



2018-2019

Model Arab League

BACKGROUND

GUIDE

Council on Palestinian Affairs

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**National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations**



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Topic I: Devising strategies to plan for potential failure of peace negotiations.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

As early as 1947, Palestinian Arabs and Jews have wanted to undertake peace negotiations under the auspice of the United Nations. However, 1991 was the start of the series of peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine.¹ The series of peace negotiations have produced a collection of peace plans, international summits, secret negotiations, UN resolutions, think tanks, initiatives, interim truces and state-building programmes, etc that have all failed. The reasons for why each peace negotiation has faltered is because each peace plan has failed to address key issues at a local, regional and global level for all parties involved. The main players in these negotiations include the Palestinian government, political parties of Palestine, the Israeli State, and members of the Arab League and United Nations.

The most recent peace plan between one of Palestine's prominent political parties, Hamas, which governs Gaza, took place with Israel in Cairo, Egypt. Currently, Egypt is finalizing the details of a one year truce that could extend to four years.² Although this can be considered progress, it is only short term. A truce up to four years is not sustainable and does not resolve the larger issues at hand which include: Palestinian statehood, border placement, rights of Palestinian refugees and diaspora, Israeli settlements and the role of Arab League and United Nations. For successful peace negotiations to occur, the League must consider different strategies to address short term and long term goals for the State of Palestine.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted 33 to 13 with 10 abstentions to partition western Palestine into two states -- one for the Jews and the other for the Palestinian Arabs, with Jerusalem becoming an international city under the supervision of the United Nations.³

From this date, the history between Palestine and Israel has experienced a long series of peace plans, the major ones being the Armistice Agreement, The Rabat Summit Conference, the Oslo Accords of 1993, Paris Protocol, Cairo Agreement, Camp David Summit, Road Map for Peace. Additionally there is a constant stream of peace talks between Palestinian groups and Israel that have resulted from escalated violence and bloodshed.

¹ <https://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.timeline.php?timelineID=000031>

² <https://gulffnews.com/news/mena/palestine/egypt-finalising-details-of-long-term-hamas-israel-truce-1.2267364>

³ <https://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.timeline.php?timelineID=000031>

These peace negotiations should be part of your research in order to effectively devise strategies to prevent failure of future negotiations. Your country must analyze the agreement in the current position, and the relationship that they have with both Palestine and Israel. Furthermore, your country should strategically place themselves in a role that will facilitate dialogue as well as allow short term and long term solutions to occur.

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

The Arab League has been a part of many failed and incompleting peace negotiations, the most recent being the Cairo talks between Hamas and Israel. Although the Cairo talks are still in progress, there is a chance that they will fail. Therefore, the Arab League must create alternative strategies and initiatives that will further collaboration and peace, while also considering all options that will allow for Palestinian Statehood.

Your country likely has many positive and negative political relationships with all members of the League, as well as Israel. Your country must reflect on past failed agreements within the country and understand the steps that your country should have taken in order for a successful agreement to occur. Essentially, your country should provide guidance, structure, and strategies to prevent another failed peace agreement. Strategies to prevent failure of future agreement should include and discuss the fundamental reasons for past peace failures, as well as address the steps that each country should be taking, the consequences of violating an agreement, and the major issues that Palestine and the international community need to resolve.

Your country can partake in all aspects of peace negotiations, but if your country does specialize, for example in economic development, play those strengths during discussion. Remember peace negotiations must continue until there is peace.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How has your country prevented the failure of peace negotiations within your country?
- Has your country participated and taken an active role in peace negotiations?
 - If so, what role did your country play?
- What expertise or resources can my country provide to the peace process?
- What is your country's relationship with Israel? How will this affect your role in the peace process?
- How would the end of Israeli occupation change political and economic relations in the Middle East?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What does Palestine want and need from a future peace negotiation?
- How will peace negotiation affect the Arab League at the regional and international level?
- What needs to be implemented in the short term in order to achieve long term peace?
- What are the current peace negotiations that are taking place and what is being addressed?
- How can your country ensure transparency and accountability of the League when taking the necessary steps to achieve peace and a free Palestine?

IV. Additional Resources

- <https://www.bakerinstitute.org/media/files/files/015a3fac/BI-pub-IPUpdate-070714.pdf>
- <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/An-Inclusive-Peace-Process-for-the-Israeli-Palestinian-Conflict-2-2-12.pdf>

Topic II: Developing arrangements for repairing and rebuilding damaged and destroyed infrastructure for both private and public buildings.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Since the start of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israel has been able to prevent Palestine from implementing and constructing housing, hospitals, schools, etc by limiting and withholding construction permits.⁴ Although still an issue in West Bank territories and refugee camps, Gaza is in a more critical condition due to the consequences of occupation, siege and attacks. Many Gazans continue to lack permanent housing and basic infrastructure, such as electricity, clean water, sewage treatment, and waste management.

