

## **Topic I: Devising Contingency Plans and Increasing Resiliency to Protect Palestinian Civilians and Infrastructure from Military Actions and Offensives.**

### **I. Introduction**

#### **A. General Background**

Palestinian civilians and infrastructure have been under attack by foreign military actors since the 1950's. Past efforts on behalf of the United Nations (UN), World Bank (WB) and other international institutions to develop a Palestinian contingency plan have failed to bring about a peaceful end to the conflict, often sacrificing long-term flexibility for short-term improvements which are not compatible with the evolving needs of the Palestinian people and government.

The majority of efforts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are funded by non-League states, creating a disconnect between the creators of these initiatives and those whom the initiatives affect<sup>1</sup>. For example, plans calling for military action disproportionately place military offensives in Gaza and the West Bank regions, which are already systematically targeted by state and sub-state violence. Meanwhile, economy-focused contingency plans tend to ignore the greater fiscal influences of the region.<sup>2</sup> In order to create a meaningful contingency plan for the Palestinian conflict, it is important that Arab states play a role, as their understanding of the Palestinian people's needs is more intimate than other states.

Finally, the protection of Palestinian civilians is a delicate but crucial issue in light of the current Israeli occupation. There has been a considerable lack of protection for Palestinian civilians since the start of the conflict, and recently the rights of Palestinian civilians have declined rapidly. According to the Human Rights Watch (HRW), an international Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) focused on achieving social justice and human rights worldwide, "Israel enforces severe and discriminatory restrictions on Palestinians' human rights, and it builds and supports unlawful settlements in the occupied West Bank."<sup>3,4</sup> As such, the constant attacks on Palestine require immediate action on behalf of Palestinians and their allies in the Arab League (AL).

#### **B. History in the Arab World**

In order to understand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is important to go back to its beginning. The conflict's history begins with events outside of Palestine with the Pogroms of eastern Europe and became a fully formed conflict at the conclusion of World War II (WWII). The Pogroms were a series of violent attacks as a response to strong anti-Semitism in Tsarist Russia beginning in 1881<sup>5</sup>. Zionism finds its earliest roots in the terror and anger incited in the Jewish populations of Eastern Europe as a result of the Pogroms. The founding of both the Zionist movement and the Jewish National Fund were equally instrumental in the foundations of the State of Israel. The migration patterns of the European Jewish population

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch . "Israel/Palestine: Events of 2016." *Human Rights Watch*, Human Rights Watch , 12 Jan. 2017, [www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/israel/palestine#73fcc](http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/israel/palestine#73fcc).

See also Al-Kadi, Alia 2010 cited below 2010. *The Arab Peace Initiative: An Instrument for Peace*. The Atkin Paper Series.

<sup>2</sup> *Policy / The World Bank*, [projects.worldbank.org/P147687?lang=en](http://projects.worldbank.org/P147687?lang=en).

<sup>3</sup> Projects & Operations." *Projects : Palestinian National Development Plan - Sixth Development*

<sup>4</sup> Israel/Palestine." *Human Rights Watch*, [www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa/israel/palestine](http://www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa/israel/palestine)

<sup>5</sup> Smith, Charles D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (University of Arizona: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017).

were a result of the ongoing regional violence which reached its zenith with the events of WWII and the Holocaust. The creation of the Jewish National Fund in 1901 gave the displaced Jewish population and burgeoning Zionist movement a monetary backing<sup>6</sup>.

As World War II came to a close, Palestine remained occupied by Britain, whose economy was severely affected by the war. While Jewish nationalism (Zionism) had slowly been developing in the 20th century, the tragedies of World War II (the holocaust) created a social and political environment conducive to the aims of the Zionist movement. In the mid-1940s, a group of Zionists headed by David Ben-Gurion bought land in Palestine with the intention of creating a Jewish state. Soon, tens of thousands of Jews had immigrated to the Palestine from across Europe and the Middle East. Initially, Palestine was not overly concerned about Jewish migration or Zionistic ideologies, however, as Jewish populations grew large enough to begin to compete with local Palestinian markets, friction began to develop between the ethnic factions. The Zionists worked to expand their settlements by driving Palestinian peasants out of their homes through the purchase of land from wealthy Palestinians. Many of these purchases were done with the help of the Jewish National Fund.<sup>7</sup>

In 1947, Britain brought the conflict to the General Assembly of the United Nations, hoping for a solution. The UN met with delegates from the Jewish and Arab communities in Palestine, and worked to understand the issue. Eventually, the Council drafted a resolution which allowed Britain to withdraw from the region and Jews to continue to migrate there, and established borders dividing Jewish and Arab territories in the region: A Two-State Solution. As Jews rejoiced at the decision, Arab forces rebelled and a civil war erupted in the region. Zionists organized military attacks which forced hundreds of thousands of Arabs out of their homes in Haifa and Jaffa. On May 14, 1948, the Zionists declared the establishment of the state of Israel.

