

ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION



WELCOME LETTER

Hello Everyone!

My name is Serena Wang and I will be your head chair for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation committee this year. I am currently a senior at UC Berkeley studying Political Science and pursuing minors in Arabic and Chinese. In the midst of my Arabic studies, I have become extremely interested in Middle Eastern politics, so the issues that we will be debating upon are ones that I have invested quite heavily in throughout college. That being said, I am super excited to witness your intelligence, hard work, and motivation throughout the upcoming year. If you are the least bit worried, don't be! We will be with you every step of the way in terms of both procedure and topics -- plus, this is also a strong learning experience that can only produce a positive outcome, so get pumped to immerse yourselves into these awesome topics. Needless to say, I am beyond confident that you guys will exceed my expectations and impress me in March!

Hello delegates! My name is Dhruv Mandal and I am honored to serve as the Vice-Chair for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for Berkeley Model United Nations' 67th Session! I am currently a sophomore here at the University of California, Berkeley studying both Molecular & Cell Biology and Political Science and this is my second year in BMUN and fifth year doing Model UN. I love being a part of BMUN's mission as an organization in that it strives to improve the future by educating today's generation of students about important global issues and diplomacy. The OIC is an extremely topical committee and understanding the intersectionality between religion, culture, and politics is fundamental to solving crises in all areas of the world; I can't wait to hear delegates discuss the nuances of negotiating peace in the Middle East this upcoming March! Besides participating in BMUN, I am also a member of The Berkeley Forum and Berkeley Political Review. In my free time, I like to watch sitcoms, go on hikes, and play soccer with friends. I hope to see you all at conference!

Hi everyone! My name is Taanvi Malhotra and I will be one of your Vice Chairs for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation committee this year. I am currently a sophomore at UC Berkeley studying Economics. I was born in New Delhi and lived there for 6 years and then moved to Dubai for 12. Middle Eastern politics and policies are essentially what I grew

up studying, discussing and watching on the news and I'm super excited to facilitate the speeches that will take place during this conference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Serena Wang', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Serena Wang

Head Chair, Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Berkeley Model United Nations, Sixty-Seventh Session

TOPIC A: EMPOWERMENT OF MUSLIM WOMEN

TOPIC BACKGROUND: WOMEN IN ISLAM

In order to understand the experience of Arab women in the Middle East, we must first draw our attention towards the stringent status of Muslim women within Islamic society, especially as religion continues to shape the course of Middle Eastern culture and politics today. Dating back to the birth of Prophet Muhammed in 571 AD, we find that the very principles of Islamism are deeply rooted within the Quran, or hadiths, which are traditional translations of socratic texts. Furthermore, the notion of fiqh is understood to be differing human interpretation and understanding of Islamic law, which has ultimately defined Islamic society and cultural norms. Thus, women of Islam are often subject to standard guidelines that were once "interpreted" from hadiths and deemed fit amongst the Islamic religious leaders. Although fatwas are non-binding scholarly legal interpretations of the Quran, such regulations are often commonly practiced within Islamic culture. Over the course of continued fatwas (rulings on points of Islamic law given by recognized authorities) and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence and understanding of Sharia law) within society, the religious requirements and "rights" of women was naturally integrated within Arab culture and norms. Hence, Arab women were expected to abide to such societal pressures and were subjugated to the laws claimed under Islamic socratic texts.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, the status of Arab women varied based upon the laws and cultural norms of different Arab tribes, which restricted the legal and property rights of women and often sold them into the cultural bounds of marriage. However, hadiths interpreted from the Quran suggests that the advent of Islam improved the status of women, transforming the structure of Arab societies to standardize gender roles and institute rights of property ownership, education, and divorce. Furthermore, Muslim scholars claim that Islamic law redefined the concept of marriage to require the consent of Muslim women. Thus, following the rise of Islam, Islamic law not only limited the practice of polygamy, but also redefined marriage in terms of the Qur'an, which permitted women to inherit wealth and property.

Although the religion of Islam understands men and women as both equal in the sight of God, Arab women have failed to acquire equal access in many areas of Islamic life. In fact, the dominant position of men in Muslim society takes precedence above all, further requiring the obedience of women to their husbands and limiting Arab women to household duties and rights. Muslim leaders have imposed a system of gender inequality that has been justified through fiqh and personal interpretations of the Qur'an. Hence, lack of educational resources, emphasis upon ritual impurity, and limitations to the participation of Muslim women in religious dwellings continues to shape the gender imbalance of Arab societies. Though several women have gained recognition as Islamic scholars through Quranic interpretations, Muslim women are perceived as incapable of teaching men and are therefore often restricted from formal education in Arab nations. As such, strict religious interpretation of the Qur'an to define Muslim women remains a pressing issue in Islamic society. In most cases, Islamic texts are being interpreted literally, and therefore allow conservative religious scholars to silence the voices of Muslim women in the name of "Allah" (Rajkhan).

