Assessment of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in The Israel and Palestine Conflict

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Abstract
Preventing wars and other disputes between nations was the declared purpose of establishing the United Nations. This admirable goal, however, has proven to be an insurmountable obstacle. Hence, this paper assessed the role of United Nations in Peace Keeping with particular focus on the Israel and Palestine conflict. Using the qualitative research method, findings revealed that the United Nations' peace and stability programmes has been utterly unable to prevent Israeli invasion on Palestinian territory and address the legitimate complaints of the Palestinian people since its establishment in 1945 due to reasons including the non-democratic structure of the Security Council, which gives the five permanent members the right to veto, in a manner that consistently advantageous to one. It is recommended that the United States should use its veto power in a balance way to end the conflicts, so that the United Nations and its several organisations can achieve the purpose of its creation, and find a lasting solution to Israel-Palestine conflict.

Keywords: United Nations, conflicts, conflict resolution, peace keeping operations

Introduction

The Israel-Palestine conflict has consumed the United Nations' attention for the longest period of time and has yielded the least amount of progress compared to all other global concerns (Owen, 2012). The rivalry between Israel and Palestine predates even the establishment of the United Nations. Therefore, the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict occupies a significant portion of the United Nation's history. Still, the Israel-Palestine conflict is the most certain way to start a nuclear war, which would have devastating effects for humanity (Mahajan, 2018).

The organisation's stated mission is to prevent war from breaking out in the future and to ensure that its treaty and other international law-based obligations to peace and security are upheld. The Charter, which the United Nations was established under in June 1945 by its founding Member States, states, among other things, is aimed to preserve the world's peace (Article 1). However, by going against its own stated goals, the United Nations made matters worse in Palestine practically immediately after it was established (Mercan, 2018).

Concepts like collective security, interference in dispute settlement, and the balance of power are becoming more entangled as the international system develops into a more intricate framework. The two world wars destabilised the international system, which in turn wrecked

it. Right up to the middle of the twentieth century, the whole world was consumed by the belligerent stances of the European superpowers (Bennis, 1997). The devastation escalated when the Second World War broke out in 1939, proving once again that humanity has learnt nothing from past mistakes. The allied countries kept trying to find a peaceful method to resolve the conflict even as it spread across the world. The international system's dilemma has persisted despite efforts to resolve it (Mercans, 2018).

Treaties were ratified in order to establish a global organisation charged with maintaining global stability and security. In response to Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, the Atlantic Charter discussed the peace that would enable every nation to safely exist inside its boundaries. On August 9 and 10, 1941, the United States and Great Britain committed to supporting in the post-war world, agreed not to seek territorial expansion and restoration of self-governments for all countries that had been occupied during the war and allowing all peoples to choose their own form of government (Makdisi, 2017). On October 9, 1944, demands were made for the establishment of an international organisation to be governed by these United Nations. This global organisation unveiled its strategy on October 24, 1945 (Mauro, 2012).

Its non-sovereign status and reliance on collaboration among member states are its defining characteristics. Upholding social and economic progress, equity among member states, and international peace and security are the primary goals of the Organisation. One of the goals of the United Nations is to ensure that all of its member states adhere to and work together in accordance with international norms and standards (Landis, 2020). This is one of the principles outlined in the United Nations Preamble. Peaceful resolution of conflicts is the primary responsibility of the United Nations. When all other options have been exhausted and there is a clear danger to global stability, only then may armed intervention be considered (Upendra, 2000).

When new problems arise, the usual procedure is to bring them before the Security Council. The members of the General Assembly may participate in the discussions and vote on the issues. The situation is that the permanent members of the Council have the authority to impede proceedings, if any exist. Accordingly, the overall power of the Security Council to intervene in international conflicts is greater (Matthews, 2011).