Following their declaration, The Arab-Israeli war began on 15 May 1948. Officially, the war ended one year after it began, but the reasons for the war remain present. Since 1948, the AL Member States have been heavily involved in the actions occurring in Palestine. The AL mobilized troops in Palestine in 1948, and became one of the few institutions to recognize the All-Palestine Government formed in Gaza as a legitimate governing party. In 1964, the Palestinian Government forces formed the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which is recognized by international bodies today as the governing body for the Palestinian people.

Since then, the conflict has become even more complex with the rise in Israel's military capabilities, thanks in part to help from the United States, and the rise in fundamentalist violence. Though Palestine has continued to be an ideological priority for the Arab World, the League has not solely focused on protecting infrastructure within Palestine in order for Palestinians to have access to basic necessities, including education, healthcare, sanitation, etc. Due to the lack of attention to these needs, Palestine has often felt betrayed by its Arab allies. In addition, many Arab allies have begun to work with Israel, creating a feeling of betrayal. Egypt closed its border with Gaza and has become increasingly cordial with Israel since the fall of Mohammed Morsi, and the Gulf States have begun to co-operate with security efforts in Israel,<sup>8</sup> as well as the recently signed peace treaty between and Israel.

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<sup>6</sup> Smith, Charles D. Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict (University of Arizona: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Smith, Charles D. 2017.

<sup>8</sup> "The Enemy of My Enemies." The Economist, The Economist Newspaper, 23 July 2016, [www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21702476-arab-states-warm-israel-palestinians-feel-neglected-enemy-my](http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21702476-arab-states-warm-israel-palestinians-feel-neglected-enemy-my).

### **C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future**

The League has always been passionate about the plight of the Palestinian state and its citizens; however, the League has not had any success in protecting Palestinians from military offensives against needed infrastructure in Gaza and the West Bank. Though Israel has for years, claimed that it only strikes Hamas “terrorist camps,” they have destroyed valuable infrastructure including schools, hospitals and water sanitation. In fact, water in Gaza is no longer sustainable due to the lack of infrastructure<sup>9</sup>. These problems are exacerbated by the continuing Israeli siege on Gaza.

In the 2014 war between Israel and Gaza, 17,000 housing units were damaged or destroyed.<sup>10</sup> During the ceasefire that followed, Gaza only received 9 percent of the total needed construction materials to rebuild. They were unable to build 250 schools needed throughout. In the West Bank, attacks on homes, mosques, schools and other Palestinian property continues to occur, as well as the displacement of hundreds of Palestinians for new settlements. In 2015, 601 people including 296 children were displaced when 481 Palestinian homes and buildings were demolished in the West Bank.<sup>11</sup> The most recent outburst of violence instigated by Israel was during the so called Palestinian Great March of Return in 2018 which took place from March 30 (Land day) until the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Nakba on May 5. The military actions taken by Israel in response to these non-violent protests resulted in 111 fatalities and 2,210 victims of live ammunitions<sup>12</sup>. These atrocities continue to persist each day for Palestinians throughout and it is time that the League properly addresses them.

This Council must seek ways to address the current issues within Palestine and provide plans for protecting Palestinians against further infrastructure loss. The League must come together to create a strong plan to aid Palestine in rebuilding lost infrastructure as well as a plan to protect it. This Council should create plans both for short-term relief for protection of current infrastructure and Palestinian citizens, as well as a long term plan to provide aid in the rebuilding of infrastructure across the West Bank and Gaza and its protection as well.

