

ACI'25 MUN



ANTALYA PRIVATE ACI COLLEGE MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE 2025

SPECPOL

AGENDA ITEM:

ONGOING CONFLICTS IN MENA REGION

UNDERSECRETARY GENERAL:
BEDIRHAN CURA

Table of Content

Letter from Secretary-General

Letter from Under-Secretary-General

Afghan War (1978-1992)

Riot against Communism

After 1992

Deaths and Backfires

Another War in Afghanistan

Background of Taliban Takeover

- Taliban Takeover in 2021
- War Crimes in The Region
- Evacuation of Foreign Staff

UN Involvement Regarding Afghanistan Conflict

Background to Syrian Civil War

What is the Syrian Civil War?

- How Did It Begin?
- Major Groups in The War
- Syrian Civil War
- Uprising
- Civil War

Dethronement of Bessar Esad

Palestine-Israel Conflict

- Background
- Recent Developments
- Hamas

Questions to be Addressed

Letter from Secretary-General

First of all, let me extend a huge and warm welcome to all of the participants to the very first official session of Private Açı High School Model United Nations Conference of 2025, which will be held in Antalya from September 2nd to 4th!

I, Yasemin Raithel, as the Secretary-General of this well-planned and coordinated conference, it is my immense pleasure to be able to present this organization with this position. I sincerely wish you a fulfilling and thriving one. Model United Nations Conferences are not just a conference, you have a wonderful opportunity to level-up your knowledge of international relations and today's issues, gaining confidence whilst being a representative in the committees. Especially, members of the Academic Team; our Under-Secretary Generals, Academic Assistants and Board Members are the best you could ever ask for in Antalya society. Each of our committees are carefully selected for you to have the best experience ever. From advanced committees to beginner ones.

My utmost gratitude to the Principals and Teachers of our school, their effort and guidance made this conference possible. Moreover, I want to thank every single attendee of AÇIMUN'25, particularly our Academic and Organization Teams, who worked hard and served their best. Also a special appreciation goes to the only other person of the Executive Team, his organization skills are beyond any measure.

Last but not least, I want to leave a quote from Founder Father of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk:

Turkish Youth, your first duty is to preserve and to defend Turkish Independence and the Turkish Republic forever. This is the very foundation of your existence and your future. This foundation is your most precious treasure.

Lastly, whether you are a first timer delegate or an experienced member of ours, I wish everyone a marvelous experience and success during the conference. Hope to see you soon!

Sincerely,

Yasemin RAITHEL

Secretary-General of AÇIMUN'25

Letter from Under-Secretary-General

My lovely delegates,

My name is Bedirhan CURA, and I am honored to be your Under-Secretary-General for the SPECPOL committee in this incredible conference.

I truly hope we will be able to produce some meaningful and educational debates throughout our four days together. I will be assisting you in any way that I possibly can, as I have always done with my previous delegates and committees.

Our agenda item is vast and does not really have a breaking point, since all the problems that I have clarified in this guide are results of many cultural, social, and economical differences in the region, but then again, differences are enough to create conflict around the globe in these days.

Most of the guide is specifically chosen, written, and explained, but I strongly recommend you to conduct your own research regarding the Palestine-Israel conflict since I have left out some information knowingly. The reason why I did this is to raise awareness about what is happening in Gaza, to Palestinian people, and to show you what kind of monstrous acts the Israeli government commits. I can promise that when you read those articles about the conditions in Gaza and those acts, you will not be able to forget it, and sadly, that is the best way to etch this into your brains. Nevertheless, I am able to provide you with every little bit of information regarding this conflict, so I will be helping you throughout the committee.

Before concluding, I would like to express my gratitude towards the executive board of this conference, Yasemin RAITHEL and Mert SÜRÜCÜ, for giving me the opportunity of being an Under-Secretary-General for this conference, since I have missed being one.

Those who are in need of guidance regarding this committee and study guide, can contact me in any way possible, I will return to you when I am available.

Kindest Regards

Bedirhan CURA

Under-Secretary-General

-Afghan War (1978-1992)

The internal battle between anti-communist Islamic guerrillas and the Afghan communist government (supported in 1979–89 by Soviet soldiers), started in 1978 and resulted in the collapse of the government in 1992. In a broader sense, the phrase also refers to military operations in Afghanistan after 1992, excluding the Afghanistan War (2001–14), an invasion spearheaded by the United States in retaliation for the September 11 attacks on the country in 2001. By this broader definition, many commentators believe that the U.S.-led Afghanistan War overlaps with the internal Afghan War and continues well into the 21st century.

-Riot against Communism

The left-wing military officers led by Nur Mohammad Taraki overthrew President Mohammad Daud Khan's centrist administration in April 1978, sparking the start of the conflict. Following the coup, the People's (Khalq) Party and the Banner (Parcham) Party, two Marxist-Leninist political parties that had previously split from the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and came back together in a shaky coalition, shared power. The new administration, which received little popular support, developed strong links with the Soviet Union, initiated harsh purges of any internal opposition, and started significant land and social reforms that were fiercely opposed by the fervently Muslim and predominately anti-communist population.

Both tribal and urban organizations began to rebel against the government, and all of these groups commonly referred to as the mujahideen (Arabic: mujahidin, "those who engage in jihad"), were Islamic. The Soviet Union invaded the country in December 1979, sending in about 30,000 troops, and toppling the short-lived presidency of People's leader Hafizullah Amin. This invasion was sparked by these uprisings as well as internal fighting and coup attempts within the government between the People's and Banner factions. The Soviet operation's goal was to support their newly established but ailing client state, now led by Banner commander Babrak Karmal, but in reaction, the mujahideen uprising intensified and extended to the entire nation. The Afghan army was initially tasked by the Soviets with quelling the uprising, but it was beset by rampant desertion and remained essentially ineffective throughout the conflict.

The Afghan Conflict immediately settled down into an impasse, with around 100,000 Soviet soldiers controlling the urban communities, bigger towns, and significant posts and the Mujahideen moving with relative opportunity all through the open country. The insurgency was subdued by Soviet troops using a variety of strategies, but the guerrillas generally resisted. The

Soviets then bombed and depopulated rural areas to eliminate Mujahideen's civilian support. A massive exodus from the countryside was sparked by these strategies; By 1982, 1.5 million Afghans had fled to Iran and 2.8 million had sought refuge in Pakistan. The Mujahideen were ultimately ready to kill Soviet air power using shoulder-terminated anti-aircraft rockets provided by the Soviet Association's enemy, the US.