One of the primary goals of the United Nations is the peaceful settlement of conflicts via the use of force, if required, be it an internal or external issue. Determining the nature of the conflict is a difficulty for international relations specialists. Given that the issue is to suggest some kind of intervention as engagement, interdependence is becoming more inevitable in the evolving international system. However, describing the global peace and security clashes is more complicated when considering the concepts of national interest and citizenship (Tomeh, 2018), hence, the need to assess the United Nations and peace-keeping operations in the Israel and Palestine conflicts.

Conceptual Clarification
United Nations
Maintaining international peace and security, developing cordial relations among states, achieving international cooperation, and serving as a hub for harmonising the acts of nations are all declared aims of the international organisation known as the United Nations (UN). It is the biggest multinational organisation in the world. The United Nations maintains many offices across the world, including in New York City (which is technically in the United States but has certain extraterritorial rights), Geneva, Nairobi, Vienna, and The Hague, where the Peace Palace serves as the headquarters of the International Court of Justice (Mahajan, 2018).

Following the failure of the League of Nations to effectively avert future global conflicts, the United Nations was formed in the aftermath of WWII with the same goal in mind. The United Nations Charter was approved on June 25, 1945, after fifty countries gathered for a convention in San Francisco, California, on April 25, 1945. When the United Nations officially launched on October 24, 1945, the charter went into force. The United Nations charter lays out the organisation's stated goals, which include preserving world peace and security, safeguarding

human rights, providing humanitarian assistance, fostering sustainable development, and enforcing international law. In its inception, the United Nations had 51 member states; in 2023, that number has increased to 193, representing almost every independent nation on Earth (Mahajan, 2018).

Decolonisation in the 1960s led to a dramatic increase in United Nations membership. In the time thereafter, eleven trust territories that were under the supervision of the Trusteeship Council became independent nations, joining 80 other former colonies. Spending on social and economic development initiatives by the United Nations far outpaced that on peacekeeping by the 1970s. The United Nations refocused and expanded its field activities after the Cold War ended in 1991, taking on a broad range of complicated missions.

The Cold War hostilities between the US and the USSR and their allies hampered the United Nations' early decades of attempting to maintain global peace. As part of its mandate, it has sent mostly unarmed military observers and lightly armed personnel whose primary responsibilities have been to watch, report, and foster trust. Despite very varied assessments of the United Nations efficacy, the organisation, its officials, and its agencies have garnered several Nobel Peace Prizes. Although some critics have criticised the organization as corrupt, biased, and ineffectual, others have praised it as a powerful tool for human progress and peace (Gold & Connolly, 2006).

Concept of Conflict

Conflict is a phenomenon that has widely attracted the attention of scholars. As far back as humanity can be traced, conflicts have always been there (Isarch, 1992; David, 2016). People often accept conflict as inevitable in their day-to-day interactions (Weeks, 1992). While no single definition of conflict exists, most definitions seems to involve at least two independent groups, the groups perceive some incompatibility between themselves, and the groups interact with each other in some way (Putnam & Poole, 1987).

According to David (2016), violence during a conflict is the exception rather than the rule. Conflict arises when different groups pursue incompatible interests and goals. This description suggests the conflicting objectives of numerous factions. Disagreements occur when one party believes that the actions of another are preventing them from succeeding (Ojiji, 2016). Schmit and Kochan (1992) stated that two circumstances must be present for conflict to occur. First, people must feel that their objectives are incompatible, and second, there must be a possibility of interference or obstruction. These authors claim that when two parties have conflicting objectives, it's like a zero-sum game where the winner is always the loser. To put it another way, the sum is zero if one side prevails. An intentional action that is thought to impede the accomplishment of a goal is referred to as interference or a block (Obi, 2017).

Conflict arises when there is a disparity in desired outcomes in a bargaining environment (Goldestein, 2013). According to Coser (1956), disagreements can also be defined as a struggle between opposing parties for scarce status, power, and resources, with the goal of neutralising, hurting, or eliminating their rivals. This is said to result from people and/or groups' interests, objectives, and aspirations within a certain social or physical setting.

