

**Topic:** Addressing the consequences of the Israeli military operations in Palestine on civilians

**Committee:** The Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM)

### **A. Letter From Secretary General**

Dear Delegates and most esteemed participants,

As the Co-Secretary Generals of the BJK Kabataş Foundation Schools Model United Nations Conference, it is our distinct honor to welcome you to our traditional conference, now in its second annual iteration this year.

We are delighted to collaborate with the diligent academic and organizational teams, whose dedication is truly commendable. We have worked extensively with our academic team to prepare engaging crisis and procedural committees where significant global issues will be discussed worldwide. Simultaneously, our organization team has tirelessly prepared to ensure the best conference experience for you, which will enchant these 3 days.

Delegates will have access to a wide variety of committee types and topics. Among these diverse options, delegates will have the opportunity to find a committee that aligns with their interests and select one that fits their preferred style of debate. With such broad spectrum, delegates can explore committees that resonate with their passions and engage in debates that suit their preferred style of discourse.

We aspire for this conference to act as a driving force, broadening your horizons, sparking fresh concepts, and propelling you toward greater strides in your pursuit of global leadership.

Sincerely,

Berra Gümüşler & Dila Bengisu

## **B. Welcome Letter from the Under-Secretary General**

Dear delegates,

Let me start by introducing myself. My name is Defne Yılmaz. I am a 10th grade student at Istanbul Erkek High School and the Deputy President of the General Assembly at IELMUN'25. This year at BKVMUN'25, I will serve in SOCHUM as both your President Chair and the Under Secretary General. In our first agenda item, we will discuss the humanitarian crisis in Palestine, with a focus on the consequences of the recent Gaza war. Our second agenda item is about the displacement and humanitarian crisis in the Sahel region of Africa. When researching your agenda items, remember that this document is only there to guide you. I highly encourage you to research from many different sources and perspectives. Nevertheless, I hope these documents will help you in your preparations. I would like to thank our valuable Academic Assistant Ayşe Naz Yedikardeş for her support in the preparation of these guides and the whole BKVMUN Secretariat for their efforts in organising this conference, especially my childhood friend and the CO-SG Dila whose invitation to BKVMUN I proudly accepted.

Lastly, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. You can reach me whenever you want (my email: [dfnylmzs13@gmail.com](mailto:dfnylmzs13@gmail.com)). I look forward to meeting you all and hope that this committee will be a very fun, productive and educational experience. And, this is a note to all the first-timers reading this guide, do not stress out. I will do my best to teach you everything you need to know during the conference. Just make sure you are aware of the main problems and know the main actors shaping the problem.

Sincerely,

Defne Yılmaz

## **C. Introduction To the Committee**

The Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) focuses on issues that arise in humanitarian, social development, equality and human rights issues. SOCHUM's main objective is to solve the previously stated problems and preach respect towards basic human rights. SOCHUM, founded in 1945 to uphold the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is the third GA (General Assembly) committee. SOCHUM's Mandate and Responsibilities protect human rights, keeping up with social and humanitarian issues and aiding with cultural affairs. What is the purpose of SOCHUM, then? SOCHUM's goal is to design peaceful settlements for issues within the large spectrum of social, humanitarian, and cultural complications. What does SOCHUM deal with? Some examples of SOCHUM'S deals are human trafficking, women's and children's rights, and migration issues. The committee is authorized to propose recommendations on peace and security matters to members of the General Assembly, the UN Security Council, and other relevant bodies and agencies. SOCHUM has the authority to request reports from special rapporteurs appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council.

#### **D. Introduction to the Agenda Item**

The conflict between Israel and the Palestinian people is one of the longest-running and most violent disputes in the world. Britain took control of the area known as Palestine in World War I, following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman territories were placed under British administration by the League of Nations in 1922, and all of these territories eventually became fully independent states, except Palestine.