Politically, the mujahideen were divided into a small number of distinct groups, and their military efforts were not coordinated throughout the war. However, as experience and a large number of weapons and other war supplies were delivered to the rebels via Pakistan by the United States, other nations, and sympathetic Muslims from around the world, the quality of their weapons and combat organization gradually improved. In addition, an indeterminate number of Muslim volunteers joined the opposition from all over the world, and they were referred to as "Afghan Arabs," regardless of their ethnicity.

The war in Afghanistan became a mess for the Soviet Union, which was falling apart by the end of the 1980s. (15,000 people were killed and many more were injured by the Soviets.) The Soviet Union agreed to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in 1989, and the United States, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Afghanistan returned to nonaligned status. The communist president Najibullah, who had succeeded Karmal in 1986, was overthrown in April 1992 when several rebel groups and newly rebellious government troops stormed the besieged capital of Kabul.

-After 1992

The Islamic republic was declared by a transitional government supported by various rebel groups, but the celebration was brief. By the power-sharing agreement reached by the new government, President Burhanuddin Rabbani, leader of the Islamic Society (Jamiyyat-e Eslm), a significant mujahideen organization, refused to resign. The Islamic Party (ezb-e Eslm), led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and other mujahideen groups surrounded Kabul and began shelling the city with artillery and rockets. Over the following several years, as the countryside outside of Kabul descended into chaos, these attacks persisted on an irregular basis.

Mostly as a reaction, the Taliban (Pashto: " Students"), an Islamic puritanical group led by Mohammad Omar, a former mujahideen commander, emerged in the fall of 1994 and gradually seized control of the country, occupying Kabul in 1996. The Taliban soon controlled all of northern Afghanistan, with the exception of a small portion held by a loose coalition of mujahideen forces known as the Northern Alliance. The Taliban were augmented by volunteers from various Islamic extremist groups hiding in Afghanistan, many of whom were Afghan-Arab

veterans of the previous conflict. The Taliban refused the United States' requests in 2001 to extradite Saudi Arabian exile Osama bin Laden, leader of the Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda, which had close ties to the Taliban and was accused of having launched terrorist attacks against the United States, including the group of devastating strikes on September 11. Fighting continued at a standstill until 2001. After that, Northern Alliance fighters and U.S. special operations forces launched a series of military operations in Afghanistan that drove the Taliban from power by the beginning of December. See War in Afghanistan.) A republic was established in 2004 after a period of the transitional interim government, but the new government struggled well into the 21st century to secure centralized authority over the country in opposition to the powerful Taliban insurgency.

-Deaths and Backfires

Since Afghanistan has never conducted a comprehensive census, it is difficult to estimate the number of casualties since the beginning of the fighting. Prior to 1992, the best available estimates indicate that approximately 1.5 million Afghans were killed; however, the precise numbers of those killed during combat and those killed as a direct result of the conflict remain a mystery. Even less accurate is the rate of casualties after 1992. Fighting between factions directly resulted in the deaths of many thousands; Tribal, ethnic, or religious rivals carried out the executions of hundreds or thousands of prisoners and civilians; what's more, an enormous number of soldiers — and a few noncombatants — were killed during the U.S. offensive. In addition, hundreds of thousands were killed or injured by the country's numerous land mines and tens of thousands died from starvation and a variety of diseases, many of which could have been easily treated in times of less turmoil. By the end of the 20th century, Afghanistan was one of the countries with the most mines in the world, and the countryside was littered with a lot of unexploded ammunition.) With the fighting, the number of Afghan refugees living abroad changed over time and peaked at six million in the late 1980s.

Another War in Afghanistan

A conflict that took place from 2001 to 2021 in the South-Central Asian country of Afghanistan. It began when the U.S. and its allies invaded Afghanistan and toppled the Taliban-ruled Islamic Emirate. The war ended with the Taliban regaining power after almost 20 years long insurgency against allied NATO and Afghan Armed Forces.

After the 9/11 attacks in 2001, US President Bush demanded the extradite of Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind of the attacks. Taliban refused this demand and this refusal led to an invasion of

the country. The Taliban and their al-Qaeda allies were mostly defeated and expelled. However, they could not catch Osama bin Laden after he fled to Pakistan. The US and a coalition of 40 countries, including all NATO, formed UN sanctioned security mission called ISAF. ISAF's main purpose was to create a new democratic government in the country and to prevent the Taliban's and al-Qaeda's return to power.

Taliban reorganized under Mullah Omar and in 2003 launched an insurgency against the new Afghan Government. Insurgents from the Taliban and other groups waged asymmetric warfare. There were guerilla raids, ambushes, suicide attacks against urban targets, and more. Eventually, violence raised to an enormous point and most of Afghanistan had been retaken by 2007.

NATO leaders devised a plan to withdraw their troops after bin Laden was killed in 2011. ISAF operations in Afghanistan were officially halted on December 28, 2014, and the Afghan government was given full security authority. The government of President Ashraf Ghani turned to diplomacy to end the conflict after repeatedly failing to eliminate the Taliban. As a result of these efforts, the United States and the Taliban reached a conditional peace agreement in Doha in February 2020, requiring the withdrawal of American troops by April 2021.

The deadline for the US withdrawal was extended to August 31. During the summer, following the expiration of the initial deadline and the troop withdrawal, the Taliban launched a large-scale offensive attack in Afghanistan. They finally conquered Kabul on August 15, 2021.

After 2001, the United Nations said that more than 5.7 million former refugees came back to the country. However, due to the renewed attacks by the Taliban in 2021, 2.6 million Afghans are still refugees or have left the country, and another 4 million Afghans are still displaced internally within the country.

*ISAF, International Security Assistance Force

Background of Taliban Takeover

In accordance with the US-Taliban agreement between the United States and the Taliban, the Afghan government freed more than 5,000 Taliban inmates in September 2020, including 400 who had been indicted or found guilty of serious offenses like murder. The National Security Council of Afghanistan claims that many of the "expert" inmates who were freed later returned to the field of war and helped the Taliban get the upper hand. By the time of the Taliban's final onslaught, the majority of the provincial governors in Afghanistan had made agreements with the terrorists to change their allegiance and join the Taliban. The Taliban have recruitment teams that

approach Afghan authorities and pressure them to join the Taliban, according to a senior official from the Afghan Interior Ministry who was reported by the Washington Post.

-Taliban Takeover in 2021

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, based in Kabul, was overthrown by a military offensive launched by the Taliban insurgent group and other allied militants. This marked the end of the nearly two-decades-long War in Afghanistan, which had begun with the United States invasion of the country. Regarding human rights and the spread of terrorism, the victory of the Taliban had wide-ranging domestic and international repercussions. Following the US–Taliban agreement in February 2020, the offensive included a continuation of the bottom-up series of negotiated or paid surrenders to the Taliban from the village level up.