### **D. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- How have documents and initiatives, such as the Arab Peace Initiative, failed to provide Palestine with protection from military action?
- Which contributions from the international community have been effective and what can this council take from them as it works towards a resolution?
- Is the situation in Palestine a priority to your state? Why or why not?
- What does your state and sub-region have to gain by helping protect Palestinian

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<sup>9</sup> “The Water Crisis in Gaza Worsens.” *Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine*, 15 May 2017, [waterjusticeinpalestine.org/blog/2017/5/15/the-water-crisis-in-gaza-worsens](http://waterjusticeinpalestine.org/blog/2017/5/15/the-water-crisis-in-gaza-worsens).

<sup>10</sup> McDuffee, Allen. “Rebuilding Gaza Will Take 20 Years, Housing Group Estimates.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 30 Aug. 2014, [www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/08/rebuilding-gaza-will-take-20-years-housing-group-estimates/379417/](http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/08/rebuilding-gaza-will-take-20-years-housing-group-estimates/379417/).

<sup>11</sup> “Israel/Palestine: Events of 2015.” Human Rights Watch. January 27, 2016. Accessed September 12, 2017. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/israel/palestine>

<sup>12</sup> Chughtai, Alia. “Palestinians’ Great March of Return: The human Cost.” *AlJazeera*, AlJazeera newsguid, 16 May 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2018/05/palestinians-great-march-return-human-cost-180516110538165.html>

- citizens and infrastructure from military actions?
- What compromises, if any, is your state willing to make in order to ensure the longevity of the Palestinian state?

#### **E. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- Can we utilize past methods and enhance them to resolve current and future situations?
- Is there a solution to the problem that allows member states to develop a relationship with Israel and still advocate for Palestine?
- What method is primary to tackling this issue? Economic, military presence, etc.? Why?
- How much should the League allow the international community to have an input in this decision?

#### **IV. Additional Resources**

##### [Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#)

*United Nations optional protocol that address inhuman treatment of all persons and the procedures that should be followed to assess and intervene in such circumstance*

##### [Israel/Palestine](#)

*Human Rights Watch produced a report of all the human rights violations that occurred in Palestine in 2016. This page consists of individual briefings and data collection.*

##### [THE 1967 AND 1973 WARS](#)

*This is a chapter from a book that discusses the conflict between Israel, Palestine, and other states between the years 1967-1973. It also includes history of how Palestine's current recognized government (the PLO) was formed.*

##### <http://icsr.info/2010/09/the-arab-peace-initiative-an-instrument-for-peace/>

*This article explores the Arab Peace Initiative (API), drafted at the Beirut Arab League Summit in 2002, arguably provides “the contours of a comprehensive regional peace that is inclusive and sustainable” as well as addresses the most pertinent concerns for both Israeli and Palestinian factions.*

## **Topic II: Facilitating Cooperation between Fatah and Hamas as a Means of Delivering Humanitarian aid and Assistance to the Gaza Strip**

### **I. Introduction**

#### **A. General Background**

The history between Hamas and Fatah has always been contentious as they have many fundamentally opposing views. In 2006, Hamas defeated the Fatah party in parliamentary polls creating greater tension among the two groups.<sup>13</sup> Though talks of unity governments happened over the years, they have never come to fruition. In 2011, 2012 and 2014 unity deals were signed, but they never brought about real change and stability between the two groups.<sup>14</sup> An agreement for a unity government was reached again in January of 2017, but again has not been brought to fruition. It is important that a unity deal be reached, as the last election in which both parties were able to participate was in 2006.<sup>15</sup>

The conflict between the two parties has put all Palestinian political concerns on hold despite the daily hostility Palestinian citizens experience. The intermittent violence and continued hostilities between the two parties continues to prevent joint work by elected officials and prevented aid and social services from reaching the people who need it. Due to lack of unity between the two parties, Gaza suffered greatly leading to the blockade established in 2007. Lack of recognition of Hamas as a political party allowed Israel and Egypt to justify blockades on Gaza compromising nearly all routes in and out of the region. The only way to resolve the issue is to foster cooperation between Fatah and Hamas to create a strong Palestinian government representative of all Palestinians voices.