Large-scale Jewish immigration occurred during the Mandate (1922–1947), mostly from Eastern Europe. The Nazi persecution of the Jews in the 1930s caused the numbers to rise, which unnerved the Arabs. This resulted in a rebellion in 1937, which was followed by ongoing violence on both sides. In 1947, the United Nations agreed to internationalize Jerusalem and split Palestine into two separate states: one Jewish and one Palestinian. Arabs were unhappy about this matter and quarreled about the proposal. Britain did not participate. At the end of May 14, 1948, it made the decision to leave and turn the issue up to the UN.

The day after Israel declared its independence, it was attacked and surrounded by the armies of five Arab nations. By the time the fighting ended in 1949, Israel had gained most of the territory. Approximately 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced, many of whom became refugees in neighboring countries. In 1967, the war known as the Six-Day War resulted in significant changes to the borders of the Middle East. The conflict saw Israel confront Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. The war began when Israel, fearing an impending attack from Egypt and Syria, launched an airstrike against Egypt's air force. When the fighting concluded, Israel had captured the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza from Egypt, most of the Golan Heights from Syria, and East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan. These territories have remained under Israeli occupation to this day. In 1979, Israel signed a peace treaty with Egypt, under which it returned the Sinai Peninsula.

Israelis and Palestinians have not been able to come to a definitive peace deal despite a protracted peace process. Although the Oslo Accords of 1993–1995 made strides in the direction of a two-state solution, Israeli forces nevertheless occupy the Gaza Strip and 165 West Bank territories today.

Israel-Hamas war began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas launched a land, sea, and air assault on Israel from the Gaza Strip. This war killed over 50,000 people – 48,405 Palestinians and 1,706 Israelis. On 17 January 2025, Israel and Hamas made a ceasefire agreement.

## **E. Key Terms**

**IDF (Israel Defense Forces):** The military forces of Israel, responsible for numerous operations in Gaza and the West Bank. In the context of this agenda, the IDF's actions are central to discussions about civilian casualties and human rights violations.

**Hamas:** A Palestinian political and militant organization that governs the Gaza Strip. It has been involved in numerous armed conflicts with Israel and is considered a terrorist group by several countries. Its presence often leads to escalations that heavily impact civilians.

**Gaza Strip:** A densely populated Palestinian territory frequently affected by Israeli military operations. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is a core issue in this agenda item.

**Ceasefire:** A temporary stoppage of war or conflict where both sides agree to halt aggressive actions. Ceasefires between Israel and Hamas have often been short-lived due to violations or unresolved issues.

**UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency):** A UN agency that provides essential aid such as education, healthcare, and housing to Palestinian refugees, especially in times of armed conflict.

## **F. General Overview**

On October 7 2023, Israel was the target of an unprecedented, multifaceted offensive by Hamas. Hamas militants entered Israel from the Gaza Strip early in the morning and attacked southern Israel's civilian communities. Attacks on cities and villages close to the Gaza border included armed incursions, missile barrages, and attacks.

Israel was caught off guard by the deadliest attack in recent memory, which struck people without distinction. In retaliation, Israel launched airstrikes against Hamas sites in Gaza. The Israeli military also deployed ground troops and prepared for a potential ground invasion. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's announcement against Hamas prompted the battle, focusing on the group's infrastructure, military bases, and leadership. The violence quickly spiraled into a full-scale war, with widespread casualties. Palestinian civilians were primarily affected by the ongoing fighting with significant loss towards basic living necessities and critical infrastructure, all destroyed due to Israeli attacks. As of today, the number of casualties is estimated to be around 50,000.



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This conflict caused an ecological disaster in addition to its effects on civilians. In Gaza's ecological catastrophe, toxic dust was unleashed into the air. Continued Israeli bombing and raw sewage contaminated coastal waters after the region's treatment plants were damaged or destroyed by the Israeli bombardment.

Innocent individuals like children were also impacted by these conflicts. The Education and Higher Education Ministry in Gaza reported that Israel's war spanning over 15 months has left 85% of schools out of service resulting in a two-year interruption in education. According to the Government Media Office's statistics, over the 15 months, Israel bombed 1,166 educational establishments, including 927 schools, universities, kindergartens, and learning centers. These institutions were completely destroyed, and the attacks killed a total of 12,800 students and 800 teachers and administrative staff.