B. History in the Arab World

In A 2009, a World Bank report stated that Gaza had designed a water and sanitation system which would help eliminate gaps in the infrastructure. However, the same report also indicated that under the political climate, less than 2% of the water and sanitation system was being implemented. Israel's blockade prevents the import of materials necessary to repair, upgrade and maintain infrastructure.⁵

Members of the Arab League contribute donations to the Palestinian reconstruction efforts, but this funding is not always constant or guaranteed. Recent aid cuts, and threats of aid cuts from Arab countries and the United States have further hindered the ability of Palestinian authorities to plan and execute infrastructure projects.⁶ However, it is imperative to acknowledge and consider the impact that other countries, organizations, and NGO's may have in helping rebuild Palestine. Recently, the German Embassy, the German Development Bank and UNRWA reconstructed new houses for 61 returning families and 35 retail units for store owners.⁷

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

The main reasons that repairing and rebuilding infrastructure in Palestine is still a major problem is due to the restricted access into and out of the territory, which is enforced by both Israeli and Egyptian authorities. The Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) approves any construction or humanitarian aid, while Egyptian authorities control access via the

⁴ <https://www.mepc.org/reconstruction-palestine-urban-and-rural-development>

⁵ <https://water.fanack.com/palestine/water-infrastructure/limitations-on-developing-infrastructure-in-gaza/>

⁶ "Sources: Arab countries withhold aid to Palestinian Authority," Middle East Monitor, last modified January 19, 2018, accessed September 10, 2018, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180119-sources-arab-countries-withhold-aid-to-palestinian-authority/>.

⁷ <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-and-germany-hand-over-newly-built-houses-and-commercial-units-nahr-el>

Rafah border crossing.⁸ Because of these limitations, development of infrastructure is difficult and requires a long planning process. The second reason why infrastructure efforts often fail is due to funding efforts that have been neglected and unfulfilled by the Arab League.

Acquiring necessary materials and funding is necessary to successfully reconstruct Gaza and improve the socioeconomic condition of the Palestinians. The Gaza Strip will continue to deteriorate without more working being done to open the way for resources and supplies.

When discussing reconstruction efforts, your country should consider how the Government of Palestine will oversee the reconstruction effort, and how to assure that donors and sponsors follow through with funding. Additionally, your country must address security concerns along the borders to ensure that materials and personnel move safely through the region.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Which type of buildings are most critically needed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip?
- Who is contributing to reconstruction efforts and how?
- Which organizations are helping fund reconstruction efforts?
- What is needed to enable the safe passage of materials through the borders?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How can my country help facilitate reconstruction efforts?
- Does Palestine need help implementing an effective infrastructure system or is it more an issue of funding/ resources?
- How can my country help Palestine's infrastructure?

IV. Additional Resources

- <https://water.fanack.com/palestine/water-infrastructure/limitations-on-developing-infrastructure-in-gaza>
- <https://www.amera.org/priorities/reconstruction/>
- <https://www.unrwa.org>

⁸ (<https://www.brookings.edu/research/reviving-the-stalled-reconstruction-of-gaza/>)

Topic III: Creating contingency plans to protect against the unjust imprisonment of Palestinians.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Many reports have highlighted the unjust and inhumane imprisonment of Palestinians, especially of Palestinian youth. Since 2002, an average of two children per day have been detained, many after being accused of throwing stones at Israeli soldiers.⁹ According to Defense for Children International, of the 500-700 Palestinians who are arrested every year, over three-quarters are subjected to physically violent arrests. Children are often not provided legal aid, or any form of representation. This means that when, or even if Palestinian children are taken before a military court, they are highly unlikely to be given fair trial.¹⁰

In June 2013, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child released a report documenting how Palestinian children in Israeli custody are “systematically subject to degrading treatment, and acts of torture,” including “physical and verbal violence, humiliation, painful restraints, hooding of the head and face in a sack, threatened with death, physical violence, and sexual assault against themselves or members of their family, restricted access to toilet, food and water.”¹¹ Many Palestinians have endured arbitrary arrest, inhumane treatment and punishment, and all the psychological and mental consequences that comes from living in a prison.¹²

B. History in the Arab World

As of August 1998, more than 3,000 Palestinian children from the West Bank and Gaza Strip were held in Israeli prisons, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.¹³

In 2012, about 4,500 Palestinian prisoners were being held in Israeli prisons, with 308 under “administrative detention.” Administrative detention” is a form of detention without charge or trial that is authorized by administrative order instead of judicial decree. Another 453 Palestinians from the Gaza Strip were detained that same year.¹⁴ In 2017, more than 6,300 Palestinians were held in Israeli prisons and detention centers, including 300 children.¹⁵

⁹ <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2013/06/25/pale-j25.html>

¹⁰ "Military Detention." Defense for Children International - Palestine. Accessed September 7, 2018. https://www.dci-palestine.org/issues_military_detention.