#### **B. History in the Arab World**

Hamas's presence in Gaza has always been controversial as their charter and actions toward Israel have been deemed extreme by the international community.<sup>16</sup> Founded in 1987, Hamas emerged as the foremost armed resistance against Israel. In the years following, Hamas employed suicide bombings and other means to fight Israeli occupation of Palestine. They have consistently denounced the Oslo Accords and many other peace agreements as they see the Israel's entire existence as an occupation.<sup>17</sup>

Much like Hamas, Fatah began in the 1950's as a political and military organization under Yasser Arafat and Khalil al-Wazir. In 1964, Fatah conducted its first military operation and continued to gain influence. By the end of the 1960's it took effective control of the PLO and was the largest funded organization of all the Palestinian organizations. Violence between the PLO and Israel continued until the 1993 Oslo Accords were signed and the Palestinian

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<sup>13</sup> "Timeline: Hamas –Fatah Conflict." Al Jazeera English. May 4, 2011. Accessed September 13, 2017. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/05/2011549435141647.html>

<sup>14</sup> Wiener-Brohner, Danielle. "A Brief History of the Frught Relationship between Fatah and Hamas." The Atlantic. May 14, 2014. Accessed September 13, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/04/a-brief-history-of-the-fraught-relationship-between-fatah-and-hamas/361178/>

<sup>15</sup> "Fatah and Hamas to form Unity government." Al Jazeera English. January 18, 2017. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/fatah-hamas-form-unity-government-170118031339203.html>

<sup>16</sup> "Foreign Terrorist Organizations." *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, [www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm](http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm).

<sup>17</sup> Laub, Zachary. "Hamas." Council on Foreign Relations. August 1, 2014. Accessed September 14, 2017. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/hamas>

Authority was established.<sup>18</sup> Fatah remained in political power until the January 2006 elections in which Hamas won the majority of the parliamentary seats.<sup>19</sup>

Though the two parties came to power under similar circumstances, conflict has erupted between the two due to largely different philosophies on approaches to Israel. In Hamas's 1988 Covenant, it stipulated that the whole of Palestine should be returned to Palestinians, with no exception, and that all peace talks to return to the 1967 borders were a waste of time.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, Fatah has called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict since its 1989 Charter constructed in Tunis. While Hamas's new charter, proposed in May of 2017 shows a more moderate group, the rivalry between Fatah and Hamas has not subsided. Their competing approaches have continuously caused division within the two parties.

In addition to their charters, the majority of the international community dismissed Hamas as a political party. Their attacks on Israel and continued denouncement of Israel as a state has led the international community to only work with and provide aid to the Fatah led government. These two differing ideologies and the need for continued support from the international community have led to the strife and lack of compromise between Fatah and Hamas for decades.

The tense history between the two groups finally led to the 2017 reconciliation talks, which took place in Moscow, Russia. At the time, it seemed that major headway was being made to create a coalition government between the two parties. During the talks, Fatah and Hamas made an agreement to hold municipal elections in May. The municipal elections, the first in 10 years, were originally postponed because of a dispute about whether or not the polling should take place in the West Bank and/or the Gaza Strip. The parties decided in January that both the West Bank and Gaza would participate.<sup>21</sup> As the time neared for voters to voice their opinion about the state of Palestinian politics, Hamas pulled out of the agreement and chose not to participate in the elections. The parties have not revisited the possibility of a coalition government.

Had Hamas chosen to participate, this would have been the first joint election since 2007 when Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip. The unity government between Hamas and Fatah is imperative to the advancement of the Palestinian cause, both locally and in the eyes of the international community. Hamas claims that it pulled out of the deal because it believes that reconciliation must take place before elections happen; Fatah believes elections are the key to reconciliation. Regardless of which is deemed correct, action must be taken for any advancement of unity between the two. The outcome of this unity affects Palestinians and their government, as well as the Arab world as a whole. The state of Palestine has been a top priority for the AL since its creation. Despite this, it is hard for Palestine to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the international community without unity from within.

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<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of State. "The Oslo Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process." *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo.

<sup>19</sup> "Fatah: Palestinian Political Organization." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed September 14, 2017. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Fatah>

<sup>20</sup> Hamas. "The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement." *Hamas Covenant 1988*, Yale University, avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\_century/hamas.asp.

<sup>21</sup> Jazeera, Al. "West Bank Palestinians Vote in Local Elections." *Palestine News | Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 13 May 2017, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/west-bank-palestinians-vote-local-elections-170513073441630.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/west-bank-palestinians-vote-local-elections-170513073441630.html).

## **C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future**

As you can see, the situation between Fatah and Hamas is a serious one that indirectly affects everyone in the region, and directly affects Palestinian civilians. The divide between Fatah and Hamas means that, in addition to Palestine's issues with Israel, its citizens suffer greatly from domestic disputes and the state's efforts to gain recognition are quickly losing legitimacy in the eyes of the international community.