The United States and other international allies' withdrawal from Afghanistan on May 1, 2021, coincided with the start of the offensive. In defense, the Afghan Army recruited former warlords like Ismail Khan as well as a large number of armed civilians, including women. Despite this, the Taliban made significant territorial gains in the countryside. In the first three months of the offensive, they increased the number of districts they controlled from 73 to 223. The Taliban launched an assault on the provincial capitals on August 6, and most of the towns gave up without a fight. On August 13, they won the battles of major cities Herat, Kandahar, and Lashkargah, which lasted for weeks. President Ashraf Ghani left the country on August 15, and the Taliban took over Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, without any resistance; As a result, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan was reestablished and the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was overthrown. Many governments, including those of the United States and its allies, Russia, and others, were surprised by the speed with which the Taliban took control.

Before May 2021, factors included the Taliban's efficient use of online social media, its strategic decision to attack northern provinces, and the Taliban's freedom of movement on the main Afghan highways as a result of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) adhering to the US-recommended strategy of sacrificing rural areas to defend key urban centers. The abrupt removal of technical, proprietary software and logistics support, particularly aerial support, that the ANSF had been trained to rely on, in February 2020 and April 2021 were factors in the ANSF's defeat by the Taliban. In addition to Afghan police extorting locals and military officers to fund themselves by inventing ghost soldiers and the months of unpaid ANSF salaries that followed the April 2021 switch in ANSF salary management to Afghan military administration, errors in US coalition training of the ANSF were considered a factor. The ANSF's defeat was

also attributed to cronyism in military appointments and Ashraf Ghani's inability to achieve national consensus and persuade local warlords. In addition, Afghans are more devoted to their traditional ethnic, tribal, and even familial ties than they are to a Kabul-based central government, which the provincial Taliban commanders used as leverage to negotiate the surrender of numerous troops. In the long run, the Taliban's resurgence in the middle to late 2000s has also been linked to the American invasion of Iraq and its shift in focus to that region.

* ANSF- Afghanistan National Security Force

-War Crimes in The Region

In its 2021 attack, the Taliban perpetrated a number of war crimes.

22 unarmed Afghan Special Forces commandos were killed on June 16 in Dawlat Abad while attempting to turn themselves into Taliban fighters. A video of the incident went viral and was shown on CNN. The incident was referred to as "the cold-blooded murder of surrendering soldiers - a war crime" by Samira Hamidi of Amnesty International. She demanded that the incident be looked at as part of the Afghan probe by the International Criminal Court.

On July 8, Afghan soldiers put an Afghan villager to death by forcing him to sit on an IED before it exploded. Afghan police and anti-Taliban militia accused the victim, who went by the name Barakatullah, of assisting the Taliban. Barakatullah's father denied that his son collaborated with the Taliban. The incident was recorded and shared on TikTok, and it occurred south of Sharana, the provincial capital of Paktika. The video was confirmed and geographically located by the France 24 Observers team. A spokesperson for the Afghan Ministry of defense, Fawad Aman, denied the existence of any such incident. Naseeb Zadran, an Afghan journalist, stated that this is not an isolated incident and demonstrates the Afghan army's impunity. Danish Siddiqui, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for Reuters, was killed by the Taliban on July 16 in the province of Kandahar. After the journalist's body was turned over to the Red Cross, health officials from India and Afghanistan said that the Taliban had badly mutilated Danish Siddiqui's body.

Following the Taliban's takeover of Spin Boldak District in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, on July 22, it was reported that gunmen killed at least 100 people in the district. The killings were attributed to the Taliban by the Afghan government. Human rights groups have also laid the blame on the Taliban for a string of retaliatory killings in Kandahar province that targeted people who were close to General Abdul Razakzai.

One person died and three were injured when the Afghan Air Force bombed a small private hospital in the city of Lashkargah on August 1. According to the hospital's proprietor, the Afghan Air Force targeted his establishment because they mistakenly believed that the Taliban were receiving medical care there. The proprietor denied that his hospital's staff had been reduced as a result of the city's intense fighting and denied that Taliban fighters were receiving treatment there.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the murder of Dawa Khan Menapal, Kabul's head of the government's media and information center, on August 5. Human rights activist Laal Gul Laal stated that the Taliban's execution of 30 soldiers was a war crime on the same day that they took control of Zaranj. TOLONews claims that the Taliban killed some of the soldiers after torturing them and removing their eyes.

Amnesty International cited the killing of Hazara by the Taliban in Ghazni province at the beginning of July as a "horrific indicator" for the future on August 20. One of the Hazara men was strangled by his own scarf and had his arm muscles cut off, while another had his body shot to pieces. The Hazara men were tortured and shot to death in a variety of ways.

-Evacuation of Foreign Staff

On August 12, just a few hours after Herat* fell, the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom made public their plans to send 3,000 and 600 of their troops, respectively, to the Kabul airport to ensure that their citizens, embassy workers, and Afghan civilians who worked with the coalition forces would be flown out of the country by air. The first deployment, according to officials, would begin within the next 24 to 48 hours and be completed by the month's end. The plan, according to those sources, was to use charter aircraft for the evacuation at the Kabul airport, which at the time allowed commercial aircraft to fly. Military aircraft, on the other hand, would be used if that was not possible. The British government says that the evacuation and when it would take place had been planned for a long time, but an Afghan official says that the timing was changed because the security situation was rapidly getting worse. Notwithstanding the 3,000 US troops, 3,500 extra will be on backup in Kuwait on the off chance that the circumstance raises to an equipped struggle with the Taliban. The Canadian

embassy in Kabul, which houses Afghan families who have previously collaborated with Canadian personnel, will be evacuated by Canadian special forces units, according to an announcement made by Canada. The governments of Denmark and Norway announced that their embassies in Kabul would be closed due to security concerns and that they would proceed with plans to evacuate their diplomatic staff and Afghans who worked alongside them.

*Herat is the third largest city of Afghanistan and an oasis city.

UN Involvement Regarding Afghanistan Conflict

The United States was given permission by the Security Council toward the end of 2001 to overthrow the Taliban government as part of an offensive against the terrorist organization al-Qaeda, which is believed to be based in the country.

The United States and its NATO allies were also given permission by the Council to establish the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to provide military support for a newly established pro-Western government (the United States also continued to run a separate military operation against terrorists). The Council created the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) in March 2002 to oversee all UN relief, recovery, and reconstruction efforts. Afghanistan has remained a "failed state" in spite of these military-centered initiatives or perhaps because of them. Warlords have regained control of the majority of the country, opium is now the primary agricultural crop, and President Hamid Karzai's authority barely extends beyond the suburbs of Kabul.