Under the Caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab, women were banned from worshipping in mosques. Within Islamic society, the presence of women in public is understood to be a source of temptation and conflict. Therefore, banning women from entering mosques became a means to preserve the holiness and religious scarcity in the sight of God. The most obvious indicator of limitations to Muslim women rights' is shown through the practice of veiling, which highlights the implementation of strict clothing regulations in the post-Islamic world. On the other hand, Arab women have often pronounced their personal preference to abide by the veil out of respect for Islam; yet, others claim that such laws merely reflect the injustices of Islam's male-dominated society. As Muslim women are often isolated in private sectors during worship and limited in their religious roles of Islam, it is evident that Islamic society has structured women to play marginal roles in the mosque, which inevitably undermines their role within Arab society as well.

From a Western perspective, the practice of veiling has established a generalized perception of Muslim women to be inferior Arab culture. In the 17th century, a majority of Islamic societies came under control of European powers, which greatly integrated Western values regarding women, marriage, and family into the Muslim world. Further, Europeans

questioned the legal and social restrictions of Arab women, creating a new sense of insecurity in Arab society and drawing doubt of Islamic regulations. As a result, demand for reform consequentially established primary and secondary schooling for girls, while Egypt, Iran, and the Ottoman Empire opened its universities for women. In the early 1900s, newly independent Muslim states such as Turkey modernized the role of Arab women adopting new family laws and discouraging Islamic polygamy. In 1930, Turkish women gained the right to vote in municipal and national elections. Further, Reza Shah Pahlavi outlawed the practice of veiling in Iran. Ultimately, the integration of Western ideals dramatically changed the Arab perception of Islam and the role of Arab women in society. Orientalism encouraged Islamic societies to closely align with European interests' for the sake of social and economic acceptance, which even introduced Westernized beliefs of Christianity. However, more traditional muslim societies regarded this Westernization as a threat to Islam's culture of male superiority.

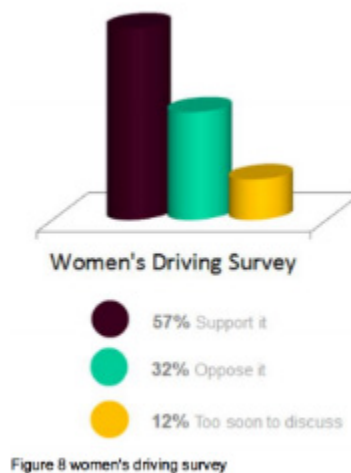
Muslim societies continue to regard the status of women as a means for preserving Islamic tradition and family culture. Extremists would regard the subjugation of Arab women as a defining symbol of national identity. Although Arab governments have promoted education for both men and women as a means of increasing economic growth, the percentage of women in education remain relatively low due to societal pressure and cultural norms. Further, economic downfall and political instability has forced Muslim countries to integrate women into the workforce, though the economic necessity of women continues to be of low priority.



Figure 5 male and female unemployment rates over the years

Manal Al Sharif's Daring to Drive draws upon existing gender inequality within Saudi Arabia on a completely new level – as she unconsciously sparks a women rights' social

movement by posting a Youtube video of herself driving in Saudi Arabia, her courage shines light upon the need for social change in the Middle East to implement policies in compliance to women's rights. Despite sacrificing her own personal freedom as an Arab women, Manal Al Sharif has become an international icon in advocating the need for changing Saudi law and promoting international human rights, particularly after her Youtube viral hit showing an Arab women driving. As we approach the changing face of Saudi women today, we must understand Arab culture, one of which Islamic religion is deeply rooted within.



From an outsider's perspective, the nature of Islam and its significant influence within Arab culture is not easy to understand. Especially in Western culture, the notion of "separation between church and state" assisted by our democratic values is in complete contrast to Arab culture, which can often be misperceived as too conservative, traditional, and oppressive. For Saudi women, however, clothing, commitments, and limitations in the household often define their role in society. Thus, as society veers towards the popularization of women rights, change within Saudi law under King Abdullah is absolutely necessary for the future of Saudi Arabian women despite already settled breakthroughs under King Abdullah. Nonetheless, by representing their respect for Islam through clothing and daily actions, Saudi women are shown to be capable of maintaining their respect for tradition amidst calling for a new era of change. Hence, Saudi women may lack the kind of freedom that others enjoy, yet continue to stand in a unique position amongst Arab women.

Saudi Arabia has the lowest female employment rates throughout the entire Middle East (Rajkhan). As the Saudi government is integrated within Shari'a law, Saudi Arabia has

adopted a basic law of governance based upon the Quran and Sunni ideals, which inevitably marginalizes Arab women rights based on its religious context. In Article 28, Saudi Arabia claims that "the state shall provide job opportunities to all able-bodied people and shall enact laws to protect both the employee and the employer;" yet, only 15% of Saudi women are employed out of the 8.4 million women who are of working age in society (Raijkhan).