Despite the fact that conflict has always existed, there has never been a universally accepted meaning of the word. Thus, it is reasonable to ask, given the variety of research methodologies and the frequency of conflict phenomena, whether the apparent intellectual disorder is due to an intrinsically erratic focus of social analysis or to interdisciplinary compartmentalism, academic individualism, rapid growth, or a lack of focus on direction as a result of these factors.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is seen as efforts and interventions employed to limit, contain or regulate conflict as well as a sub-field of peace and conflict studies. According to Miller et al. (2001), conflict resolution is a range of strategies meant to end conflict by finding a positive solution to issues that is different from management or transformation. It is anticipated that through addressing and resolving the fundamental causes of conflict, hostile attitudes and aggressive

behavior will cease. Conflict resolution involves doing a number of actions that are started during a disagreement in order to bring an end to it (Obi, 2017).

Holding the same view, Best (2016) maintains that conflict resolution connotes a sense of finality where the parties to a conflict are mutually satisfied with the outcome of a settlement and the conflict is resolved in a true sense. Conflict resolution is any process or procedure that results in a mutually acceptable solution that resolves the issues in an ongoing conflict and fosters the development of a new, amicable relationship between parties who were previously hostile adversaries to a satisfactory degree (Mitchel & Banks, 1998). Mitchell (1988) emphasises that the circumstances, actions, and attitudes in a dispute are all interconnected.

Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping is the prevention of war and violence, especially using armed forces not involved in a disagreement to prevent fighting. Peacekeeping refers to the deployment of national or, more commonly, multinational forces to help control and resolve an actual or potential armed conflict between or within states. Most peacekeeping operations are undertaken with the authorisation of, and are often led by, the United Nations (UN) but regional organisations may also conduct peacekeeping operations, and in some cases, single states have undertaken such operations as well. Peacekeeping forces are normally deployed with the consent of the parties to a conflict and in support of a ceasefire or other agreed upon peace measures. Peacekeeping forces are therefore usually unarmed or only lightly armed and use the minimum of force necessary and then only exceptionally.

In simplest terms, peacekeeping is primarily a diplomatic tool used to stimulate the peaceful resolution of conflict and is not an end in itself. As with neutral individuals and properties not involved in peacekeeping operations, peacekeepers are considered non-combatants by international law and must be safeguarded from assaults at all times because of their impartial posture in the conflict involving several belligerent parties.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on zero-sum game theory. The choice of zero-sum game theory is in line with the number of choices available to the parties involved in the conflict and the UN General Assembly and the Security Council. The zero-sum game finds most of its application in economics and political theory. As posited by Neuman Morgenstern in 1963, it is a situation (such as a game or relationship) in which a gain for one side involves a corresponding loss for the other side. In the words of Ananya, it is a mathematical representation of a situation in which each participant's gain or loss of utility is exactly balanced by the losses or gains of the utility of the other participants. If the total gains of the participants are added up and the total losses are subtracted, they will sum to zero. In a two-person zero-sum game, what one actor wins the other loses; if A wins, 5, B loses 5, and the sum is zero (Ananya, 2021).

The zero-sum game aptly explains the strategies Israelis and Palestinians have adopted in the situations of the Palestinian - Israeli conflict which have involved armed struggles, which United Nations has attempted to resolve from 1948 till date. The central theme of the theory is that there are two parties to the game of politics. It is used in Political Science for the study and understanding of international problems and how the parties involved in them behave. Those parties can be individuals, or institutions. Each party is more interested to win the game. The theory seeks to identify and explain patterns and regularities in the way people confronted with conflict situations behave and actually make decisions. It provides a platform or formal model for identifying and understanding the optimum or the most rational strategy which actors in decision or bargain making contexts pursue. The players employ a lot of strategies that would minimise loss while maximising the possible gains or pay - offs.