In 2007 and 2008, the Taliban experienced an increase in military success, and a number of NATO nations have expressed concern regarding the operation's political viability. In nations like Germany and Canada, public support for deployments to Afghanistan has vanished. The media have reported on the US-UK airstrikes on innocent civilians and the brazen Taliban attacks on US and NATO forces, implying that the intervention is not bringing about the prosperity, democracy, and safety that it has promised.

An election operation run by the United Nations is collaborating with Afghan authorities to register voters and plan for the 2009 and 2010 elections. The promotion of good governance and the rule of law, police training, and other similar initiatives are additional efforts. However, in a nation ravaged by violence, warlordism, drug production, and a high level of foreigner suspicion, these programs appear implausible and highly unlikely to be successful. There can be no hope of electoral or other progress in Afghanistan until the country establishes a peace that lasts and is stable, as planned and supported by Afghans.

Background to Syrian Civil War

What is the Syrian Civil War?

The long-running dynastic administration of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is at war with pro-democracy revolutionaries in what is known as the Syrian Civil War. Since 2011, the war has contributed significantly to the instability in the Middle East, and the subsequent displacement of civilians and refugee flight has created one of the worst humanitarian disasters in contemporary history.

How Did It Begin?

Syria experienced the worst drought in modern times from 2006 to 2010. The first nonviolent pro-reform rallies, which rode the wave of the Arab Spring events, began in 2011, as a result of the consequences of the drought and underlying economic imbalances under the Assad administration. The Sunni majority and the ruling Alawite elite were divided, which was another contributing cause. Tensions increased as a result of the regime's severe military repression, and by September 2011, the unarmed insurgency had replaced the peaceful protests.

Major Groups in The War

The Syrian Civil War involves a number of sides. The Syrian Arab Army (SAA), which has fought alongside Hezbollah and many Shi'i militias, is under the command of President Bashar al-Assad. Russia and Iran both provided him with backing from abroad. The Southern Front, the predominantly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces, and a group of SAA defectors make up the insurgent forces. Western nations like the United States and Germany have backed these organizations. The region is supported by Saudi Arabia, Israel, Jordan, Turkey, and Jordan. While opposing the Assad administration, Islamist militant groups like ISIL and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham have fought alongside conventional insurgents.

Syrian Civil War

Pro-democracy demonstrations broke out all across Syria in March 2011, posing an unprecedented threat to President Bashar al-Assad. The authoritarian policies of the Assad dictatorship, in effect since Assad's father, Hafiz al-Assad, was elected president in 1971, were called for by protesters. The Syrian government violently put down protests, using cops, soldiers, and paramilitary groups in large numbers. In 2011, opposition militias started to emerge, and by 2012, the crisis had fully descended into civil war. Britannica investigates the historical background of the civil war and offers an introduction to the fighting in this special feature.

Uprising

The Syrian President in January 2011 In an interview with The Wall Street Journal, Bashar al-Assad was asked if he thought the wave of popular protest that was sweeping through the Arab world at the time, which had already toppled authoritarian rulers in Tunisia and Egypt, would reach Syria. Despite the fact that many Syrians were experiencing financial difficulties and that political reform had been slow and stalled, Assad was confident that Syria would be spared because his administration's stance of opposition to Israel and the United States aligned with the beliefs of the Syrian people, whereas the leaders who had already been ousted had pursued a pro-Western foreign policy in defiance of their people's feelings.

The beginning of antiregime fights, coming only half a month after the meeting, clarified that Assad's circumstances had been considerably more unsafe than he was ready to concede. In point of fact, the nation was experiencing instability as a result of a number of enduring issues with its political and economic system. When Assad became president in 2000, he had a reputation for modernizing and reforming the country. However, the majority of the hopes that were raised by Assad's presidency were not realized. Assad revived the authoritarian strategies of his late father's administration in politics, including pervasive censorship, surveillance, and brutal

violence against suspected regime opponents. A brief shift toward greater participation was quickly reversed. Additionally, Assad oversaw significant economic liberalization in Syria, which primarily benefited a network of crony capitalists with ties to the regime. Therefore, on the eve of the uprising, society in Syria remained extremely repressive, with ever-increasing disparities in wealth and privilege.

The crisis in the environment also contributed to the uprising in Syria. The worst drought in Syria's modern history occurred between 2006 and 2010. A mass exodus of rural residents to urban shantytowns was prompted by the poverty that swept through hundreds of thousands of farming families.

It was in the ruined dry spell that struck the rustic territory of Dar'ā, in southern Syria, that the principal significant fights happened in Walk 2011. The government had detained and tortured a group of children for writing anti-regime graffiti; angered nearby individuals took to the road to exhibit for political and financial changes. As a harsh response, security forces made a lot of arrests and sometimes fired at protesters. The regime's violent response increased the protesters' visibility and momentum, prompting the emergence of nonviolent protests in cities across the nation within weeks. Mobile phone footage of witnesses beating and firing at protesters was distributed across the nation and smuggled out to foreign media outlets.

The uprising and the regime's response were religiously motivated from the beginning. While the ruling Assad family belonged to the country's Alawite minority, many of the protesters belonged to the Sunni majority. Alawites also controlled the irregular militias and security forces, which committed some of the worst acts of violence against protesters and suspected regime opponents. However, sectarian divisions were not as rigid at first as is sometimes believed; Many middle- and working-class Alawites did not particularly benefit from belonging to the same community as the Assad family and may have shared some of the protesters' socioeconomic grievances with the political and economic elite with ties to the regime. The political and economic elite with ties to the regime included members of all of Syria's confessional groups—not just Alawites.

However, as the conflict progressed, sectarian divides became more pronounced. In his public explanations, Assad tried to depict the resistance as Sunni Islamic radicals in the shape of al-Qaeda and as members of unfamiliar tricks against Syria. The regime also made propaganda that made minorities more afraid that the Sunni opposition, which is mostly Sunni, would attack non-Sunni communities with violence.

The regime responded with greater force as the protests grew in size and strength. At times this implied circling urban areas or neighborhoods that had become centers of dissent, like Bāniyās or Homs, with tanks, gunnery, and assault helicopters and removing utilities and interchanges. Some protesters began to arm themselves against the security forces as a response. Thousands of

Syrian refugees fled to Turkey after Syrian tanks and troops entered the northern town of Jisr al-Shugr in June.