<sup>1</sup> 2025 Gaza war ceasefire  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025\\_Gaza\\_war\\_ceasefire#:~:text=Ceasefire%20and%20hostage%20prisoner%20exchanges,-](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_Gaza_war_ceasefire#:~:text=Ceasefire%20and%20hostage%20prisoner%20exchanges,-)

In Gaza, animals were also impacted by this conflict. Many of the animals in Gaza's zoos have been killed by Israeli attacks. Together with their human caregivers, the surviving animals are lacking in terms of adequate nutrition.

Today, even basic needs are out of reach for Gazans. The United Nations reports that 90% of the population of Gaza regularly goes a whole day without food. Other basic necessities like clean water, fuel, medicine and medical supplies are all scarce. The Global IPC Food Security Initiative shows that 133,000 people – or 6 percent of the enclave's population – are already experiencing “catastrophic” food insecurity. According to UNICEF, at least half of the water and sanitation facilities in Gaza have been destroyed or damaged. At the same time, UNRWA reports that around 70 percent of the population of Gaza are drinking salinized or contaminated water. Doctors Without Borders teams in the Gaza Strip report that Palestinians are facing critical shortages of essential medicines and equipment. The closure of the Rafah border crossing, following Israel's offensive in the south of Gaza in early May, coupled with the endless red tape imposed by Israeli authorities, have dramatically congested the flow of humanitarian aid through the Kerem Shalom entry point. This has led to massive queues of trucks and perilous delays in the delivery of humanitarian assistance across Gaza. Even when aid can finally enter the Strip, insecurity often does not allow humanitarian organisations to get it where it is desperately needed.



## ISRAEL'S WAR ON GAZA

# Infrastructure damage in besieged Gaza

October 7, 2023 - October 27, 2024

**2.3 million**  
total population

**47%**  
are children



**87%**  
of housing  
units are  
damaged



**80%**  
of commercial  
facilities  
damaged



**68%**  
of cropland  
area  
damaged



**17 of 36**  
hospitals  
partially  
functional



**68%**  
of road networks  
damaged



**87%**  
of school buildings  
damaged



Source: WHO, OCHA | Updated: October 27, 2024

@AJLabs



International organizations play a pivotal role in mediating, containing, and resolving conflicts like the one in Gaza. Through several resolutions and peace initiatives, including the Oslo Accords, the UN has tried to arbitrate a settlement between Israel and Palestine. The EU has always been the largest international donor to the Palestinian people and often acts as a diplomatic intermediary. Almost €400 million in emergency financial support has been



disbursed. Most of the EU members stopped arms sales to Israel, like Spain, however some countries like Germany didn't. For example the United Kingdom has given Israel substantial military and political support since the start of the Gaza War on October 7, 2023. A new £17 million plan to aid thousands of citizens in the Occupied Palestinian Territories has been announced by England's Ministry of Development. It is also safe to say that the United States has been a big supporter of Israel. The United States has contributed almost \$22 billion to Israel's military actions since October 7, 2023, including those in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria. The US has delivered over 50,000 tons of weapons worth \$2.4 billion. In addition to financial and military aid, the U.S. provides large-scale political support for Israel.