International Response:

Arab women have long been marginalized by the Muslim community and continue to be isolated in political decision-making by Islamic-dominated governments. In 2013, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation announced the need to call attention upon Arab women's restricted access to education, which has prohibited the progression of Arab women rights. Despite the fact that a majority of Arab nations granted suffrage rights to women in the 1950s, women continue to be underrepresented in government legislation. In fact, only recently have women been eligible to vote and stand for elections in several GCC countries.

Nonetheless, we have witnessed positive trends towards the growing recognition and importance of women's participation in politics. In 2015, the UAE became the first Arab nation to appoint a woman as the speaker of Parliament. Further, Algeria and Palestine have opened opportunities for Arab women to obtain positions in the top ranks of political parties. Despite internal opposition, Egypt and Mauritania have granted women the right to become judges, while Kuwait has re-opened posts for 22 female graduates within its Ministry of Justice. With the involvement of the international community, Arab nations have continued to be pressured towards implementing women activism. Further, Arab women have pressured the state by participating in protests throughout the region in 2010, indicating their eagerness to join in civic and political engagements.

In 2011, Tawakkol Karman, a female human rights activist of Yemen, became the first Arab woman to receive a Nobel Prize, which rewarded her on the basis of her "non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work." In Tunisia, women comprise one third of the members of the country's national parliament and mandates pertaining to Arab women's rights have been successfully established. The Yemeni National Dialogue Conference has included the participation of Arab

women in 2013 as well. Nonetheless, the international community has argued that women's participation in peace and transitional processes remains limited and scathed. Syria, for instance, largely marginalized women from the Geneva peace talks in 2012 and continues to face international accusation for violating international human rights upon Syrian women. Thus, several Arab countries have sought to ensure better representation of women through law enforcement and granting political justice positions, though the status of Arab women's continues to spark international debate within the United Nation Human Rights Council.

In 1995, the international community responded to the notion of women's rights by implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which served as a driving force for establishing and expanding national women's machineries. The Beijing Platform for Action called upon states to "create or strengthen institutional mechanisms so that women and girls can report acts of violence against them in a safe and confidential environment," thus aiming to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women, everywhere. Within the Middle East, the adoption of the Beijing Platform pushed Arab governments to formalize rudimentary women's divisions under various ministries. Further, Arab nations such as Morocco, Kuwait, and Jordan have instituted female quotas in parliament recommended by the Beijing Platform for Action in order to promote Arab women's participation in political decision-making.

CASE STUDY: ARAB-PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Drawing our attention towards a discussion of gender equality and Israeli women rights, Palestinian women are subject to widening social discrimination and economic inequity in both Arab-Palestinian and Israeli society. Compared to Saudi women's rights, Arab-Palestinian women have received substantial freedom; however, the relative success of Arab-Palestinian women integration in society demonstrates the prospect of empowering Muslim women future Middle Eastern policies. Hence, Arab-Palestinian women play a dual role within society as both Israeli minority citizens and underrepresented Muslim women -- as they pledge responsibilities to both their families and careers, Palestinian women continue to face challenges that economically disadvantages them within society. Based upon gender, nationality, and ethnicity, Palestinian-Arab women hold unique, multifaceted positions within Israeli society. However, these multiple, interwoven identities forge a conflicting ambivalent "third" space for social inequalities, therefore placing Palestinian women far below the societal hierarchy in comparison to that of Israeli-Jewish women. Primarily rooted within the historical Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Palestinian-Arab and Israeli-Jewish lack a united front to advance women rights in Israel. Although Arab-Palestinian women struggle with gender biases and narrowing social mobility within Israel's socio-economic system, empowerment of Palestinian women rights has garnered increasing attention, therefore creating new perceptions towards the traditional role of Arab women in Israeli and Arab-Palestinian society. Ultimately, Arab-Israeli women face unequal realities compared to that of Jewish-Israeli women; however, Palestinian women continue to challenge social racism by increasing their multidimensional roles and statuses as Arab women of Israel.

Similar to women residing in nearby Arab countries, Arab-Palestinian women are constrained by marriage and status as they hold unequal responsibilities within the family. In the state of Islam, marriage is a universal behavior that dates back to cultural norms established by Prophet Mohammed -- it has been conceived as a developmental stage within a woman's life, leading them towards ultimate maturity and wisdom. As such, the empowerment of Arab-Palestinian women's rights is a direct attack to the very foundation of Arab religion and societal norms. Further, Palestinian-Arab women are often expected to meet the needs of their husbands and likely to be accused for broken marriages; therefore,

the rate of divorce amongst Palestinian women in Israel is extremely low in comparison to Jewish women in Israel. Consequentially, divorced Arab women are ranked amongst the lowest of Arab social hierarchy, creating great social pressures for Arab women to obtain marital status rather than pursuing their careers. As the new rising generation of young Palestinian academic women in Israel no longer share the traditionally set views of marriage and are venturing towards social independence, Arab women continue to be limited within the sphere of household responsibilities as both wife and mother (Abu Bakr). Early marriage has been proven to prohibit Arab womens' acquisition of postsecondary education and economic independence-- in other words, women who seek progressive power are considered masculine, and must be constrained to their responsibilities within the family. On the other hand, Israeli Jewish women are granted the right to initiate divorce proceedings without it hindering their socio-economic status within society. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics shows that 37 percent of married Palestinian women in occupied territories have experienced domestic violence from their husbands, indicating unequal realities between Israeli-Jews and Palestinian-Arab married women.