¹¹ <https://imeu.org/article/policing-apartheid-israels-imprisonment-of-palestinians>

¹² <https://imeu.org/article/policing-apartheid-israels-imprisonment-of-palestinians>

¹³ <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/advocacy/prisons/mideast.htm>

¹⁴ <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/detention-imprisonment-of-palestinians/>

¹⁵ <https://www.thenation.com/article/stop-the-imprisonment-of-palestinian-children/>

One of the many Palestinians who have been put in Israeli detention include Ahed Tamimi, a Palestinian girl was imprisoned for slapping a soldier and faced 12 charges in Israeli court.¹⁶ Ahed was subjected to 8 months in jail and her saga is still continuing in the Israeli legal system.¹⁷ As of September 2018, Tamimi was barred from leaving Palestine after planning a series of talks to discuss Israeli human rights violations.¹⁸ The future of Palestinian youth is directly related to the experiences that they, their friends or families may have in an Israeli prison. Unfortunately, the Israeli State often censors and silences experiences which would lead to a greater understanding of this issue.

In the past and still today, some countries in the Middle East, have prison systems that are unsanitary and inhumane. Although this is another topic on its own, it is your country's responsibility to advocate and ensure that the Israeli Prison System does not violate international law. Although many Arab countries do not have clean prison records, this does not mean there is not room for them to negotiate deals and terms to push the Israeli government to limit arbitrary arrests and the inhumane treatment of underage prisoners.

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

The impact of administrative detention and solitary confinement results in psychological and mental trauma. After release from detention, Palestinians, especially Palestinian children have been known to suffer from PTSD, nightmares, behavioral changes, and loss of interest in school. The systematic imprisonment of youth in Israeli prisons is tactic used to demoralize and discourage youth activism in regards to the occupation. There is more work that must be done to provide aid to those who have been imprisoned in Israeli jails. Assistance from Arab States could address the psychological needs of Palestinian youth who were subjected to Israeli imprisonment.

As Israel does not legally consider Gaza as being occupied, they cannot detain people under administrative detention, so Israel uses the Unlawful Combatants Law on Gazans.¹⁹ Furthermore, the treatment of children in Israeli prisons does not abide by international humanitarian law. International humanitarian law states that countries must have a separate juvenile-justice system that recognizes the special status of children, protects minors from violence, and focuses on rehabilitation and reintegration.²⁰ There is little that can be done by the Arab League in terms of providing assistance to the Gaza strip. Any form of aid would be seen by the Israelis as an infringement on Gazan sovereignty, or a possible effort to fund hostile Palestinian groups such as Hamas. The Arab league should not see these issues as insurmountable. There is always the option of diplomatic efforts through states which recognize Israel, or by being creative with loopholes in Israeli policy. Any resolution must be cognizant of the fact that Israel has the power

¹⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/05/middleeast/ahed-tamimi-palestinian-activist/index.html>

¹⁷ <http://daysofpalestine.com/post/10734/ahed-tamimi-is-facing-10-years-in-prison-amnesty-says>

¹⁸ Abbas Momani, "Palestinian teen activist Ahed Tamimi banned from traveling abroad, her father claims," Russia Today, last modified September 9, 2018, accessed September 10, 2018, <https://www.rt.com/news/437994-tamimi-family-banned-travel/>.

¹⁹ <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/detention-imprisonment-of-palestinians/>

²⁰ <https://www.thenation.com/article/stop-the-imprisonment-of-palestinian-children/>

to stop any League action, so the resolution must either be highly symbolic, or highly effective in order to demonstrate the continued concern for the Palestinian people.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What is the structure of your country's prison system?
- How does your country ensure that its prison system meets the standards of international law?
- How has your country dealt with mental, psychological and physical well-being of your prisoners?
- How can youth mobilize the international community to pressure Israel to follow international humanitarian law?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How can the League work together to prevent Israel from breaking international law?
- How can the league help Palestinian prisoners?
- What are the necessary precautions that the League needs to take in order to prevent the imprisonment of youth?
- How can the League bring exposure and international awareness to the illegal imprisonment of Palestinians?
- How can youth mobilize the international community to pressure Israel to follow international humanitarian law?

IV. Additional Resources

- <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/136023.pdf>
- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/ahed-tamimi-months-prison-plea-deal-180321201412587.html>
- https://www.democracynow.org/2018/8/6/meet_ahed_tamimi_17_year_old
- <https://www.ohchr.org/>
- <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/advocacy/prisons/mideast.htm>

Topic IV: Examining and finding ways to encourage a healthy entrepreneurial climate for Palestinian citizens.

