroyed, rendering access to basic necessities nearly impossible. As a result of the nearly three years of uninterrupted conflict, the country has been driven into an acute humanitarian crisis. Indeed, the UN has stated that Yemen has reached the level immediately preceding famine, classifying it as a “Level 3 emergency,” meaning a country in urgent need of large-scale humanitarian assistance.

Approximately 14 million Yemenis are currently at **risk of hunger**, while a total of *22 million people* in the country require humanitarian assistance. The ongoing conflict, coupled with the blockade imposed by the Saudi-led coalition, has precipitated the most severe food crisis Yemen has experienced in the past century.

The country’s largest port city, Hudaydah, remains under the control of the insurgent Shia Houthis. Although both parties recently announced a suspension of reciprocal attacks in the area, reports indicate that clashes and bombardments continue to occur.

Prior to the conflict, 90% of Yemen’s food imports were routed through this port. The reduction in commercial imports by approximately *55,000 metric tons per month* corresponds to the basic needs of *4.4 million people, including 2.2 million children*.

9. Questions to Consider

- How can DISEC reduce regional proxy conflicts in the Middle East, especially those driven by major powers?
- What mechanisms can the UN develop to ensure better implementation of long-standing resolutions on Israel-Palestine?
- How can the international community support Yemen in rebuilding a unified and stable economic system?
- What realistic steps can be taken to curb uncontrolled arms flows to non-state actors in the region?

- How can humanitarian aid be protected from manipulation by armed groups in both Gaza and Yemen?
- What confidence-building measures could help address the deep mistrust between Israelis and Palestinians?
- How can DISEC support effective Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Yemen's fragmented military landscape?
- What strategies can prevent the Israel– Hamas war from escalating into a wider regional conflict?
- How can the issues of settlements and the Palestinian right of return be addressed in a balanced, negotiable framework?
- How can major powers be encouraged to cooperate rather than compete in shaping Middle East peace efforts?

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

<https://doi.org/10.24193/cs.q.41.2>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/09/why-israel-palestine-conflict-history>

<https://assajournal.com/index.php/36/article/view/635/921>

<https://www.xisd.xjsu.asia/V21I06-20.pdf>

<https://archive.is/20231010171656/https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/israel-palestine-conflict-timeline-history-explained>

<https://www.humanrightsresearch.org/post/the-world-s-worst-humanitarian-crisis-war-in-yemen>

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Israel-Hamas-War>

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Israel-Hamas-War/Ceasefire-and-hostage-exchange-January-March-2025>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/israel-has-committed-genocide-gaza-strip-un-commission-finds>

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Yemeni-Civil-War>

<https://unfoundation.org/what-we-do/issues/peace-human-rights-and-humanitarian-response/yemen-a-brief-background/>

<https://www.un.org/unispal/history/>

<https://libguides.stkate.edu/middleeastconflict>

<https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/16342/10409>

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session60/advance-version/a-hrc-60-crp-3.pdf>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Houthi-movement>

<https://globalejournal.org/global-e/august-2024/roots-conflict-and-fragmentation-historical-analysis-yemens-intermittent-wars>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/12/1158076>

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Israel-Hamas-War>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/11/17/economic-hardship-deepens-in-yemen>

<https://yemen.un.org/en/259543-yemen-humanitarian-response-plan>

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/events/all/open-event/israel-palestinepeace-possible>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territory>

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/events/all/research-event/israel-hamaswar-and-its-fallout>

<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/yemen/>

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/security-sector-reform>

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/events/all/open-event/understanding-role-armed-actors-across-middle-east>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/09/1165846>

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/yemen>

<https://yemenaid.org/understanding-the-yemen-crisis-causes-and-consequences/>

<https://www.bakerinstitute.org/research/obstacles-and-opportunities-pursuit-israeli-palestinian-peace>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/obstacles-to-peace-in-israel-and-palestine>

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10235/>

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/un-general-assembly-adopts-resolution-on-palestine-calling-for-ending-1967-occupation/3760407>

https://repository.essex.ac.uk/13109/1/lubell_law_report.pdf

<https://cebri.org/revista/en/artigo/156/the-global-south-and-mediation-between-israel-and-palestine-the-conflict-needs-a-new-paradigm-and-renewed-third-parties>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/11/un-security-council-resolution-violation-palestinian-right-self>

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/res181.asp

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Resolution-181>

https://grokipedia.com/page/List_of_United_Nations_resolutions_concerning_Israel

<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/research-reports/lookup-cgikwlemtisg-b-3748287.php>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/25/what-has-the-un-done-on-the-israel-palestine-conflict>

<https://mohacenter.org/en/the-united-nations-position-on-yemen-unity-past-and-present/>

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/the-unfolding-un-failure-in-the-yemen-war/>

<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/resolutions-0>

<https://cdn.istanbul.edu.tr/file/JTA6CLJ8T5/ABE9EAE12A234A8E94A510E80CD01688>

<https://www.unrwa.org>

https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/security-council-resolutions/?ctype=Israel%2FPalestine&cbtype=israelpalestine

<https://www.britannica.com/procon/Middle-East-conflict-explainer>

<https://www.studentsofhistory.com/conflict-in-the-middle-east>

https://sssjournal.com/files/sssjournal/1357980700_11_4-13_ID324.%20G%C3%BCI%20Seda%20ACET_114-125.pdf

<https://hukuk.deu.edu.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/V.Coskun-4.pdf>

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/-silent-but-lethal-bomb-israel-weaponizing-water-for-destruction-of-gaza-its-people-warns-un-rapporteur/3557898>