The global powers and Syria's regional neighbors had begun to divide into pro- and anti-Assad camps by the summer of 2011. As Assad's crackdown continued, the United States and the European Union became increasingly critical of him, and President In August 2011, several European heads of state and Barack Obama demanded his resignation. In the latter half of 2011, Qatar, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia formed an anti-Assad bloc. Soon after, sanctions were imposed against senior Assad regime members by the EU, the US, and the Arab League.

Iran and Russia, Syria's long-term allies, continued their support in the meantime. When Russia and China blocked a UN Security Council Resolution in October 2011 that would have condemned Assad's crackdown, it was an early sign of the international divisions and rivalries that would prolong the conflict.

Civil War

Armed clashes became increasingly common, and by September 2011, organized rebel militias were regularly engaging in combat with government troops in cities throughout Syria. Although it is impossible to pinpoint when the uprising turned from a primarily peaceful protest movement into a militarized rebellion, armed clashes became increasingly common. The Free Syrian Armed force, a dissident umbrella gathering framed by deserters from the Syrian armed force in July, guaranteed initiative over the outfitted resistance battling in Syria, yet its power was generally unnoticed by the nearby local armies.

A number of unsuccessful attempts by international organizations to end the conflict were made in late 2011 and early 2012. Toward the beginning of November 2011, Syrian authorities consented to a Bedouin Association drive requiring the Syrian government to stop viciousness against dissidents, eliminate tanks and shielded vehicles from urban communities, and delivery of political detainees. A delegation of Arab League monitors was granted permission to visit Syria in December 2011 to observe the plan's implementation. The onlooker mission immediately lost believability with the resistance as plainly insufficient screens and hardware had been sent and that the Syrian government had given the screens coordinated scenes and confined their developments. The Arab League called off the mission on January 28 due to worries about the monitors' safety.

A subsequent arrangement, this time facilitated by previous UN secretary-general Kofi Annan and supported by the UN and the Bedouin Association, created a short fractional truce in April 2012. However, violence soon returned and escalated, necessitating the withdrawal of the UN team of monitors for security reasons, just like the Arab League team before them.

The United Nations and the Arab League attempted to enlist the support of the international powers for a political solution to the conflict after achieving little success in establishing peace between the combatants themselves. The Geneva Communiqué, which served as a road map for negotiations to establish a transitional governing body for Syria, was produced in June 2012 at an international conference that was organized by the United Nations. However, this was left unspecified because the United States and Russia were unable to agree on whether Assad would be a part of a subsequent Syrian government.

By the beginning of 2012, it became clear that the opposition umbrella organization known as the Syrian National Council (SNC), which was established in August 2011 in Istanbul, was too small and weakened by internal conflict to effectively represent the opposition. The donor countries' efforts to prioritize their own agendas and maximize their influence over the opposition caused conflicts and prevented any one group from developing the stature to lead. As a result, crosscutting streams of support were the cause of much of the infighting. In November, Syrian opposition leaders announced the formation of a new coalition known as the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, following months of contentious diplomacy. Dutzende of nations acknowledged the coalition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people over the following month. The new organization still had the same divisions and rivalries that plagued the Syrian National Council.

The mid-year and fall of 2012 saw a line of strategic successes for the renegades. The rebels were able to take control of significant territory for the first time after the government troops were forced to withdraw from areas in the north and east. The largest city in Syria, Aleppo, was attacked by rebels in July, and they gained control of the eastern part of the city. However, the military situation appeared to be approaching an impasse by the beginning of 2013. Lack of organization, weaponry, and equipment prevented rebel fighters from firmly occupying northern regions. In the meantime, it appeared as though the government forces could not make significant gains because of the defections. In contested areas, daily fighting continued, increasing the number of civilian deaths.

The international allies of the Syrian government and the rebels stepped up their support, raising the possibility of a regional proxy war with no clear outcome. At the end of 2012 and 2013, efforts by Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey to support and arm rebels became increasingly public. A modest program to train and equip a few vetted rebel groups was eventually launched by the United States, which had been reluctant to send weapons out of concern that it might accidentally arm radical jihadists who would later turn against the West. Iran and the Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon continued to provide weapons to the Syrian government. Hezbollah had also begun sending its own fighters into Syria to fight the rebels by the end of 2012.

After hundreds of people were killed on August 21, 2013, in suspected chemical weapons attacks in Damascus suburbs, there were new calls for international military action in Syria. The Syrian resistance blamed supportive of Assad powers for having done the assaults. Syrian officials claimed that rebel forces were to blame for the use of chemical weapons and denied using chemical weapons. The leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France made it clear that they were contemplating retaliatory strikes against the Assad regime while UN weapons inspectors gathered evidence at the alleged sites of chemical attacks. Assad pledged to fight what he described as Western aggression, and Russia, China, and Iran opposed military action.

By the end of August, it became clear that majorities in both the United States and the United Kingdom were opposed to military intervention in Syria. This led to the possibility of an international military intervention in Syria beginning to fade. On August 29, a British Parliamentary motion to authorize strikes in Syria was defeated, and on September 10, a similar vote in the United States Congress was postponed. In the meantime, diplomacy took center stage, and on September 14, Russia, Syria, and the United States came to an agreement to control all of Syria's chemical weapons internationally. By the agreement's deadline, which was June 30, 2014, all declared chemical weapons had been removed from Syria.

As the non-Islamist groups faltered due to exhaustion and infighting, Islamist militants began to take center stage in 2013. The Nusra Front, an al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria, was generally regarded as one of the most effective fighting forces because it collaborated with a variety of other opposition groups. But a new group soon took its place: Al-Qaeda in Iraq's Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced in April 2013 that he would form the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) by combining his forces in Syria and Iraq. also referred to as ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria). He obviously planned for the Nusra Front to be essential for the new gathering under his order, yet the Nusra Front dismissed the consolidation, and the two gatherings wound up battling with one another.

ISIL took control of an area in the Euphrates Valley near the city of Al-Raqqah in eastern Syria. ISIL expanded to control a large portion of the land bordering Iraq and Syria from that point on, carrying out a series of successful operations in Syria and Iraq.

The international community's calls for action were heightened by ISIL's sudden advances in Iraq, which were accompanied by a steady stream of violent and provocative propaganda. In order to shield Christian and Yazd communities in northern Iraq and halt ISIL's advance into the autonomous Kurdish region, the United States launched air strikes on August 8. The strikes slowed the group's advance, but a series of videos showing ISIL fighters beheading journalists and aid workers in Western countries heightened concerns that the group posed a global threat.

The air campaign to attack ISIL targets in Syria was expanded on September 23 by the United States and a coalition of Arab countries.