The relevance of the theory is anchored on the understanding that the winner takes all syndromes that have characterised the conflict. It has created a situation in which what one player wins is equal to what his opponent losses, making the sum of the outcome for the two players to be zero. Represent thus; pay - off for the winner to be +x, while that of the loser is -

x, the two pay - offs added, we shall continue to have in the conflict x - f(-x) = 0; x - x= 0. Palestinians and Israelis have continued to adopt the game theory approach which has created a seemingly uncertain situation. The zero sum game theory has however, been criticised that it fails to take into account the involvement of more players than two in a conflict, things get a lot more complicated, and the zero sum game often becomes unproductive.

War and conflict are almost invariably zero-sum games. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the larger conflict encircling the conflict, has been beset by the same moral bankruptcies and zero-sum mentalities. Zero sum thinking applies in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. The Israeli government and many citizens want to maintain control over the West Bank, where hundreds of thousands of Israelis have settled since 1967. This is justified by security, ideology, and religion. The Palestinians reject this, and many reject the right of Israel to exist. A compromise has not been reached as both sides view it as a zero-sum game.

The Origin of Israel and Palestine Conflicts
United Kingdom escalated tensions between the local Arab population and the Jewish immigrant population after World War I due their occupation of Palestine. The United Nations took over the United Nations' mandates after World War ll, when it replaced the League of Nations. Britain wanted out of the mess it had helped create by asking the United Nations to resolve the Palestinian crisis because it couldn't make up its mind on what to do with the Arab and Jewish communities. Because of this, a resolution was discussed and passed by the United Nations General Assembly in May 1947 creating the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to conduct investigations and provide recommendations.

The United Nations which had 55 member states then including the (UNSCOP did not include any Arab countries). However, states such as Yugoslavia, Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay, and the Netherlands who were the main members rejected the termination of the British Mandate over Palestine. Despite the rejection of the motion, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia pushed for the termination of Britain's mandate and recognition of Palestine's independence (Ilan, 2006).

Near the end of 1946, Palestine had a population of around 1,846,000 people, with almost two-thirds being Arab and one-third being Jewish. Immigration, encouraged by British policy, was the primary driver of Jewish population expansion, in contrast to the natural rise that contributed to the Arab population. In every region of Palestine, including Jaffa (which encompassed Tel Aviv), the Arabs were the majority and the Jews the minority when it came to land ownership (Ilan, 2006). More than 700,000 settlers – 10 percent of Israel's nearly 7 million population – now live in 150 settlements and 128 outposts dotting the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Some of the settlers move to the occupied territories for religious reasons while others are drawn by a relatively lower cost of living and financial incentives offered by the government. Ultraorthodox Jews form one-third of all settlers (Aljazeera, 2023).

Regardless of these realities, the bulk of the UNSCOP's recommendations were for the partition of Palestine into two nations, with the majority of the Arabs giving up territory to the Jews so that they may establish their state. In this plan, the Jewish state would own 55% of the land and the Arab state would own 45%. In a statement claiming that the Arabs of Palestine did not have the right to self-determination because of the intention to make possible the creation of the Jewish National home there, UNSCOP vehemently opposed this claim (UNSCOP, 1947). UNSCOP rejected the idea of a unified Palestine with an elected legislature that included Jewish delegates and a democratic constitution that would grant religious and civil liberties to all residents. This was considered an extreme stance at the organisation's 47th meeting on August 27, 1947 (UNSCOP, 194; Gail, 2003).

Another plan was supported by India, Iran, and Yugoslavia, who dissented from UNSCOP's majority recommendation for division. They noted that it was in every respect the most democratic solution and most in line with the fundamental values of the UN Charter (Hammond, 2017). Additionally, Arab representatives rejected the proposed partition. In reaction to UNSCOP's report, the General Assembly established a second committee, which also rejected

the majority's proposal. They did so on the grounds that it violated the UN Charter's principles and that the UN lacked the authority to take Palestine away from the majority of its citizens and give it to a minority for their own use. Additionally, the newly formed committee recommended that Palestine's independence be recognised (Hammond, 2017).