Since 2000, Israeli-Jewish women have taken part in military field operations alongside men, enjoying a sense of both physical and spiritual independence and strength. Rather than being subject to the Israeli Defense Forces' aggressive conduct, Israeli-Jewish women are protected under the 2000 Equality Amendment within Israeli Military Service law, providing Jewish women the same equal rights as men in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Hence, Israeli-Jewish women comprise of 33% of the IDF, fulfilling multiple roles across its ground, navy, and air forces. On the other hand, the IDF has been accused for diminishing the psychological and economic security of Arab-Palestinian women during the 1967 War. Following the establishment of Israel in 1948, Arab women were displaced from their homelands, resulting in a nation-wide refugee crisis.

However, through its 1951 compulsory education law, Israel has naturally empowered Palestinian-Arab women rights by integrating secondary education for Arab women. Although Israel has promoted discriminatory policies towards the Palestinian community as a whole, Palestinian-Arab women are granted individual beneficiaries such as legal and financial protection, voting rights, education, and welfare programs. Hence, Arab-Palestinian

women benefit from individual rights, but not communal rights. The increasing demand for women within the Israeli labour market has also changed the status of Palestinian women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well, where Arab women make up 47.2 percent of primary-level students in government schools. Thus, Israel's compulsory education law has naturally contributed to a rise in intellectual Palestinian women joining the workforce, creating a dual role for Palestinian women identity. In 1982, 40 percent of students attending higher institutions in the West Bank were Arab-Palestinian women.

Though many young Palestinian women pursue post-compulsory education, this has not guaranteed social-political participation in society. Due to Israel's harsh political situation, Arab women living in the newly autonomous territories of Gaza and Jericho often find themselves in disadvantaged positions compared to Jewish women despite receiving education. Further, the Women's Security Index discusses how in 2013, Palestinian women were likely to fear government institutions twice as much as Israeli women. Within the workforce itself, Arab-Muslim women receive the lowest salaries compared to any other Israeli and hold the greatest rate of unemployment. Additionally, wage for Palestinian female workers are considerably low, particularly compared to the rates of Israeli Jewish women obtaining high-level career opportunities. In fact, Palestinian women's daily wages are only 76 percent of Palestinian men's while Jewish-Israeli women are 24 percent more likely to get hired in comparison to Palestinian-Arab women.

Palestinian women are marginalized and considered "third class" as citizens of Israel in all cultural, gender, national, and racial structures (Herzog). However, by increasing their presence in the labour market and adopting patterns of assertive behavior towards success, Palestinian-Arab women have made steps towards carrying out political acts that blur and challenge conceptions held by the Jewish male-dominant society. Rising feminist-nationalist organization such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committee has encouraged Arab-Palestinian women to socially engage in both the political and economic markets. Although Palestinian women are still very limited in their roles and statuses, the fight for Arab-Palestinian women's rights in the West Bank is evident and improving with time and progress. Arab women have also increasingly gained access to trade unions and political awareness towards equal wages

or employment opportunities. Within the Gaza Strip, the Women's Empowerment Project has provided counselling services to women who were victim to violence or domestic abuse. As such, Arab-Palestinian women utilized media for self-empowerment as well, spreading online awareness as a tool for progression Arab women rights.

On the other hand, Israeli-Palestinian women are at risk of symbolic depletion of their feminity by acquiring "too much" economic or social powers (Sa'ar). Women who seek progressive power are considered "masculine," and must be constrained to her responsibility within the family. Sa'ar describes qawiyi in terms of a local understanding of feminine strength among Arab women, which highlights the rising class of educated Palestinian women going beyond what is traditionally accepted within Arab culture. As such, qawiyi expands the social norms of Palestinian womanhood despite facing both physical and internal struggles as an underrepresented minority. However, strength within the Arab-Palestinian community can often be characterized as "anti-feminine;" therefore, Palestinian women often struggle to find the balance between their achievements and social acceptance.

Throughout the history of cross-cultural misunderstandings between the Arab world and the West, Palestinian career women have been criticized for modeling their work on the Western liberal notion of "career." More specifically, Palestinian career women are attacked for adopting Western fashions, manners, ideas and lifestyles, therefore betraying the state of Islam by integrating within Israel's liberal society. Arabs continue to perceive the West as a force of destruction, aiming to erase Arab culture. As the concept of equal gender rights clashes with Islamic law, Palestinian women face aggressive social rejection within the state of Islam.