## **G. Major Parties Involved**

- **Israel:** Israel is one of the principal parties in this conflict and maintains a close strategic, political, and military relationship with the United States. It is the only country in the Middle East with a Jewish majority population. Due to its geographical location and stability, Israel has served as a key regional ally for the United States and plays a central role in Western policy and influence in the Middle East.
- **Palestine:** Palestine is the other main party in the conflict. Since 2007, the Gaza Strip has been under the de facto control of Hamas, an Islamist political and militant group that is designated as a terrorist organization by countries including the United States, the European Union, and Israel. Hamas took control of Gaza after ousting the Palestinian Authority (PA), which still governs parts of the West Bank. Hamas does not recognize the state of Israel and has engaged in armed resistance against it, contributing significantly to the ongoing violence in the region.
- **USA:** The United States is one of the most influential external actors in this conflict. It has long been Israel's strongest ally, providing substantial military aid and political support. The U.S. has also played a role in peace negotiations, although its perceived partiality has been a point of contention among other international actors. Furthermore, The United States has consistently used its veto power in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to block resolutions critical of Israel, particularly those addressing military actions in Gaza. As one of the five permanent members of

the UNSC, the U.S. holds the power to veto any resolution, preventing it from being adopted even if it has majority support. This has helped shield Israel from international diplomatic and legal consequences, limiting the ability of the UN to impose sanctions or demand accountability. One key example is the December 18, 2017, UNSC resolution that sought to reaffirm the international consensus on the status of Jerusalem and reject any changes to its recognized borders, following the U.S. decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem. The resolution received 14 votes in favor, but the U.S. vetoed it, preventing its adoption. More recently, the U.S. has repeatedly vetoed ceasefire resolutions during escalations in Gaza, arguing that they are one-sided or do not sufficiently address Israeli security concerns. By using its veto, the U.S. ensures that Israel remains protected from binding UN actions, such as sanctions or peacekeeping interventions, allowing it greater freedom in its military operations. This diplomatic shield also limits Palestine's ability to gain full UN recognition and weakens international efforts to hold Israel accountable under international law.

- **UK:** The United Kingdom has played a historically significant role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It controlled the region under the British Mandate for Palestine from 1920 to 1948, a period that shaped much of the region's modern political landscape. British policies during this time, including the Balfour Declaration, contributed to the complex dynamics that persist today.
- **UNRWA:** UNRWA plays a crucial role in supporting Palestinian civilians, particularly refugees affected by the conflict. Its services include education, healthcare, relief and social services, infrastructure development, and emergency humanitarian aid. The agency operates in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria, and continues to be a lifeline for millions of displaced Palestinians.

## H. Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
27 Dec 2008 – 18 Jan 2009	Operation Cast Lead: Israeli offensive in Gaza.

8 July – 26 Aug 2014	Operation Protective Edge: 50-day war in Gaza.
10 – 21 May 2021	May conflict: Escalation between Israel and Hamas.
7 Oct 2023	Hamas attacks southern Israel; Israel declares war.
9 Oct 2023 – present	Israeli operations in Gaza continue with high civilian impact.
18 Oct 2023	Al-Ahli Hospital blast in Gaza; global protests erupt.
8 Dec 2023	UNSC resolution calling for ceasefire vetoed by the US.
Mar 2024 – early 2025	Ceasefire talks ongoing amid worsening humanitarian crisis.

## J. Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue and Relevant UN Treaties

- Oslo Accords:** The Oslo Accords are a pair of interim agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). They consist of the Oslo I Accord, signed in Washington, D.C., in 1993 and the Oslo II Accord, signed in Taba, Egypt, in 1995. They marked the start of the Oslo process, a peace process aimed at achieving a peace treaty based on Resolution 242 and Resolution 338 of the United Nations Security Council. The Oslo Accords was the creation of the Palestinian National Authority, which was tasked with the responsibility of conducting limited Palestinian self-governance over parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; and the international acknowledgement of the PLO as Israel's partner in permanent-status negotiations about any remaining issues revolving around the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.
- Previous Ceasefires:** Over the years, several ceasefires have been brokered between Israel and Hamas, yet each has failed to bring lasting peace due to unresolved core issues. The 2008–2009 ceasefire, following Operation Cast Lead, was declared unilaterally by Israel and later echoed by Hamas. Mediated by Egypt, it quickly broke down due to ongoing blockades, rocket fire, and mutual distrust. In 2014, after the 50-day Operation Protective Edge, another Egyptian-brokered ceasefire called for easing the blockade on Gaza and expanding the fishing zone. However, deeper political issues, such as Hamas’ disarmament and Gaza’s reconstruction, were left unresolved, leading to continued tensions. The 2021 ceasefire, ending 11 days of intense fighting, was informally mediated by Egypt, Qatar, and the UN. While it temporarily halted violence, it lacked concrete agreements and follow-up mechanisms, resulting in recurring escalations. Most recently, the 2025 ceasefire, brokered again by Egypt with support from the UN and the US, aims to provide humanitarian aid and restore basic services in Gaza. Yet like the previous ones, it