The General Assembly approved Resolution 181, which urged the implementation of the majority UNSCOP proposal, on November 29, 1947, with 33 votes in favour, 15 against, and 10 abstentions. The Security Council was notified of the non-binding resolution, but it was never considered or adopted. Contrary to common belief, the United Nations did neither establish the state of Israel nor provide the Zionist leadership the legal right to unilaterally proclaim the state's establishment on May 14, 1948 (Ilan, 2006).

Furthermore, US envoy Warren Austin noted that the Security Council lacked the power to compel the division of Palestine, and that the only means of implementing the UNSCOP plan would be by resorting to force. He continued by saying that based on what is currently known and the light of available information, if the British were to leave Palestine and end the Mandate, there would be chaos, fierce warfare, and many casualties (Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, 2013; Gail, 2003). In contrast, Austin acknowledged that the UN could intervene, even with the use of force, to forestall a bloody confrontation of this kind. The United Nations "can take action to prevent a threat to international peace and security from inside Palestine", he said, in addition to "to prevent aggression against Palestine from outside". "The United Nations cannot permit such a result," he pleaded with the Council. There can be no more casualties in the Holy Land; the killing must stop now. The preservation of world peace is under jeopardy.

But the United Nations did nothing as David Ben-Gurion's Zionist leadership carried out an ethnic cleansing operation, with the displacement of Arabs seen as necessary for the establishment of a "Jewish state" based on Jewish demographics. In his seminal work, The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine, Iian Pappe detailed how "UN agents and British officials stood by and watched indifferently" as Zionist troops methodically assaulted Palestine's main cities. Likewise, "US representatives on the ground were by now fully aware of the expulsions that were going on" by the end of April (Ilan, 2006).

The formal end of the British Occupation was on May 14, 1948, but before then, Jewish armed troops had already forcibly removed 25,000 Palestinians from their homes. Concurrently, the Zionist leadership made their unilateral proclamation of Israel's formation, in which they fraudulently claimed that their "Jewish State" had been legitimately established by UN General Assembly Resolution 181.

United Nations Peace Keeping Operations
The development of peacekeeping was evolutionary and the term has come to mean many things, especially as applied in the non-UN context. In fact, one peacekeeping expert proclaims: "Non-UN peacekeeping has come to mean whatever those applying it have wished it to mean." Even so, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali recently stated: "Peace-keeping can rightly be called the invention of the United Nations." In fact, peacekeeping was the brainchild of Prime Minister Lester Pearson of Canada and Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold and developed over the decades by Sir Brian Urquhart, a lifelong United Nations official (Brooks, 1994).

It is widely recognised within the United Nations (UN) group of nation-state governments and organisations that peacekeepers play a crucial role in post-conflict areas, keeping an eye on the peace process and offering assistance to former combatants in fulfilling their end-of-conflict pledges. Economic and social development, electoral support, confidence-building, power-sharing, rule-of-law strengthening, and other sorts of help are all possible. Accordingly, UN peacekeepers may be civilians, police officers, or even military; they are sometimes called Blue Berets or Blue Helmets because to the light blue colour of their berets or helmets (Ojiji, 2016).

When it comes to executing peacekeeping operations, the UN is far from alone. Among the peacekeeping forces that are not part of the United Nations, are NATO's mission in Kosovo

and the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai Peninsula. Others include the EUFOR RCA and the African Union Mission in Sudan, both of which are organised by the European Union (Mahajan, 2018). Although the United Nations recognises that all peace-related endeavours are "mutually reinforcing" and that there is often overlap between them, it is distinct from peace-building, peace-making, and peace-enforcement (Agana, 2020).