Experiencing unequal opportunities within both the Palestinian and Israeli community, Arab women must also overcome gender discrimination that impedes their economic and social mobility as Israeli citizens and Arab Muslim women. Compared to Jewish-Israeli women, the average Palestinian woman's social experience is rooted within multiple layers of oppression and exclusion, where Arab-Palestinian women hold unequal social, economic, and political realities in comparison to Israeli Jews. Perhaps the marginalization of Palestinian women derives from the oppressive nature of Israel's socio-political structure, where the everyday experiences of racism are rooted within the existence of discriminatory social

norms such as marriage and family responsibilities. Nonetheless, Arab-Palestinian women have increasingly benefitted from Israel's educational reform and social engagement, thus raising more awareness towards the role of Palestinian women and its traditional limitations. Despite being third-class citizens, Palestinian-Arab women continue to challenge their social definition within all religious, ethnic, and social contexts in the the state of Israel, pushing towards a newly reconstructed notion of women rights' in the Middle East.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Does the empowerment of Arab women's rights require international response? Or should such cultural and religious sensitivities be left to the responsibility of Muslim leaders?
2. How should we approach the ongoing debate regarding Saudi Arabia's membership in the UN Women's Rights committee?
3. How will Arab-Palestinian women integrate within Israeli society? Are their rights legitimate under Israeli law?
4. How does the OIC's definition of human rights apply to Muslim women?

TOPIC B: ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

INTRODUCTION:

Despite common misconceptions, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not primarily rooted within religious differences nor is it so gruesomely violent as the public image portrays; rather, its foundation derives from the claim of two peoples over the same strip of land (Dowty). Over the years, the conflict has unfolded a multitude of cultural, religious, and social complexities between two varying ethnic identities; however, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was and still is a clash between the Jewish national movement (Zionism) seeking to establish a Jewish state (לארשי צהרא) in the historic Land of Israel -- and an Arab Palestinian national movement defining this same territory (Palestine) as an integral part of the Islamic world (نيطسلف). As warranted, even debating upon what the true origins of the Israel-Palestinians conflict is controversial -- to Israeli supporters, the conflict is defined as the Palestinians' refusal to acknowledge Jewish legitimate claims to its own historic homeland, whereas Arabs often define the issue as a violation of Palestinian rights to self-determination (Dowly). Further, despite the obvious strife between Jews and Arabs within the state of Israel, the involvement of neighboring Arab countries following the establishment of Israel in 1948 expanded its label to an Arab-Israeli conflict. Hence, the "Arab-Israeli" conflict is more precedent in modern terms, though Arab states have largely disengaged (Egypt and Jordan have signed peace treaties with Israel) from the conflict.

Common Misconceptions:

In your preparation of providing elegant speeches during conference, take note of the exact terms you use in addressing different groups of people and places. When it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, just about everything is controversial; thus, it is crucial that every term utilized is accurate. Avoiding such misconceptions first requires understanding, then later investigate what is "true" within the vast sources provided to you online. Are the terms "Zionists," "Israelis" and "Jews" interchangeable? The definition of "Zionism" addresses the Jewish movement for national self-determination. This notion of self-

determination refers to the the formal establishment of the state of Israel as an official home to Jews across the world. The term "Jews," however, is simply a religious-ethnic group that can include peoples of any racial background. Finally, an "Israeli" is one who officially holds an Israeli passport and is recognized under this state as a citizen of Israel. The common misperception is that only Jews can be referred to as Israelis, when in fact the term Israeli is based upon basic citizenship, rather than racial identity.

Topic Background:

The historical timeline of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict dates back to 1900, and has since continued along the following chronological order:

1900-1917	Zionism and Early Jewish Immigration to Israel
1915-1916	Hussein-McMahon Letters
1916 (May)	Sykes-Picot Agreement
1916 (May)	Arab Revolt Against the Ottoman Empire
1917	Balfour Declaration
1918	WWI and Collapse of the Ottoman Empire
1919	King-Crane Commission
1920-1922	League of Nations Divides Former Ottoman Territories into Mandates
1933-1936	Mass Jewish Immigration to Palestine (Nazi Germany)
1933-1945	Holocaust
1936-1939	Arab Revolt in Palestine against British Mandate
1939-1945	WWII and Jewish Revolt against British Mandate
1941-1945	Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Allies with Axis Power
1947	Great Britain Requests UN Intervention on Palestinian Question
1947	UN Partitions to Separate Jewish and Palestinian States
1948	Jews vs. Palestinian Village of Deir Yassin
1948	Israel Declares Independence
1948	First Arab-Israeli War
1948-1949	Palestinian Refugees
1949	Israel Armistice Agreements with Arab Nations