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

In the past few years, Palestine has been a part of programs and initiatives that foster entrepreneurship and the startup culture. There have been several entrepreneurial initiatives by the Palestine Investment Fund (PIF), microfinance institutions and Palestinian universities that have taken the forefront in leading entrepreneurial growth.²¹

Palestine is a leader in the Middle East entrepreneurial scene. A major initiative that is now in the works, Building Entrepreneurship Excellence and Developing Economic Enterprises (BEEADEE), is a three-year project with the goal to foster sustainable growth by enhancing the entrepreneurial environment in the West Bank.²² In Palestine, most initiatives come from local universities such as Bethlehem University and Berzeit University both which are addressing social/green and cultural entrepreneurship, and the importance, challenges, and outcomes of women entrepreneurship.²³

B. History in the Arab World

In recent years, the Middle East has had broad developments in social entrepreneurship. To date, an estimated 78 globally recognized and award winning social entrepreneurs are operating in the Middle East. However, because of methodology and funding 73 out of the 78 social entrepreneurs come only from five countries in the region: Egypt, the West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco.²⁴

Most current investment in entrepreneurship comes in the form of technical training or financial capital.²⁵ Although needed, this limits the scope of what entrepreneurship and social enterprises can become in the Middle East. Many problems have arisen from entrepreneurial development in the Middle East due to a lack of; framework, standardized benchmarks that can measure the impact of social entrepreneurship, and a strong support system to encourage and support youth to undertake entrepreneurial initiatives.

²¹ <http://www.netkite.eu/2014/07/25/entrepreneurship-in-palestinechallenges-and-prospects/>

²² <https://kelley.iu.edu/faculty-research/centers-institutes/international-business/programs-initiatives/entrepreneurship-excellence.cshtml>

²³ <http://www.birzeit.edu/en/news/entrepreneurship-occupied-palestine-policies-and-prospects>

²⁴ https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/04_social_entrepreneurship_es.pdf

²⁵ https://ssir.org/articles/entry/whats_holding_back_entrepreneurs_in_the_middle_east_and_north_africa

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

While new small businesses come to life every day in the Middle East, most entrepreneurs cannot scale their business into larger enterprises. Entrepreneurs in the Middle East face many barriers because of cultural norms, politics, governance, education and infrastructure. Thus, the entrepreneurial environment is often forced to slow down. Standardizing laws and forming political policy to open new markets in the Middle East, Europe and Africa will greatly expand the ability of entrepreneurs to be successful in the League. Considerable work needs to be done to access Palestinian markets and allow goods and entrepreneurship to flow into the greater Middle East economic area. Boosting Palestinian entrepreneurship will help increase prosperity and allow Palestinian people to continue pushing for their rights as a stateless people.

The Middle East is now undergoing a slow shift of mentality in regards to social entrepreneurship. It is important that the League as a whole defines entrepreneurship and understands the impact that entrepreneurship can have on the political and socio-economic stability of one's country. The League should focus on establishing partnerships to support entrepreneurial initiatives in a local, regional and international scale. Creating League-wide trade strategies with entrepreneurs in mind could also facilitate cross-border cooperation, and allow for even growth across the League. Since the League cannot mandate what happens inside each state, it is more important to look at the policies that can help growth across the region, or in specific shared markets. Entrepreneurship will not have the same needs in GCC countries as they might have in the Maghreb Economic Union, or in Palestine. Resolutions must keep in mind the groups that they are trying to assist, and whether that group has specific or variable needs based on their location in the League. Because of the economic constraints on Palestine, League policy must focus on how entrepreneurs can grow and expand when they operate in a constrained and underdeveloped market.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What is the biggest challenge to supporting startups in your country?
- How has entrepreneurship developed in your country?
- Does your country have competitions for startups or tech startups?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How can the local and regional community support entrepreneurship efforts?
- What can high-schools and universities do to encourage entrepreneurship?
- How can the League foster and cultivate entrepreneurial initiatives?

IV. Additional Resources

- <http://thisweekinpalestine.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/The-Ecosystem-Map-of-Entrepreneurship-Organizations-in-Palestine.pdf>
- https://ssir.org/articles/entry/social_entrepreneurship_in_the_middle_east_old_practice_new_concept
- <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/06/five-ways-to-make-maghreb-work/>
This article from the World Economic Forum highlights the issues with the Maghreb Union. This could be useful for finding solutions to problems in that specific area, or could also be expanded to other regions within MENA.
- <http://www.mei.edu/content/entrepreneurship-better-egypt>