Russia began to become more active in the conflict in the summer of 2015, deploying troops and military equipment to an air base near Latakia. Russia carried out its first air strikes against targets in Syria in September. At first, Russian officials claimed that the air strikes were directed at ISIL. However, it quickly became clear that, in order to support their ally, they were primarily targeting rebels fighting against Assad.

Russian and Syrian government forces launched an aggressive bombing campaign in the rebel-held eastern part of Aleppo after a brief cease-fire in September 2016 broke down between them and Western-backed rebels. In their efforts to subdue the rebels, Russian and Syrian forces made no effort to spare civilian lives; Cluster bombs and incendiary bombs were dropped indiscriminately by warplanes on medical facilities, search and rescue teams, and aid workers. Human rights groups condemned those actions, but they didn't stop until the rebels in Aleppo fell in December.

Dethronement of Bessar Esad

After his father, Hafez al-Assad, who controlled Syria for thirty years, passed away in 2000, Bashar al-Assad assumed power. Because of his Western education and experience in ophthalmology, Bashar was first seen as a reformer who could bring about change. Many Syrians anticipated he would liberalize the political system and modernize the nation. But his administration quickly adopted dictatorial policies reminiscent of his father's. The nation continued to operate under emergency law, which had been in effect since 1963, and political dissent was brutally put down. Despite some attempts at privatization, corruption, excessive unemployment, and rising inequality hampered Syria's economy and fueled popular unrest.

While managing relations with Western nations, Assad preserved Syria's ties with Iran and Hezbollah on the international front. Syria became increasingly isolated on the international scene in the 2000s, especially following the 2005 killing of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, which many blamed on Syria. Bashar's regime kept power at home with a massive security force and a patronage system, but as political stagnation and economic suffering created discontent, especially among disenfranchised rural and urban communities, cracks started to show.

Anti-government protests in Syria were triggered by the 2011 Arab Spring upheavals that swept over the Middle East and North Africa. At first, protesters demanded political changes, but the regime's brutal suppression of the demonstrations heightened tensions and sparked a full-scale civil war. Refusing to resign, Bashar al-Assad claimed that opposition groups were violent extremists and presented the war as a battle against terrorism. He was able to sustain support from important allies like Russia and Iran by using this narrative to defend ruthless military campaigns.

Syria's position worsened as the conflict grew more intense. One of the worst refugee crises in recent history resulted from the destruction of entire towns and the displacement of millions of Syrians. By using outside assistance and taking advantage of disagreements among the opposition, Assad managed to hold onto power in spite of international censure and sanctions. The use of chemical weapons, barrel bombs, and sieges against civilian populations were among the war crimes alleged against his regime. While some international leaders called for his resignation, others—such as Vladimir Putin of Russia—offered political and military support that was crucial in Assad's recovery of control over a sizable portion of the nation.

Even though his government has recaptured a large portion of Syria's land, the nation is still divided, with large areas controlled by Kurdish forces, factions supported by Turkey, and surviving opposition groups. Syria's economy is in ruins, with hyperinflation, widespread poverty, and infrastructural collapse. The Assad regime's reliance on Russia and Iran as allies is further cemented by the fact that it still depends mostly on their assistance to survive.

Although some regional actors have started to improve relations with Syria in recent years, Assad has suffered isolation from many Western and Arab nations on the international scene. Because of geopolitical complications, efforts to bring him accountable for alleged war crimes have mainly stopped. Even while Assad has held onto power, he is in charge of a nation in ashes with little chance of reconciliation or rehabilitation anytime soon. The damage caused by the war and his refusal to cede control, even at the expense of great human suffering, will probably define his legacy.

On December 8, 2024, the Bashar al-Assad administration collapsed after a ten-day onslaught executed by opposition forces, which commenced with the rebels' capture of Aleppo on November 30. The armed coalition was spearheaded by the Islamist militant organization Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and the Turkish-supported Syrian National Army (SNA). The upheaval concluded more than fifty years of the Assad family's governance in Syria. It disrupted four years of predominantly stagnant dynamics in the Syrian civil war, which has persisted since 2011. As the capital city, Damascus, fell to HTS and allied troops, ousted President Assad sought refuge in Moscow. During the offensive, rebels liberated captives of the Assad regime while

capturing further land. Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah—longstanding allies of Assad’s regime—did not provide substantial assistance to his Syrian Arab Army (SA) throughout the rebel offensive. The Kurdish-led Syrian Defense Forces (SDF), which govern portions of northeastern Syria, are simultaneously engaged in conflicts with Arab tribes that allege discrimination by the group, while Turkey and its affiliates persist in their assaults against Kurdish forces. The factionalized conflict has given space for the self-proclaimed Islamic State to establish a foothold and launch attacks. Furthermore, Israel consistently targets Iranian and Syrian military installations in Syria and has escalated its assaults, including raids on the airports in Damascus and Aleppo, following Hamas's attack on Israel in October 2023.

On February 6, 2023, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake and 7.5 magnitude aftershock devastated southeast Turkey and northwest Syria, representing one of the deadliest natural disasters of this century. Estimates in May 2023 estimated the death toll at around 60,000, with 50,700 dead in Turkey and 8,400 in Syria. Syria’s twelve years of violence have significantly handicapped its aid efforts—the president of the World Food Programme called the situation as a “catastrophe on top of catastrophe.” In Syria alone, the earthquake is estimated to have cost \$5.1 billion in losses.

Earthquake response activities were exacerbated by the territorial divisions originating from Syria’s civil war. Opposition troops hold the northwest part of Syria most damaged by the earthquake, and the Syrian government has long limited access to the region. Consequently, international help needs to be sanctioned by the Turkish government to transit the sole humanitarian aid corridor between Syria and Turkey, known as the Bab al-Hawa border. However, the earthquake badly damaged the roads linking Turkey to Syria, and the Turkish government was absorbed with its own relief efforts. The first United Nations supply convoy arrived Bab al-Hawa on Thursday, February 9. On Friday, February 10, the Syrian government declared it would allow permission to international relief groups to reach rebel-held areas of Syria, but did not provide a schedule for doing so.

In May 2023, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi met with President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus to strengthen economic cooperation—marking the first visit of an Iranian president to Syria since the conflict. Later same month, the Arab League voted to re-admit Syria after a twelve-year ban, despite the continuance of Western sanctions against President Assad’s regime that could prevent oil-rich Arab countries from investment in Syria. In July 2023, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudan discussed drug trafficking, the return of Syrian refugees, and the easing of the Western sanctions with President Assad in Damascus.