1956	Second Arab-Israeli War
1956	UNEF Intervention
1964	Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Formed
1967	Six-Day War
1967	Arab Summit Conference
1967	UN Security Council Passes Resolution 242
1969 (February)	Yasser Arafat elected Chairman of the PLO
1969 (March)-1970	Israeli War of Attrition with Egypt
1970 (September)	Palestinian Guerillas attempted to overthrow Jordanian monarchy
1970-1971	PLO expelled from Jordan & moved to Lebanon
1972 (September)	Palestinian members of Black September killed 11 Israeli Olympians
1973 (Oct. 6-25)	Yom Kippur War/War of 1973 (ends in a ceasefire)
	Israel & Egypt sign Disengagement Accord over Suez Canal
1974	Arab League acknowledges legitimacy of PLO
1975	UN General Assembly (GA) resolves that Zionism is a form of racism
1978	Israel invades Southern Lebanon in response to Palestinian attack
1979	Israel and Egypt sign historic peace treaty/Sinai Peninsula is returned
1982	U.S. President Reagan rejects creation of Independent Palestinian State
1987	First Palestinian Intifada Begins and Hamas is founded
1988	Palestine proclaims establishment of independent state
1991 (Oct.-Nov)	Madrid Conference - Israel's first direct negotiation with PLO
1991 (December)	UN revokes 1975 resolution on racist classification of Zionism
1993 (April)	Hamas carries out first suicide bomb attack in Israel
1993 (September)	Oslo Peace Accord signed by Israel and the PLO
1994	Massacre at Tomb of the Patriarchs by Jewish Defense League Member
1994 (May)	Cairo Agreement signed transferring bulk to Gaza Strip to Palestine
1994 (June)	Israel and Jordan Sign Peace Treaty

1995	Oslo II Accords (Giving Palestinians Control Over West Bank & Gaza), Israeli Prime Minister assassinated
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In the early 20th century, Zionists claimed legitimacy in creating a Jewish state in what was previously known as Ottoman Palestine. Hence, early migration to Palestine began as early as the eighteenth century. The notion of aliyah held a religious connotation to migrate towards the Holy Land, where one must ascend towards the land of Jerusalem. The first aliyah took place in 1881 as a result of Russian domestic policy, where Jews faced harsh discrimination and were stripped of basic human rights. As the persecution of Jews continued through Europe in the nineteenth century, fractions of the Jewish community began migrating towards Palestine, where they expanded their own agricultural communities and waited for the Messiah. The second aliyah from 1904-1914 in the wake of ensuing anti-Semitism in Europe -- young Jews were inspired to establish the Jewish socialist movement in Ottoman Palestine, leading to a revival of Jewish sentiment and modernity. Thus, as the number of Jews migrating to Palestine increased, conflict with Arab-Palestinians over territorial and religious lands grew as well. Alongside such tensions included the rise of Zionism, which led to the first Zionist Congress in 1897.

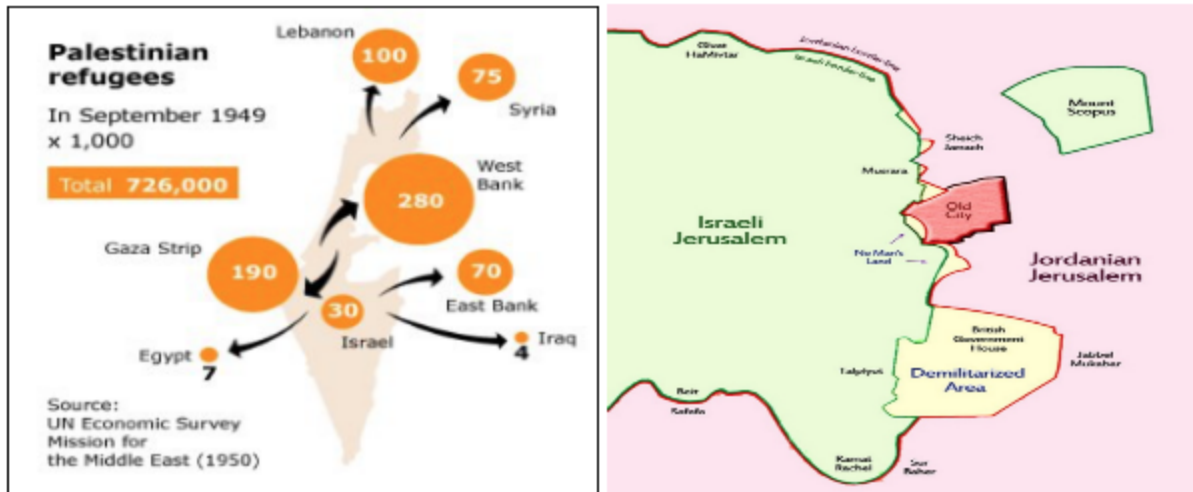
The Hussein-McMahon letters between Sharif Hussein of Mecca and British commissioner Henry McMahon in 1915 represents one of the most controversial aspects of British involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Prior to WWI, the British encouraged Arab leaders to revolt against the Ottoman empire in return for official recognition of Arab independence over Ottoman lands. However, the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which stated British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, ultimately laid the foundation to a flurry of political discontent and Palestinian resentment. The first UN response to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis dates back to 1920, where the League of Nations divided former Ottoman territories into British mandates following WWII, leaving the fate of Israel in the hands of European powers. However, unable to reconcile its conflicting obligations as both Jews and Palestinians claimed their legal rights to the Holy Land, the British government eventually turned towards the United Nations, which partitioned to separate Palestine into both Jewish and Palestinian states in 1947.

