



**General Assembly
(GA)**

Topic:

Combating Impunity for Crimes Against Humanity in the Israel-Palestine Conflict

Chairs:

**Ximena Morales García
Mauricio Casasús Alcázar**



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Introduction:

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), established in 1945 under the Charter of the United Nations, stands as a paramount organ embodying the principles of multilateral cooperation and collective problem-solving. As the chief deliberative, policymaking, and representative body of the United Nations, the General Assembly comprises all 193 member states, each possessing an equal vote. This unique forum provides a platform for comprehensive discussions on international issues covered by the Charter, contributing significantly to the development of international law.

Annual Regular Sessions:

The General Assembly convenes annually in regular sessions, exemplifying a democratic approach wherein each member state exercises its vote. During these sessions, member states engage in dialogue and collaboration, addressing a broad spectrum of global challenges. This inclusive process underscores the commitment of the international community to work collectively in fostering solutions that transcend national boundaries.

Special Sessions:

Recognizing the need for urgent action on pressing matters, the General Assembly can convene special sessions. This flexibility enables the international community to respond swiftly to emerging crises, ensuring that the United Nations remains an adaptive and responsive entity. The General Assembly reinforces its commitment to addressing time-sensitive issues that demand immediate attention and collaboration through these special sessions.

Role in Standard-Setting and Codification:

The General Assembly plays a central role in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law. By engaging in thorough deliberations, member states contribute to establishing norms and principles that guide the conduct of nations in the global arena. This process fosters a shared understanding of legal frameworks and strengthens the foundation of international cooperation.



Recommendations and Actions:

With its unique composition of all member states, the General Assembly can make recommendations on international issues within its competence. This capacity allows the General Assembly to provide valuable insights and guidance on political, economic, humanitarian, social, and legal matters. Furthermore, the General Assembly has demonstrated its commitment to acting across all pillars of the United Nations, reflecting a holistic approach to addressing global challenges.

In the context of the Israel-Palestine Conflict, the General Assembly assumes a pivotal role in combating impunity for crimes against humanity. Through its deliberative processes, recommendations, and actions, the General Assembly strives to foster a collective and comprehensive approach to address the complexities of this longstanding conflict. In doing so, the international community reaffirms its commitment to the principles of justice, accountability, and the promotion of human rights on a global scale.

Background

The Israel-Palestine conflict, a protracted and multifaceted struggle, finds its origins in a complex interplay of historical events, geopolitical shifts, and competing national aspirations. This essay delves into the nuanced background of the conflict, exploring the circumstances surrounding its inception, the key players involved, and the lasting ramifications on the region.

British Mandate and the UN Partition Plan (1947):

The conflict's seeds began during the era of the British Mandate in Palestine, a period marked by tensions between Jewish and Arab communities. Following World War II, the United Nations proposed a partition plan in 1947, intending to create separate Jewish and Arab states in the territory. While this plan was met with approval from the Zionist leadership, Arab nations vehemently opposed the establishment of a Jewish state, leading to the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948.



First Arab-Israeli War and Displacement:

The first Arab-Israeli war witnessed the armed intervention of neighboring Arab countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq, against the newly declared state of Israel. Despite their collective efforts, Israel not only survived but expanded its territorial holdings. This conflict resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs, setting the stage for a refugee crisis that persists to this day.

1956 Suez Crisis and the Six-Day War:

The Suez Crisis of 1956 further exacerbated tensions, as Israel, along with Britain and France, clashed with Egypt over control of the Suez Canal. In 1967, the Six-Day War unfolded, with Israel facing off against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The swift Israeli victory resulted in the occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights, fundamentally altering the geopolitical landscape.

Post-1967 Occupation and Settlements:

The post-1967 period saw Israel's occupation of territories captured during the Six-Day War, leading to the establishment of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The construction of these settlements became a contentious issue, contributing to ongoing disputes over land, resources, and the viability of a two-state solution.

Peace Accords and Ongoing Struggles:

Various peace initiatives, including the Camp David Accords (1978) and the Oslo Accords (1993), aimed to address the conflict, but lasting resolutions still needed to be achieved. The rise of Palestinian organizations such as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and, subsequently, Hamas further complicated the dynamics, introducing new dimensions to the struggle for self-determination.



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Key terms:

1. Crimes Against Humanity:

- **Definition:** Widespread and systematic acts committed as part of a government policy or plan, targeting a civilian population, leading to severe physical or mental harm.

2. Impunity:

- **Definition:** Exemption from punishment or accountability, often for perpetrators of human rights abuses or crimes against humanity.

3. United Nations General Assembly (UNGA):

- **Definition:** One of the six principal organs of the United Nations, comprising all member states, where global issues are discussed, and resolutions are passed.

4. United Nations Security Council (UNSC):

- **Definition:** A principal organ of the UN responsible for maintaining international peace and security, with the authority to impose sanctions and authorize military intervention.

5. Partition Plan (1947):

- **Definition:** The UN's proposal to divide British-mandated Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, serving as a precursor to the establishment of Israel.

6. Two-State Solution:

- **Definition:** A proposed resolution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, advocating the creation of independent Israeli and Palestinian states living side by side.

7. Intifada:



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- **Definition:** Arabic for "uprising," referring to periods of Palestinian resistance marked by civil disobedience, protests, and, at times, violence against Israeli rule.

8. Hamas:

- **Definition:** A Palestinian political and militant group, founded in 1987, with the stated goal of resisting Israeli occupation and establishing an independent Palestinian state.

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9. Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO):

- **Definition:** Established in 1964, it is a political and paramilitary organization aiming to achieve Palestinian self-determination and statehood.

10. Armistice Agreement (1949):

- **Definition:** Agreements signed to halt armed conflicts temporarily, defining boundaries and conditions for a ceasefire.