Throughout August 2023, the Syrian army was exposed to multiple Islamic State and Israeli military attacks. Attacks by Islamic State sleeper cells in Syria, especially in the vast desert territories they once controlled, have intensified during 2023. For example, a bus carrying Syrian soldiers in the eastern desert region of Deir Ezzor was ambushed by the Islamic State, killing

twenty-three. Meanwhile, an Israeli missile attack near Damascus in early August killed at least four Syrian soldiers and wounded four others. Although Israel has carried out attacks against what it has characterized as Iran-linked targets in Syria for years, the number and scope have grown following the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel. Since December, Israeli strikes in and around Damascus have killed more than half a dozen members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), among them one of Iran's senior intelligence officials.

Conversely, Iran-backed militia groups in Syria and Iraq that oppose Israel's assault in Gaza have targeted U.S. troops in the region at least 165 times since the Israel-Hamas War began. There are currently 900 U.S. forces stationed in Syria to prevent a revival of Islamic State operations. Since mid-October 2023, American bases in Iraq and Syria have been subject to attacks from these diverse factions. On November 23, U.S. and multinational soldiers in northeastern Syria and Iraq were targeted with drones and missiles four times in twenty-four hours. In February 2024, the U.S. conducted a series of retaliatory strikes following an attack in Jordan on a U.S. military station near the Syrian border that killed three U.S. soldiers. The strikes comprised more than eighty-five sites in Iraq and Syria, yet U.S. officials have signaled that these strikes were simply the start of their reaction. In reaction, Iran-backed militias have initiated a series of new raids on U.S. sites, with a drone strike in the eastern province of Deir el-Zour in Syria killing seven and wounding at least eighteen.

Palestine-Israel Conflict

Background

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict began toward the close of the 1800s. Resolution 181, also referred to as the Partition Plan, was enacted by the UN in 1947 with the intention of creating Arab and Jewish states out of the British Mandate of Palestine. The first Arab-Israeli War began on May 14, 1948, when the State of Israel was established. Israel won the war in 1949, but 750,000 Palestinians were forced to flee their homes, and the land was split into three sections: the Gaza Strip, the West Bank (of the Jordan River), and the State of Israel.

Tensions in the area increased during the ensuing years, especially between Israel and Jordan, Syria, and Egypt. In preparation for a potential Israeli army mobilization, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria signed mutual defense agreements after the 1956 Suez Crisis and Israel's invasion of the Sinai Peninsula. The Six-Day War began in June 1967 when Israel launched a preemptive strike

on the air forces of Egypt and Syria in response to a series of moves by Egyptian President Abdel Gamal Nasser. Following the war, Israel acquired the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt.

Anwar al-Sadat, the president of Egypt, declared the war a victory for Egypt because it allowed Egypt and Syria to negotiate over previously ceded territory. Six years later, in what is known as the Yom Kippur War or the October War, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise two-front attack on Israel to regain their lost territory. The conflict did not yield significant gains for Egypt, Israel, or Syria. The thirty-year struggle between Egypt and Israel came to an end in 1979 when delegates from Egypt and Israel signed the Camp David Accords, a peace accord that followed a series of cease-fires and peace talks.

The issue of Palestinian self-determination and self-governance remained unresolved despite the Camp David Accords' improvement of Israel's relations with its neighbors. The first intifada began in 1987 when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip rebelled against the Israeli authorities. A foundation for Palestinian self-governance in the West Bank and Gaza was established by the 1993 Oslo I Accords, which also made it possible for Israel's government and the newly formed Palestinian Authority to recognize each other. The Oslo II Accords, which were signed in 1995, added clauses requiring Israel to completely evacuate six cities and 450 communities in the West Bank.

Palestinian complaints about Israel's rule over the West Bank, a stalled peace process, and former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's September 2000 visit to the al-Aqsa mosque—the third-holiest place in Islam—were some of the factors that led to the start of the second intifada in 2000, which lasted until 2005. Despite criticism from the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, the Israeli government responded by authorizing the building of a barrier wall across the West Bank in 2002.

When Hamas defeated Fatah, the longtime majority party, in the 2006 parliamentary elections of the Palestinian Authority, factionalism among Palestinians erupted. As a result, Hamas, a militant and political organization influenced by the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, gained authority over the Gaza Strip. The semi-autonomous Palestinian Authority has ruled Gaza, a small region on the Mediterranean Sea that borders Egypt to the south, since 1993. Because Hamas has been viewed as a terrorist organization by western countries since the late 1990s, the United States and the European Union, among others, did not recognize the group's electoral triumph. Violence between Hamas and Fatah erupted after Hamas took control. After several fruitless peace negotiations and fatal clashes between 2006 and 2011, a reconciliation deal was reached. In 2014, Fatah and Hamas formed a unity government.

The Israeli military and Hamas engaged in combat in the summer of 2014 after confrontations in the Palestinian territories. Hamas fired around 3,000 rockets toward Israel, and Israel responded with a significant attack in Gaza. A cease-fire agreement mediated by Egypt brought the conflict to a conclusion in late August 2014, but only after 2,251 Palestinians and 73 Israelis were murdered. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah declared that the territorial borders established by the Oslo Accords will no longer bind Palestinians following a spate of violence between Israelis and Palestinians in 2015.

When some Palestinians broke through the perimeter fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip and threw rocks during a nonviolent protest in March 2018, Israeli soldiers killed 183 of them and injured 6,000 more. After Hamas militants launched more than 100 rockets into Israel a few months later, Israel launched a 24-hour flare-up in retaliation, striking more than fifty sites in Gaza. With Hamas de facto ruling the Gaza Strip and Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party running the Palestinian Authority from the West Bank, the difficult political climate led to a resurgence of animosity between the two groups.

By moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and cutting off money for the UN Relief and Works Agency, which aids Palestinian refugees, the Donald J. Trump administration reversed longtime U.S. policy. Additionally, the Trump administration facilitated the Abraham Accords, which normalized relations between Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, making them the third and fourth nations in the region to do so, after Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. Similar agreements were made with Sudan and Morocco. Both Hamas and Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas of Palestine rejected the accords.

Israeli police used force against protesters in early May 2021 following a court decision that supported the eviction of multiple Palestinian families from residences in East Jerusalem. Hamas, the militant organization that controls Gaza, and other Palestinian militant organizations fired hundreds of missiles into Israeli territory following many days of unrelenting fighting. More than 20 Palestinians were killed by Israel's artillery shelling and airstrikes in retaliation, which also damaged military and non-military infrastructure, such as homes, media offices, and refugee and medical centers. Both Israel and Hamas declared victory when they agreed to a cease-fire after eleven days. Over 250 Palestinians and at least 13 Israelis were killed in the conflict, while 72,000 Palestinians were displaced and nearly 2,000 others were injured.