WWII Aftermath

Prior to Israeli Independence in 1948, the UN responded to ongoing Jewish-Palestinian wars by creating the 1947 UN partition plan also known as Resolution 181, which allowed 56% of Mandate Palestine to the Jewish state while 46% was allotted to the Arab state (Abdel). The city of Jerusalem, however, would remain an international enclave under a "Special International Regime" through UN supervision due to its controversial religious sentiment for both Muslims and Jews. With this partition, the Arab population of Palestine would own 85% of the land whereas the Jewish population would only comprise about one-third of the total and own about 7% of the land. Although the Zionists, led by David Ben-Gurion, accepted UNSCOP partition proposal, Palestinian and surrounding Arab states' response to such terms were uniformly negative. The Mufti declared from Beirut that UN Resolution 181 was "null and void," and members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria initiated a campaign calling for an Arab army to liberate the state of Palestine. Though the Arab League Secretary General Abd al-Rahman Azzam had foreseen the partition as the only solution for Palestine, he failed to suggest the move himself, largely due to rising anti-Jewish sentiment within the Arab world and its denial of the Jews' legitimate claims to the land of Israel.

As such, the War of 1948 ultimately established Israeli independence from British control, where Ben Gurion immediately endowed the newly-created state by establishing the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The 1948 War, however, began the day after Ben Gurion's declaration of independent statehood, where armies from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq entered the war to invade Palestine. Also known as the Six-Day War, the second Arab-Israeli War was a major turning point in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where Israel successfully gained military control over the Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, West Bank, and Golan Heights. To this day, Palestinians accuse Israel for the 1948 Nakba (نكبة 1948), which indicated the loss of their homeland to the Zionists. The meaning behind Nakba was not merely territorial, but also a mourning to Palestinian refugees who were now forced to remain in exile, particularly to Jordan, which largely controlled the West Bank of Israel. Although this would have been the perfect opportunity for Jordan to initiate an independent state of Palestine for the Arab-Palestinian refugees, Jordan instead controlled their destiny

while Palestinians who came under Israel's control were treated as second-class citizens.

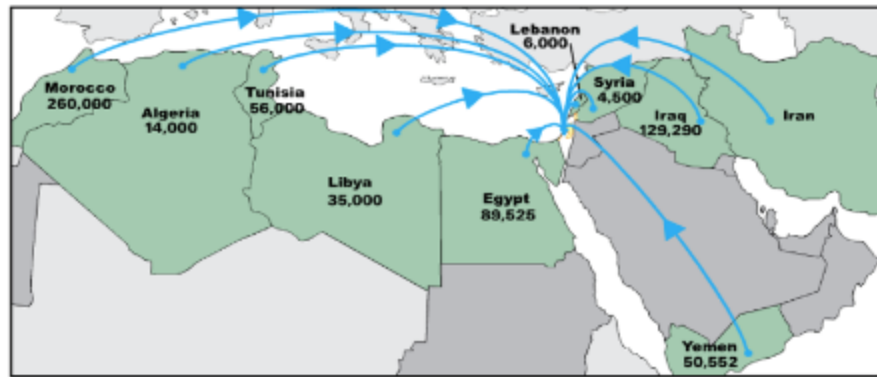


(Left) The Nakba: Palestinian Exodus

(Right) The 1948 Armistice Line and Old City of Jerusalem

In the late 1960s, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed by Palestinian Arabs as a military and political organization with the mission of achieving Palestinian independence. Through the PLO, Palestinians were granted the opportunity to organize under one unified group to fight back against Israel's military. Two militant groups under the leadership of the PLO, the Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), strategically attacked Israel from across the border using advanced weaponry. Although Israel perceived such tactics as terrorist acts, Arab-Palestinian supporters described the violence as acts of war to reclaim their homeland. Furthermore, more extreme members of the PFLP veered to more violent acts of terrorism in other parts of the world in order to draw attention towards the Arab-Palestinian struggle against the state of Israel (Benson). In 1972, several members of the PLO branched off to form an independent group called Black September, later staging what became known as the Munich Massacre during the 1972 Olympics. Catching the attention of the international community, governments around the world quickly began implementing tighter security measures while Israel continued its struggle against Palestinian militant groups (Benson).

1948-1978



The Jewish Exodus

However, the struggles between Israel and the PLO came to a head in December of 1987, when outrage over the death of four Palestinian civilians in a car accident involving an IDF truck grew into an all-out conflict spanning six years. As a sign of civil disobedience, Palestinian protesters engaged in strikes, boycotts of Israeli administrations within the Gaza Strip and West Bank, and refusals to pay taxes. When the Palestinian opposition resorted to using graffiti, throwing stones at IDF officials and detonating Molotov cocktails, the IDF took direct action by deploying several thousand soldiers to hold off Palestinian crowds. The conflict grew far deadlier as IDF troops, in the face of increasing hostility from Palestinian demonstrators, released tear gas, mercilessly beat, and ultimately opened fire on civilian crowds: by the time peace treaties had finally begun to be written, the "First Intifada" had claimed the lives of 100 Israeli civilians and over 1200 Palestinian civilians. Stopgap agreements and weak treaties such as the Madrid Conference of 1991, Oslo Accords, and the Camp David Summit in 2000 has attempted to mend the rift between Ehud Barak, the Israeli prime minister and Yasser Arafat, and the leader of Palestine. Following a Second Intifada in 2000, Israel and Palestine have stayed at odds, with no signs of either country attempting to relent.