11. Camp David Accords (1978):

- **Definition:** Agreements between Israel and Egypt, brokered by the U.S. at Camp David, leading to the normalization of relations between the two countries.

12. Oslo Accords (1993):

- **Definition:** A series of agreements between Israel and the PLO, aimed at resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict, including the establishment of the Palestinian Authority.

13. Arab Peace Initiative:

- **Definition:** A proposed peace plan by the Arab League, offering normalization of relations with Israel in exchange for its withdrawal from occupied territories and a two-state solution.

14. Suez Crisis (1956):

- **Definition:** A diplomatic and military conflict in which Israel, France, and the UK invaded Egypt following the nationalization of the Suez Canal.



15. Human Rights Violations:

- **Definition:** Actions that infringe upon the basic rights and freedoms of individuals, often perpetrated by state or non-state actors.

16. Right of Return:

- **Definition:** The principle that individuals displaced from their homes have the right to return, particularly relevant to Palestinian refugees.

17. West Bank and Gaza Strip:

- **Definition:** Territories with significant geopolitical importance in the Israel-Palestine conflict, with the West Bank being a landlocked area and the Gaza Strip bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

18. Occupied Territories:

- **Definition:** Areas seized and controlled by military force, often in violation of international law, as is the case with territories in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

19. Settlements:

- **Definition:** Israeli communities built in the occupied territories, considered illegal under international law, and a major point of contention in peace negotiations.

20. Normalization of Relations:

- **Definition:** The process of establishing normal diplomatic and economic relations between countries, often after a period of conflict or tension.

21. International Criminal Court (ICC):

Definition: A judicial institution established to prosecute individuals for the most serious crimes of international concern, including crimes against humanity.

22. Security Council Resolutions:

Definition: Decisions made by the UN Security Council that are legally binding on member states, often addressing issues related to conflict and peace.



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23. Refugee Status:

Definition: A legal status granted to individuals who have fled their home country due to well-founded fears of persecution, conflict, or violence.

24. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):

Definition: Independent organizations that operate without government control, often involved in humanitarian, human rights, and advocacy work.

25. International Humanitarian Law:

Definition: A set of rules and principles that seek to limit the impact of armed conflict, protecting civilians and those not taking part in hostilities.

26. Occupation:

Definition: The control and governance of a territory by a foreign power, often involving military presence and administration.

27. International Diplomacy:

Definition: The practice of conducting negotiations and maintaining relationships between nations to promote peaceful coexistence and address global challenges.

28. Displacement:

Definition: The forced movement of individuals or groups from their homes or places of residence due to conflict, persecution, or natural disasters.

29. Right to Self-Determination:

Definition: The principle that nations have the right to freely determine their political status, pursue economic, social, and cultural development, and manage their affairs without external interference.

30. International Human Rights Law:

Definition: A body of international law that seeks to protect and promote human rights, encompassing treaties, conventions, and customary international law.



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Guiding questions:

Understanding the Topic:

1. How would you define "crimes against humanity" in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict?
2. What historical events have contributed to the ongoing conflict in the region?
3. How has the international community historically addressed impunity for crimes against humanity in the Israel-Palestine conflict?
4. In what ways has the United Nations General Assembly played a role in addressing the conflict and combating impunity?
5. What are the key provisions of international law relevant to crimes against humanity in the context of this conflict?

Understanding Others' Views:

6. What is your country's historical position on the Israel-Palestine conflict, and how has it evolved?
7. How do major regional players, such as Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, view the issue of impunity for crimes against humanity in the region?
8. How have recent diplomatic developments, such as normalization agreements, influenced perspectives on the conflict?
9. What resolutions or statements has your country supported or opposed in the United Nations Security Council regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict?
10. How do countries with historical ties to the region, like the United Kingdom and Germany, navigate their positions?

Overall Conflict Understanding:

11. What role have international organizations, such as the International Criminal Court, played in addressing crimes against humanity in the Israel-Palestine conflict?
12. How have peace processes, such as the Oslo Accords and the Arab Peace Initiative, impacted the trajectory of the conflict?
13. What are the root causes and consequences of the displacement of Palestinian refugees, and how has it contributed to the conflict?
14. In what ways have armed groups, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, influenced the dynamics of the conflict?
15. How do ongoing issues, like the construction of settlements, impact the potential for a two-state solution?



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Guiding Investigations:

16. What steps has your country taken to address human rights violations in the Israel-Palestine conflict?
17. How can the international community balance the right to self-determination with the need to combat impunity for crimes against humanity?
18. What role do economic and trade relationships play in influencing countries' positions on the conflict?
19. How can the United Nations General Assembly strengthen its mechanisms for addressing crimes against humanity in the region?
20. What initiatives or frameworks exist for promoting reconciliation and dialogue between conflicting parties?

In-Depth Research:

21. How do regional geopolitical dynamics impact the Israel-Palestine conflict, and how might they affect efforts to combat impunity?
22. What role has the International Court of Justice played in interpreting international law relevant to the conflict?
23. How have technological advancements and cyber activities influenced the conflict and responses to crimes against humanity?
24. In what ways can the international community support the protection and promotion of human rights in the occupied territories?
25. How have previous peace negotiations and agreements shaped the current political landscape in the region?

Future Scenarios:

26. What diplomatic strategies could facilitate a more comprehensive approach to combating impunity in the Israel-Palestine conflict?
27. How might the potential involvement of non-governmental organizations contribute to addressing crimes against humanity?
28. What impact could changing leadership in key countries have on the resolution of the conflict and accountability for human rights abuses?
29. How could economic incentives or sanctions be leveraged to encourage parties to address crimes against humanity?
30. In what ways can the international community balance justice and reconciliation in post-conflict scenarios?



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