# SECURITY COUNCIL- WHITEPAPERS

## Agenda 1: “The Question of the Right to Self-Determination in Palestine”

#### Background Information

Since the formation of the United Nations in 1945, all member states have representatives in the UN conference and freely exercise their right to self determination and political status establishment as per Article 1 of the UN Charter (Unpo. org, 2020).

Self determination is regarded as a two-sided concept; in which, the internal aspect pertains to the freedom of governmental and political systems within the respective nation. The external aspect of self determination allows for people to have independence and identity as a country, unite with regions or to subsidise a self running member state (Pij. org, 2020).

The Israel- Palestine conflict has persevered for the past 52 years and is presently on going (Un. org, 2020); furthermore, it is an issue that sharply divides the 193 UN member states as only 137 recognises Palestine as an independent member state (Palestineun. org, 2020). The right to self determination for the Palestinian people is a basic principle of international law, allowing people to choose their own political status and cultural and social development (Unpo. org, 2020).

Currently, 12.4 million Palestinians are living worldwide, most notably across Israeli and Palestinian land as well as migrating to Jordan, Lebanon and Syria for refuge (Odu.edu). Many Palestinian political leaders and groups, most famously the Hamas, advocate the developed one-state solution in order to dominate the Palestinian region based on its growing population (Montessori-mun. Org, 2020).

#### History

* **1948**
  + The Israeli State was inaugurated
  + First Middle East War→ Palestinian Arabs enter Israel
* **1967**
  + Arab- Israeli War, the Six-Day War
* **1979**
  + Egypt- Israel Peace Treaty
* **1987-93**
  + First Intifada→ Jabaliya refugee camps on the Gaza Strip
* **1993**
  + Oslo Accords
  + Between the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)
* **2000-05**
  + Al- Aqsa Intifada
  + Intensified Israeli- Palestinian violence
* **2005**
  + Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip

#### UN Involvement and Action Courses

The United Nations Charter, the foundational treaty of the UN, was signed in 1945 with the following term, found in Article 1, under the heading of ‘purposes and principles’: “*To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;*” (Un. org, 2020).

UNHCR, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, one amongst three other successive UN specialised committees, supports the aforementioned argument. “*The right to self-determination was an integral element of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms…*”. Was concluded in this coucil in accordance to discrimination and xenophobia. Furthermore, all three specialised treaties and secretariat offices; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

UN special committees aside, multiple non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have also been established in order to aid territories facing the threat of heavily impacting conflicts when attempting to fight for their right to self determination. The UNPO, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation, is one such NGO combining member states to preserve cultural environments and self determined policies.

The right to self determination is, arguably, one of the most significant rights when constituting a member state: a balance must be found in order to achieve regional peace and national security of individual member states.

#### 

#### Guiding Questions

* What is the relationship between your country and Israel and/ or Palestine?
* Does your country favor any solution to the problem?
* What is your country’s position on the designated agenda- should Palestine be an individually inaugurated member state?
* Has your country taken any measures for or against the Israel- Palestine self determination issue?
* What is your country’s stance on solutions have been proposed in the past? Consider why/why not they were successful.
* What is your country’s history with self determination?
* Any struggles of self determination within minority groups, if so what action is being taken by the government?

#### References

Montessori-mun.org. (2020). [online] Available at: http://montessori-mun.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BG\_SOCHUM\_Right-to-Self-Determination.pdf [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Odu.edu. (2020). [online] Available at: https://www.odu.edu/content/dam/odu/offices/mun/issue-brief-2019/ib-fourth-palestine.pdf [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Ohchr.org. (2020). OHCHR | International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. [online] Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Ohchr.org. (2020). OHCHR | International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. [online] Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Palestineun.org. (2020). Diplomatic Relations. [online] Available at: https://palestineun.org/about-palestine/diplomatic-relations/ [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

PIJ.ORG. (2020). PIJ.ORG: Settlements and the Palestinian Right to Self-Determination By Musa Dweik. [online] Available at: https://pij.org/articles/478 [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Un.org. (2020). Welcome to the United Nations. [online] Available at: https://www.un.org/ [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Unpo.org. (2020). UNPO: Self-determination. [online] Available at: https://unpo.org/article/4957 [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

## Agenda 2: “Establishing Measures to De-Escalate Tensions Between the United States of America and Iran”

#### Background Information

Tensions between Iran and the United States of America have increased rather drastically over the course of the last few months; though, they have been present for around 4 decades at most (Cnn, 2020). Presently, they have escalated after an Iranian military commander was caught between the crossfire of a US airstrike in Iraq. As a form of retaliation, Iran fired more than a dozen ballistic missiles at US military bases situated in Iraq. The bases struck were the large Al Asad base, west of Baghdad in the center of Iran’s Kurdish region. The UN Assistance Mission in Iraq, UNAQI, sees the missile attacks as an unnecessary escalation of the violation of Iraqi sovereignty.

The UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, has chosen to continue with his avid commitment in de escalating this conflict, as can be quoted through his four-point message, “*Stop escalation. Exercise maximum restraint. Re-start dialogue and renew international cooperation”* (News. un. org, 2020). He concludes with powerful words, *“It is our common duty to make every effort to avoid a war in the Gulf that the world cannot afford. We must not forget the terrible human suffering caused by war”.* (Un. org, 2020)

Both nations appeared to have de escalated the long ongoing conflict, though the conditions of the ‘agreement’ are more volatile than ever (Time, 2020). American and Iranian forces operate closely within the Middle East, more specifically Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain and Suadi Arabia where the unintended tensions may increase again. Though not all retaliating action was taken by the Iranian military as Iranian backed groups like Kata’ib Hezbollah and Asab Al-Haq, played a major part in the launching of missiles against US troops. Said proxy groups were also mainly liable for requited protests outside the US embassy in stakeholding nations.

Both the US and Iran have seen more setbacks than advances in pursuing their feud and their competition in tipping the power balance to either side. However, Iranian losses appear larger as the economy suffered multiple sanctions and accusations of being a host nation to terrorist groups (Nytimes, 2020).

#### Terminology

* *Sanctions-* an official order, such as the stopping of trade, taken against a country in order to make it obey international law (Dictionary. cambridge. org, 2020)
* *Proxy-* an agency or function acting as a substitute for another. This may include the embodiment of the authorisation to represent another through documents that give such authority (Merriam-webster, 2020).
* *Hezbollah-* Lebanese militant group, political organisation and social services network. It was founded during the Lebanese Civil War and strongly opposed Israel and its resistance to the Western influence on the Middle East.
* *Militia-* an organisation following similar principles of the military, serving as a supplement to the national military in emergencies despite, members not being professional soldiers (Collinsdictionary, 2020).

#### Timeline and UN involvement

* **1979- 1981**
  + Iran holds American employees working in the US embassy in Tehran as hostages, severing diplomatic ties between Iran and the US.
* **1985**
  + Hezbollah, other Ismlamic Iran- backed groups; labeled as terrorist organisations by the US
* **1988**
  + American warship shoots down an Iranian passenger plane, killing all 290 passengers on board.
* **1995**
  + The US imposes a sanction, placing an oil and trade embargo on Iran.
* **2003**
  + Iran admits to plutonium production
* **2008**
  + International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) classifies the uranium enrichment project a concern; the UN and European Union agrees to place sanctions.
* **2010**
  + The US places more sanctions for nuclear power development prohibiting trade in the areas of refined petroleum and international finances (Obamawhitehouse. archives, gov, 2020).
* **2015- 2016**
  + The Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action (JCPOA), or otherwise known as the Iran nuclear deal, was achieved in Vienna 2015. The following year all sanctions were lifted as per this agreement.
* **2017- 2018**
  + Extended sanction waivers leading to the US withdrawing from the nuclear deal. This causes Iran’s economy to severely decline.
* **2019**
  + The US declares the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) a terrorist organisation and accuses Iran of explosions of oil tankers.
* **2020**
  + The US kills the Iranian general in an American airstrike causing Iran to retaliate with missiles on a US base in Iraq. Furthermore, Iran vows “severe revenge” for Soleimani’s death and pulls out, completely, from the nuclear deal.

*(Frazee, 2020), (Bbc, 2020)*

#### Guiding Questions

* What is your country’s relationship with the US and/or Iran?
* Is your country a major or minor stakeholder in the US- Iran conflict and has it been from the start?
* Does your country favour any solution to this issue? What is its position of past resolutions presented?
* Has your country involved itself through the course of this conflict? To what extent and if so, how?
* Was your country affected by the numerous sanctions and trade embargos taken? Has this changed your country’s perspective on the issue at hand?

#### 

#### References

BBC News. (2020). US-Iran relations: A brief history. [online] Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24316661 [Accessed 26 Feb. 2020].

Collinsdictionary.com. (2020). Militia definition and meaning | Collins English Dictionary. [online] Available at: https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/militia [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Council on Foreign Relations. (2020). What Is Hezbollah?. [online] Available at: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-hezbollah [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Dictionary.cambridge.org. (2020). SANCTION | meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary. [online] Available at: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sanction [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Edition.cnn.com. (2020). The US-Iran conflict: A timeline of how we got here. [online] Available at: https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2020/01/world/us-iran-conflict-timeline-trnd/ [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Frazee, G. (2020). A timeline of U.S.-Iran relations. [online] PBS NewsHour. Available at: https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/a-timeline-of-u-s-iran-relations [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Merriam-webster.com. (2020). Definition of PROXY. [online] Available at: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/proxy [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Nytimes.com. (2020). The U.S., Iran and a No-Win Game. [online] Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/09/world/middleeast/us-iran-conflict.html [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

Time. (2020). Why the Conflict Between the U.S. and Iran Isn't Over. [online] Available at: https://time.com/5761897/us-iran-conflict-continues/ [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

## Recommended Resources

CIA: The World Fact Book

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

U.S Department of State

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/index.htm>

United Nations Website

<http://www.un.org/>

Permanent Mission of Country to the UN

<http://www.un.org/members/missions.shtml>

UN System: UN Organisations

<http://www.unsystem.org/>

BBC→ BBC Country Profiles

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles>

Al Jazeera

<https://www.aljazeera.com/>