In late December 2022, Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu and his Likud party, which included three far-right parties and two ultra-Orthodox parties, formed the most far-right and religious administration in Israel's history. The coalition government supported discrimination against LGBTQ+ people on the basis of their religion, prioritized the growth and development of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, and, following a delay caused by protests across the country in March, voted to restrict judicial oversight of the government in May 2023.

Recent Developments

Early in October 2023, Hamas militants launched rockets into Israel and unexpectedly overran southern Israeli cities and villages on the other side of the Gaza Strip, killing over 1,300 Israelis, wounding 3,300, and capturing hundreds more. The Israeli cabinet officially declared war on Hamas one day after the October 7 attack, and the defense minister then ordered the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to impose a "complete siege" of Gaza. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has escalated to its most important level in decades.

Alongside Israel's ongoing aerial attack, more than a million Palestinian inhabitants in northern Gaza were told to leave before a ground invasion began on October 27. A brief ceasefire from November 24 and November 30, 2023, allowed for a spike of humanitarian deliveries to the Strip and the exchange of some Israeli hostages for Palestinian detainees detained in Israeli prisons. However, after accusations of violations by both Israeli and Hamas soldiers surfaced, fighting resumed.

Israel indicated in January 2024 that it intended to switch to lower-intensity operations in Gaza in response to pressure from its main ally, the United States, and international criticism of the humanitarian situation in Gaza as well as concerns about the viability of totally eliminating Hamas. In order to get ready for a campaign in southern Gaza, which would include the city of Rafah, the IDF also began to refocus its attention from northern Gaza.

The Biden administration publicly reacted negatively to Israel's call for a Rafah operation. The United States halted a weapon shipment to Israel in May 2024, according to news outlets. Over a million Gazan civilians were taking refuge in Rafah at the time, and administration officials expressed fears that the munitions, which were mostly 2,000-pound bombs, could result in an intolerable amount of civilian deaths if employed there. A week later, President Biden said in public that he had warned Netanyahu that if the Israeli military carried out an operation in Rafah, the United States would stop providing some offensive weaponry, like as bombs and artillery shells. In the end, the Biden administration decided that Israel's effort in Rafah was sufficiently more targeted than its previous wartime operations, therefore it did not take action on this threat.

The IDF resumed its onslaught in northern Gaza in the fall of 2024, focusing on the Jabalia refugee camp, while maintaining operations in southern and central Gaza. Eliminating Hamas terrorists who had started to reorganize in the region and occupy the space left by the Israeli military's previous operations was the declared objective. Experts expressed alarm over the IDF's actions in Jabalia that Israel may be preparing to carry out the contentious "Generals' Plan,"

which calls for a complete siege of the region, including the suspension of humanitarian aid, in order to compel the remaining Hamas terrorists to surrender. The United Nations made 165 attempts to enter the beleaguered region between October 6 and December 31, 2024. 149 of those attempts were rejected by Israeli authorities, and the other 16 encountered difficulties.

Beyond northern Gaza, the conflict has sparked humanitarian concerns. Journalists, schools, and Israeli-designated humanitarian zones have all been targeted since Israeli operations began in 2023, according to several sources. Diseases like polio have increased throughout the Strip as a result of Israeli attacks on medical facilities, including hospitals and other infrastructure, on a regular basis. The crisis has been made worse by violence against aid workers. Workers of the World Food Programme were shot in August 2024, while seven employees of the World Central Kitchen were killed in an Israeli bombing in April 2024. Many humanitarian organizations working in Gaza have halted or reduced their operations until they can better secure the safety of their staff as a result of these incidents. Additionally, humanitarian relief efforts have been hampered by Israel's prohibition of certain dual-use commodities in Gaza. Israeli inspectors have rejected vital goods, including chlorine tablets for water purification, sent in by humanitarian organizations in an attempt to keep things with possible military uses from getting to Hamas.

About 90% of Gaza's population, or 1.9 million people, were displaced as of January 2025 and are classified as experiencing acute or catastrophic food insecurity. At the moment, Gaza has no operational hospitals. The Israeli military estimates that 17,000 of the more than 46,000 Gazans killed in the conflict were Hamas fighters. Israel has frequently claimed that its actions were required because Hamas frequently uses fighters who immerse themselves in civilian neighborhoods as part of its guerilla warfare tactics. Military achievements have also been mentioned by the military, such as the June 2024 rescue of four surviving captives in central Gaza and the killing of Hamas's senior leaders, including Yahya Sinwar, Mohammed Deif, and Deif's deputy Marwan Issa. The United States has issued a warning, stating that it believes Hamas has been able to find new recruits to replace almost all of the fighters it has lost thus far as a result of the war's radicalizing impact on Gazans.

Hamas

The Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, which had been active in Gaza since the 1970s, gave rise to Hamas, also known as the Islamic Resistance Movement, a Palestinian Islamist group established in 1987 during the First Intifada. Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and other founding leaders positioned the group as an armed resistance force and a social and political movement by fusing Sunni Islamic values with Palestinian nationalism. Although a later 2017 political document softened its stance and accepted the idea of a Palestinian state within the 1967

borders as a temporary measure, the 1988 Hamas Charter called for the liberation of all historic Palestine and rejected the legitimacy of Israel, framing the struggle as both national and religious. The political wing of Hamas, which offers healthcare, education, social services, and charitable initiatives in Gaza and the West Bank, and the military wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, are in charge of carrying out attacks against Israeli military personnel and civilians that range from rocket fire to suicide bombings. After defeating Fatah in the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections and gaining control of Gaza in the wake of bloody clashes, Hamas became a powerful political force. This resulted in a divided Palestinian government, with Hamas ruling Gaza and the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority ruling the West Bank. Since then, Hamas has fought Israel in a number of wars, including the major ones in 2008–09, 2012, 2014, 2021, and 2023–24. Despite its isolation from the rest of the world, Hamas has managed to sustain its internal support through social programs. Although Hamas is considered a terrorist organization by Israel, the US, the EU, and a number of other nations, it still enjoys differing degrees of support from some Arab and Muslim nations, which reflects its complicated role as both an armed resistance movement and a governing body in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Questions to be Addressed

1. What can be done to reduce the risks of civilian casualties in war zones?
2. What actions can be taken to ensure peace in the region?
3. Would it be possible to ensure the safety of civilians, especially kids?
4. What kind of actions should be taken to fight the terrorist groups?
5. What kind of actions should be taken to prevent another outburst of wars and civil wars in the Middle East?
6. What kind of sanctions can be imposed on those who commit war crimes relentlessly?
7. What kind of actions should be taken to ensure a stable future?