The authority and duty to collectively take action to preserve international peace and security is bestowed on the United Nations Security Council by Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Troops are required to adhere to UN operational supervision, since most of these operations are initiated and carried out by the UN itself. In such instances, peacekeepers do not function as a separate "UN army" (because the UN does not maintain such a force) but rather as personnel of the armed forces of the host country. The Council delegated peacekeeping and enforcement responsibilities to regional organisations like NATO, the Economic Community of West African States, or coalitions of willing nations when the United Nations' direct intervention was deemed inappropriate or impractical (Alpher, 2011).

The organisation was only three years old when it launched its first peacekeeping intervention. Since then, more than one million men and women from about 125 countries have served in over 71 missions around the world. Over the last 75 years, peacekeeping has gone through three distinct phases (Dennis, 2024). The first began with territorial wars between countries. The six oldest of the operations are still in that phase: Jerusalem, Kashmir, the Golan Heights, southern Lebanon, Western Sahara, and Cyprus. They were established between 1948 and 1991, and they account for more than three centuries of peacekeeping efforts (Dennis, 2024).

The second phase began when peacekeepers started to be deployed to help end civil wars. Those missions have all concluded, with one minor exception: a small remnant of the mission in Kosovo. The military aspects of peacekeeping have been left to a NATO-led force, which also began in 1999. These 4,000 troops were augmented by an additional 700 in June 2023 because of an outbreak of violence between Serbs and Albanians in the northern part of Kosovo. Second-phase operations have generally disappeared because their termination is usually tied to specific events. A civil war can end when a determination is made as to who has the political power and the right to govern (Fatos & Andrew, 2023).

The third phase of peacekeeping consists of the five most recent operations, all launched between 2010 and 2014. They are located in Mali, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The mandate given to them by the Security Council is to protect civilians and help stabilise countries that are beset by violent extremism. The challenge requires these forces to become war fighters, something they could not effectively do. Several Senegalese peacekeepers soldiers were killed attempting to carry out that mandate in Mali (Al Jazeera, 2023). While some of the operations have failed, there have been enough successes to sustain the belief that it is a good way to promote international peace and security.

Assessing the Peacekeeping Efforts of United Nations on Israel and Palestine Conflicts
The success of the UN in the post-cold war and post-gulf war era can be explained by its domination by a super power like the United States. Palestine has always been in conflict since the UN was established. Palestine is one such area. Israel's formation on the Palestinian land has long created instability (Bennis, 1997). The history of Palestine can be progressed through interregional religious and ethnic tensions. Due to its vital importance to three Abrahamic religions, the dispute gained prominence. The Cold War age has been long ago about the conflict between Israel and Palestine in international politics

To put it succinctly, the US and USSR, the two superpowers, are always vying for regional hegemony in this field of diplomacy. The ideological struggle that represented the Cold War had an impact on the balance of Arab states. In an effort to gain economic dominance, the superpowers meddled in the area. During the Cold War, ideological propaganda and superpower involvement were sought as key components (Mathews, 2018). Many people harbored ethnocentric beliefs, which made other Arabs seem like foes. In the Middle East, this has always been the case. Since its founding, Israel has been unable to be placed in the region.

The Palestinians' protests over Israel's aggressive actions and meddling with US affairs are the primary cause. There was a great deal of hostility towards the Jewish population and the state of Israel as a whole (Upendra, 2000).

Palestine has always been a volatile region, and its instability has been exacerbated by its frequent submission to the pressures of the superpowers. Even after the end of the Cold War, peace accords and the end of numerous wars were unable to affect stability and balance. Within the global arena, the United States held a significant influence in the area. The United States' stance in Palestine is to defend the Jewish people (Makdisi, 2017).

In the Palestine question, the United Nations played a marginal role for settling the conflict but the dispute remains unresolved. Israel argues that the land was a part of the British evacuated town, which supports its formation. The United Nations Emergency Force was established in response to the growing conflict between Israel and Palestine. The 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict only appeared unsolvable in Israel's occupied West Bank and Golan Heights (Mauro, 2012; Osmañczyk, 2013).