With the growing tensions between Fatah and Hamas, and the League's invested interest in the State of Palestine, it is imperative that the League find a way to unite the parties. To solve this problem, it is important to consider the values of the two parties and the disputes between them.

### **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- Where does my state currently stand in relation to the conflict between the PA (Fatah) and Hamas? Does it identify more strongly with the ideology or strategy of one than the other?
- What can my state contribute to the unity of Fatah and Hamas?
- How can I use my state's culture and history, and that of other states in the League to create a compromise and unity between the two parties?
- How have international players intervened in the Fatah and Hamas conflict to date?
- What role can my state play in enforcing the rules of a proposed resolution?
- If/when unity is achieved between Hamas and Fatah, what is the next step in the region?

### **III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- What are the best methods to facilitate unity between Fatah and Hamas? Why?
- How will the proposed strategy remain equitable to both parties?
- Is cooperation between the two parties the answer to getting access into Gaza? If not, what steps must take place after cooperation to get assistance and aid into Gaza?
- How will the League enforce cooperative efforts between the two parties?
- How, if at all, will the League address Hamas's role as a violent extremist organization (VEO) in the cooperation?

### **IV. Additional Resources**

#### **[HAMAS-FATAH RECONCILIATION](#)**

*This article provides a brief timeline of the creation of both Hamas and Fatah and their history up until the most recent election in May 2017.*

### [Fatah vs. Hamas](#)

*This article contains in-depth history of the creation of both Fatah and Hamas. It also has an analysis of each organization's goals and resources from their early years. Contains links to official websites for both Hamas and Fatah.*

### [The Unbreakable Relationship: Hamas and the Humanitarian Aid in Gaza](#)

*This article goes in depth about the struggle of getting humanitarian aid in and out of the Gaza region. It also goes over the aspects of how Gaza has become completely dependent on humanitarian aid and how Israel has intervened with humanitarian aid in Gaza.*

### **Topic III: Securing Increased Water Access and Sanitation for Palestinians via League Channels and Negotiation with International Bodies.**

#### **I. Introduction**

##### **A. General Background**

Water is a basic resource that all living things need and was declared a basic human right by the United Nations since 2010<sup>22</sup>. Though these are facts, the Palestinian people continue to not have regular access to water. This is not caused by drought, but rather the absolute control Israel has over water supplies in the region. As a result, Palestinians have struggled gain access to clean drinking water on a day-to day basis for decades.<sup>23</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends access to a minimum of 100 L/day while most Palestinians have access to at best 63 L/day. Both Israel and Palestine draw water from three main sources, the Mountain Aquifer, the Jordan River Basin and the Coastal Aquifer.<sup>24</sup>

Israel has led the international community to believe that Palestine is a water-scarce region, which is quite the contrary to the truth as Ramallah has more rainfall than London.<sup>25</sup> Israel is deliberately denying Palestinians the right to control their water resources and turning water into a tool to subdue them. Due to the lack of water, sanitation and hygiene suffer as well since they both need water to operate. The scarcity of water in Palestine it puts hygiene on a back-burner as no water should be wasted on cleanliness, when there isn't even enough for a family to drink. Schools and health centers are often not equipped with clean toilets and washrooms. Sewage networks were already inadequate and deteriorated even more so after the Gaza war in 2014.

Beyond the humanitarian necessity of access to adequate amounts of potable water, access to water resources is tied to ideologies of national sovereignty. The three major watersheds available to Israel and Palestine include fluvial as well as subsoil sources. Fluvial reservoirs are commonly used as aspects of cultural identity as these sources are utilized for industrial, transportation, and manufacturing sectors. These industries support the import/export ratios and GDP of a nation. They also indicate the power of a nation as it relates to financial capabilities. Ground water access is the more contested issue between Israel and Palestine as for Palestinians shipping capabilities are of much less concern than access to clean drinking water.

As such, this council is called upon to create a diplomatic solution to the water crisis in Palestine, either by providing water sources from our countries to Palestine, by lobbying to provide water source access to the PA from the Israeli government, or through other means that the Council finds best.