faces major obstacles such as deep political divides, security concerns, and the absence of a long-term peace framework—casting doubt on its sustainability.

- **ICJ Case by South Africa:** The Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel) is an ongoing case that was brought before the International Court of Justice on 29 December 2023 by South Africa regarding Israel's conduct in the Gaza Strip during the Israel-Hamas conflict, that resulted in a humanitarian crisis and mass killings.
  
- **Relevant GA resolutions:** These resolutions from the UN General Assembly, which address topics including human rights, the siege, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the humanitarian situation in Gaza, demonstrate the concern of the international community for the current state of affairs. The General Assembly has been more active in approving resolutions pertaining to Gaza, despite the fact that they are not legally binding, whilst the UNSC frequently has political deadlock. By highlighting the necessity of international intervention, the protection of civilians, and the pursuit of peace and self-determination, these resolutions offer Palestinians moral and political support. Here are some examples:
  - UNGA Resolution 194 (III) (1948) – Adopted on December 11, 1948: Called for the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes or receive compensation.
  - UNGA Resolution 67/19 (2012) – Adopted on November 29, 2012: Upgraded Palestine's status to a non-member observer state at the UN.
  - UNGA Emergency Special Sessions on Gaza (2023–2024): Passed resolutions calling for an immediate ceasefire and humanitarian aid access, though they were non-binding.

## K. Questions to be Answered

- How has the international community responded to civilian casualties and destruction in Palestine?
- What measures can be taken to ensure better protection of civilians in conflict zones?
- How can humanitarian aid be delivered more effectively despite restrictions and blockades?

- What role do international courts and organizations play in addressing alleged 'war crimes'? How could they be more efficient?
- How can the international community ensure the safe and efficient delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza amid the ongoing blockade and restrictions?
- How might worldwide advocacy efforts be organized to draw attention to the Gaza humanitarian catastrophe and secure backing from other countries?
- What can be done to protect Gaza's cultural heritage and religious sites, which are often damaged or destroyed in conflicts?
- What are the best strategies for getting governments and the general public around the world to support Palestinian rights and a long-term peace process?
- How can we ensure the protection of women and children in Gaza, particularly in times of conflict, and address their unique needs for safety and support?
- How can the international community help Gaza rebuild its infrastructure, such as electricity, water, and telecommunication, which have been severely damaged during conflicts?
- What steps can be taken to improve access to education for Palestinian children in Gaza, and how can the international community support local schools and universities?
- How can we create an environment in Gaza that fosters dialogue and peace-building between Palestinian groups, Israeli authorities, and international stakeholders?
- How can the United Nations' monitoring or peacekeeping efforts be used to guarantee that Israelis and Palestinians in Gaza uphold human rights?

## L. Further Reading

- Al Jazeera English. (2024, October 3). *Investigating war crimes in Gaza I Al Jazeera Investigations* [Video].

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- Al Jazeera English. (2024a, September 29). *How Israel's man-made famine is killing Palestinians | Starving Gaza | Fault Lines Documentary* [Video]. YouTube.

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- UNRWA Situation Report #165 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem | UNRWA

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<https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-44124396>

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Gaza war deaths exceed 44 thousand, over 13 thousand children

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/world/news/2024-11/gaza-war-deaths-exceed-44-thousand-over-13-thousand-children.html>

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Over 1.8 million in Gaza face extreme hunger - UN News  
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Gaza: Lack of clean water brings disease and suffering

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