In October, 2023, Palestinian armed groups in Gaza launched thousands of rockets toward Israel and breached through the perimeter fence of Gaza at multiple locations, entering into Israeli towns and killing and capturing Israeli forces and civilians. The Israeli military declared a state of war alert, and began striking targets in the Gaza Strip, including residential buildings and health care facilities. According to the Gaza's Health Ministry, over 30,000 people have been killed and 70% of those killed in the territory are women and children and more than one million have been displaced, as parts of Gaza have been reduced to rubble (Aya, 2024). Israeli bombardment and siege has already caused the displacement of over 1 million Palestinians in Gaza, but Israeli actions are also causing displacement in the West Bank that has intensified since October 7, 2023. Palestinian communities in the West Bank have been suffering unprecedented violence from paramilitary Israeli settler forces.

The United Nations has played a significant role in addressing the enduring conflict between Israel and Palestine, and the UN has been actively involved in seeking a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since 1947-48 the UN has adopted more than two hundred resolutions on the subject of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has taken no action to secure their observance and implementation. Israel has flouted practically all those resolutions with impunity.

Following the escalation of the conflict in Gaza in October 2023, the Security Council held 14 meetings between October and the end of December on "the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question," in addition to the regular monthly meetings on the issue. On Nov. 15, 2023, the Council managed to adopt a resolution initiated by Malta on humanitarian pauses in Gaza with a particular focus on children. Following intensive negotiations, it adopted a second Gaza resolution initiated by the UAE on Dec. 22, 2023, which requested that the Secretary-General appoint a senior humanitarian and reconstruction coordinator, and that the coordinator establish a UN mechanism for accelerating humanitarian relief consignments to Gaza. (The vetoes on Gaza in October 2023 prompted the resumption of the General Assembly's 10th Emergency Special Session on the Middle East and two General Assembly resolutions), (Karis & Shamala, 2024).

As part of its efforts and in the early stage of the conflict, along the restive Israel-Lebanon border, the UN peacekeeping mission has 9,400 ground troops, 900 civilian staff, and 850 naval personnel on its Maritime Task Force. Top UN officials, including the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO), were engaging with parties to the conflict and key stakeholders, including the United States, Qatar, and the European Union, to de-escalate the conflict (United Nations, 2023).

Despite the decades of interventions in the conflict by the United Nations, it is worrisome that it has failed to bring the conflict to an end. This failure to resolve this deadly conflict poses serious negative and devastating implications for the geo-political stability of the Middle East, thereby threaten world peace. The failure to resolve this most protracted world conflict in recent times is given as the major reason for the recurrent instability that has bedevilled Middle

East geopolitics. It is equally said to be the main cause of international terrorism (Landis, 2020).

According to Landis (2020), Al-Qaeda was also founded because of the conflict which previously birthed ~~to~~ Hamas and Hezbollah. It is the main reason behind the virulence of Islamic fundamentalism and its rejection of Western cultures (Landis, 2020). It is the root of all the problems and conflicts that have polarised the world into dramatically opposed blocs. The conflict has further widened the divide between the adherents of the Muslim and Christian faith, which has hampered world peace and integration. The conflict has prevented the enthronement of more democratic governments across the Islamic states.

In most conflicts such as the current one it is the most vulnerable who suffer most in the throes of war especially children who account for many casualties in this particular war between Israel and Hamas. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has informed that Gaza has been turned into a graveyard for thousands of children. More than 3,450 children killed; staggeringly this rises significantly every day, having more than one million children of Gaza having a water crisis (UNICEF, 2023).

In the Human Rights Watch Special Report, the Israeli forces' aerial strikes, ground offensive, and blockade of Gaza that followed the Hamas attacks on 7 October 2023 have had a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities, elderly and women. These attacks have exposed them to various protection risks, especially separation from their primary caregivers and assistive devices, preventing them from fleeing and finding safe shelter. They also face additional challenges in accessing water, food, and medicine (HRW, 2023).