##### **B. History in the Arab World**

Since the occupation of the West Bank in 1967, Israel has maintained a monopoly over

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<sup>22</sup> See UNGA resolution 64/292

<sup>23</sup> United Nations. "The Human Right to Water and Sanitation." *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*, United Nations, 29 May 2014, [www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human\\_right\\_to\\_water.shtml](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml).

<sup>24</sup> Lautze, Jonathan & Kirshen Paul 2009. Water allocation, climate change, and sustainable water use in Israel/Palestine: the Palestinian position. Water International, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02508060902903175>

<sup>25</sup> Hegazi, Farah. "'Ramallah Has More Rainfall Than London' But Israel's Policies Have Created Water Scarcity for Palestinians." *Muftah*, 6 Mar. 2017, [muftah.org/ramallah-rainfall-london/#.Wbv5NN97BI](http://muftah.org/ramallah-rainfall-london/#.Wbv5NN97BI).

Palestinian water resources. Through discriminatory water-sharing agreements, the Israeli national water company Mekorot is able to restrict the water supply to the West Bank, causing thousands of Palestinians to become water-dependent on Israel. These agreements prevent Palestinians from developing proper water and sanitation infrastructure as since 1967 Israel has prohibited the building of such infrastructure in Palestinian areas<sup>26</sup>. The water sharing agreements ultimately created the Joint Water Committee (JWC).<sup>27</sup> All Palestinian water projects in the West Bank require approval by JWC, where the approval rate is 56% for Palestinian projects and 100% for Israeli projects. This is because Israel has de facto veto power, and no Palestinians have sat on this committee since 2010.<sup>28</sup>

In 1995 the Oslo II interim agreement was made to facilitate equal access for both Israeli and Palestinian populations to the mountain aquifer water resources, but this has not been enforced.<sup>29</sup> When the agreement was made in 1995, over 71% of the water was allocated to Israelis and Palestinians were allocated 17%. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as of 2016 Israelis receive 87% of the water while Palestinians receive a mere 13%. In the 22 years since 1995 the Palestinian population in the West Bank has doubled and their allocated water resources have decreased over time. Due to such reductions families in the West Bank end up spending 30% of their income on the purchase of water.<sup>30</sup>

The water and sanitation issues pose an even greater threat in Gaza where only 10% of the population has access to safe drinking water compared to 90% in the West Bank.<sup>31</sup> The issue in Gaza goes beyond simply access to water, but the quality of water. The Gazan aquifer is an unconfined aquifer, meaning hydrologic pressure provided by sufficient levels of water in the aquifer keep seawater from infiltrating the supply. Because of the population demands on this aquifer, large sums of water have been pumped out. The resulting decrease in hydrologic pressure results in the aquifer re-filling itself, to achieve pressure equilibrium, with the most easily accessible water. In the case of Gaza, the closest water source is seawater which mixes with the fresh supply and salinizes it beyond potability.<sup>32</sup> This has led to problems of both quantity and quality of water for the nearly two-million residents of Gaza. The people of Gaza must rely on humanitarian aid that is often unreliable and restricted to get their daily drinking water. The recent construction of a desalination plant in Gaza, funded in part by the EU and facilitated by UNICEF, has helped to mitigate some of these water issues, however since only about 12% of the plant is powered by solar panels, when there are gas or energy

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<sup>26</sup> See note 20; Lautze, Jonathan & Kirshen Paul 2009.

<sup>27</sup> "Israel: Water as a Tool to Dominate Palestinians." News from Al Jazeera, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/israel-water-tool-dominate-palestinians-160619062531348.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/israel-water-tool-dominate-palestinians-160619062531348.html).

<sup>28</sup> "Palestine Sewage Crisis and Sanitation in Refugee Camps." ANERA, [www.anera.org/priorities/sewage-sanitation-systems/](http://www.anera.org/priorities/sewage-sanitation-systems/).

<sup>29</sup> Black, Ian. "Water under the Bridge: How the Oslo Agreement Robbed the Palestinians." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 4 Feb. 2013, [www.theguardian.com/world/on-the-middle-east/2013/feb/04/israel-palestinians-water-arafat-abbas](http://www.theguardian.com/world/on-the-middle-east/2013/feb/04/israel-palestinians-water-arafat-abbas).