The shortcomings of the UN peace initiative are further exacerbated by the frequent use of veto by United States and her allies against Hamas in favour of the Israelis in the United Nations. The Muslim world views the UN as a biased umpire because of the UN's failures to meet this problem, which has always cast the organisation in a negative image. The ramifications are that the United Nations peace initiative's attempts to end the conflict have been completely ineffective, which has instead led to the emergence of terrorist organisations around the world as well as terrorist-related atrocities and conflicts (Humphrey, 2017).

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is essential to ensure the implementation of the United Nations resolutions. On several occasions the Security Council has warned Israel that it would take strong action if its resolutions are not respected and carried out, but it has never implemented any of its threats. The United Nations as a world body charged with the responsibility to maintain world peace and contain conflict in the world should be more involving and decisive in resolving the conflict. While a comprehensive final resolution to their conflict can only be agreed between Israelis and Palestinians themselves, Palestinians are well within their rights as a nation to seek recognition of their state from international organisations and governments around the world. Binding themselves to the obligations of statehood and acceding to treaties that require responsible conduct is a non-violent, international law-affirming effort that should be encouraged.

This study recommended that there is a need to focus on diplomacy toward a just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on multilateral rather than bilateral normalisation efforts. A meaningful and viable effort to resolve the underlying conflict requires prioritising Palestinian self-determination and championing the inherent benefits of Israel's full acceptance and integration in the Middle East, while moving away from an "arms for peace" model where recognition of Israel is bought with U.S. weapons and defense guarantees that tie the United States to autocrats and increase militarisation and instability in the region. It also means avoiding the failed model of a peace process based on direct, bilateral negotiations between parties with a massive imbalance of military and diplomatic power.

Instead, the United States should seek to construct a truly multilateral framework involving key regional players with universal normalisation and recognition of the national rights of both Israelis and Palestinians – alongside ensuring the security and well-being of both peoples – as its North Star. Different models, such as the Arab Peace Initiative or recent joint proposals from Holy Land Confederation and Land for Peace could be proposed by participants as terms

of reference. Absence of such an effort, the lack of a political horizon will only continue to feed despair, distrust, and extremism among both peoples.

Moreover, there is need to take meaningful anti-occupation, anti-annexation steps. Permanent Israeli occupation and ongoing de facto annexation of Palestinian territory are incompatible with international law and shared human values. Failure to impose consequences for Israel's ongoing effort to consolidate permanent, undemocratic control in the territories would doom any diplomatic conflict resolution effort and continue to feed the current cycle of violence.

United Nations attempting to exculpate Israeli actions in an International Court of Justice case against the occupation and efforts to ease the impact of its own sanctions on the relatively small number of violent settlers penalised under its Executive Order again undermines the credibility it was just beginning to build in this area. The administration should instead press forward using its anti-occupation tools, including consistently applying its Executive Order to designate Israeli officials responsible for evictions, demolitions and forced relocations in West Bank Palestinian communities, while making clear that use of U.S. arms in connection with such settlement and annexation activity also violates National Security Memorandum 20 (NSM-20), issued on February 8, 2024 requiring Israel and other recipients of U.S. military assistance to affirm that they would use American-origin arms in accordance with international humanitarian law and were complying with longstanding U.S. law, Section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA), prohibiting countries from restricting the delivery of U.S. humanitarian aid.

In addition, substantially expand support for the Palestinian people and Palestinian leaders who seek peace with Israel. US should strengthen the legitimacy of Palestinians seeking a peaceful path to conflict resolution by upgrading the United States' own bilateral relations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), including by finally following through on its promise to reopen a consulate in Jerusalem serving Palestinians, exercising existing executive authority to terminate the decades-old legislative designation of the PLO as a terrorist organisation, and working with regional and other international partners toward a major economic support program benefitting the Palestinian people.

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