<sup>30</sup> Bollack, Eloise. "Palestinian Villages 'Get Two Hours of Water a Week'." *News from Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 24 Oct. 2016, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/palestinian-villages-hours-water-week-161023105150024.htm](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/palestinian-villages-hours-water-week-161023105150024.htm)

<sup>31</sup> "Water Situation Alarming in Gaza." *World Bank*, [www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/11/22/water-situation-alarming-in-gaza](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/11/22/water-situation-alarming-in-gaza).

<sup>32</sup> Sarsak, Reem, and Mohammad N Almasri. "Seawater Intrusion into the Coastal Aquifer in the Gaza Strip: a Computer-Modelling Study." *The Lancet*, vol. 382, no. S32, 2013, doi:10.1016/s0140-6736(13)62604-5. And Berland, Allison. "The Water Component of the Peace Process Between the Israelis and the Palestinians." Ch two. Master's Thesis, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, 2000. [http://transboundarywaters.science.oregonstate.edu/sites/transboundarywaters.science.oregonstate.edu/files/Publications/Berland\\_Thesis\\_2000May.pdf](http://transboundarywaters.science.oregonstate.edu/sites/transboundarywaters.science.oregonstate.edu/files/Publications/Berland_Thesis_2000May.pdf)

shortages the availability of water again drastically decreases<sup>33</sup>.

### **C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future**

Lack of access to water is one of the most pertinent issues faced by Palestinians as water is an obligatory resource needed to live. It is also an intrinsic aspect of national sovereignty and even identity as it applies to a nation's industrial and financial accomplishments. To tackle this issue, the League must pull together all resources and open all avenues to help provide water resources to Palestine. It is imperative that this Council seeks methods to provide proportional access to water for both the West Bank and Gaza. In order to achieve this goal, this Council may have to make separate plans for each region as the challenges and geological/hydrological aspects of the region determine how much water is actually available per year for the populations inhabiting the region. The proportionality of water access is based on both need and availability, as aquifers are not unlimited resources. It is important for the League to find physically possible, legal, and permanent pathways to help develop Palestine's sanitation and sewage infrastructure and access to potable water to both regions in question.

### **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- How can my state contribute to the water and sanitation crisis in Palestine?
- Are there existing frameworks and initiatives that can be applied to the State of Palestine?
- Is this plan physically possible considering the geographical, geological, and hydrological parameters and constraints?
- What legal capacity does Palestine have in this matter regarding Israel's control of the water resources? Can intergovernmental laws support their claims?
- How can my state and the League as a whole negotiate assistance with international bodies?

### **III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- How will these methods maintain water and sanitation infrastructure?
- How does this initiative improve both short term and long-term access and availability of water resources for Palestine?
- What can neighboring countries do to help elevate water scarcity? Open borders for aid?
- How are international bodies integrated into the resolution? Is what you are asking in the purview of their body

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<sup>33</sup> Weilbel, Catherine. UNICEF seawater desalination plant helps head off Gaza water crisis. UNICEF At a glance: State of Palestine. 31 May, 2017. [https://www.unicef.org/wash/oPt\\_95521.html](https://www.unicef.org/wash/oPt_95521.html)

#### **IV. Additional Resources**

##### [THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN INTERIM AGREEMENT ON THE WEST BANK AND THE GAZA STRIP](#)

*This agreement is commonly referred to as, the water-sharing agreements, which have been in effect since 1967 and prevent Palestine from developing and maintain their water infrastructure to date.*

##### [On the Oslo II 20 years anniversary EWASH calls on the International Community and local authorities to guarantee Palestinians' water rights](#)

*This document analyses the 1995 Oslo II Interim agreement that helped allocate the mountain aquifer water. It is a plea by EWASH to the international community to step in and guarantee Palestine's right to water.*

##### [TROUBLED WATERS – PALESTINIANS DENIED FAIR ACCESS TO WATER](#)

*This document is an Amnesty International report specifically on Palestinians denied access to water from 2009.*

##### [Obstacles to Arab-Israeli peace: Water](#)

*This article discusses how the Arab-Israeli dispute is a conflict about land - and maybe just as crucially the water which flows through that land.*

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02508060902903175>

*this article contains figures and data detailing the watersheds, communities, and how much water is delineated to Israeli versus Palestinian populations as an aspect of how much water is available from the land rather than need-based arguments.*

<http://www.pwa.ps/english.aspx>

*The Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) is a research-based organization and a great resource for data on the water resources as well as some political aspects of the issue.*