Arab-Palestinian Society

The very notion of the "Arab-Palestinian Society" indicates the ethnic, cultural split between Israelis and Palestinians – despite living within the state of Israel, the Arab-

Palestinian society is understood to be segregated from an Israeli identity, both spiritually and geographically. Israel's continued internal social and political strife has led towards concerns of territorial occupation, struggling international recognition, and failed attempts for cooperation. The social distinctions between Israelis and Palestinians bound Arab-Palestinians to their own community, one that has increasingly taken pride in its own sense of nationalism throughout the past decades. As such, we witness the Arab-Palestinians identifying themselves as Palestinian instead, without holding true Israeli nationalism or a sense of belonging to Jewish-Israeli establishments. This inevitable split of identity and belonging between Arab-Palestinians and Israelis is fundamental to Palestinian-Israeli tensions, drawing upon post-1948 identity to our modern understanding of the two separate groups living under one state.

Ultimately, the Arab society occupies the margins of Jewish Israel, both geographically and politically (Ghanem & Mustafa). As such, the very exclusion of the Arab population from the public space has set the foundation to the Arab-Palestinians' lacking sense of identity and belonging to Israeli society. Further, Arab patriotism has gradually shifted from civic Israeli to Palestinian patriotism – minorities that cannot develop patriotic feeling toward their state due to exclusionary policies tend to develop counter-patriotic attachments (Jamal). Therefore, Israel's political culture has failed to include the cultural identity of all Israeli citizens equally, particularly the Arab-Palestinian community (Jamal). Israel's exclusionary policies are witnessed both socially and politically. With a lacking sense of belonging to the state of Israel, the symbolic notion of Israel's national anthem is even ignored amongst Arab Palestinians. The birth of the Arab-Palestinian Refugee issue emerged from 1948 to 1949; subsequently, only a small percentage of Palestinians fleeing from the West Bank were permitted to return, thus intensifying the physical dispersal of Palestinian Arabs.

The Arab minority in Israel developed different forms of Palestinian patriotism at different stages, which has been manifested in changing symbols of attachment (Jamal). Following the establishment of Israel in 1948, Arab national consciousness was relatively subdued (Rekhess). This is primarily due to military presence in Arab-populated areas and the physical isolation of Israeli Arabs from the Arab world (Rekhess). From 1967-1993, the Arab-Palestinian Society witnessed a "national awakening" of the Arabs in Israel, also

known as Palestinization (Rekness). In fact, the 1967 war was a symbol of Palestinian patriotism in Israel and marked a transition in Arab-Palestinian identity and nationalism. Under the PLO, there remained one unified body speaking for the Palestinian people, thus shaping Arab nationalism and identification as Arab-Palestinians. This primarily resulted in the full confirmation of Arabs as Palestinians, as well as the rise of Palestinian nationalism, particularly sparked by the Six Day War and Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip. Furthermore, 1993 to the present has called upon a new "national dilemma of Arabs in Israel," whom propose alternative models to the 1948 paradigm of "minority-majority relations in Israel" (Rekness). From 1993-present, it is clear that Arab-Palestinian identity is separate from Jewish Israeli identity.

Today, the Arab-Palestinian Society hold a multi-dimensional identity, intertwined by their civil duties to Israel, national identity as Arab-Palestinians, religious devotions, and regional identities in Galilee, the Triangle, and the Negev. The status of Arabs in Israel are still hindered by concerns of Israel security, socio-economic inequality between the two nations. Israel's intentions to declare itself a Jewish state continues to be widely debated, as this international proclamation only further alienates the Arab-Palestinian society. Thus, with the proclamation of the state of Israel as a continued international debate, the notion of identity remains a major problem for the status of Arabs in Israeli lands. (Jamal). Further, intentions for a one state, one vote policy has subsided while internal Israeli-Palestinian conflict increases exponentially.

Israel's Early State Policies

Following Israel's establishment as an independent state in 1948, the distinctive split between Jews and Arabs was clear – rather than unifying under one state, Israel was given the choice to work towards integrating Arabs into Israel's society or maintain a policy of integration. In fact, the Israeli government did not implement a direct solution to the Arab minority -- instead, the daily lives of Arab citizens in Israel were subject to Israeli control and superiority. Unfortunately, Israeli policy towards the Arab society from 1948 onwards was shaped by inevitable discriminatory attitudes and a fear for security, further segregating the two communities from harmony.

Israel's early state policy towards Arabs was characterized as suspicious and paternalistic – while restricting the freedom and responsibilities of the Arab minority, Israel masked their mistrust towards Arabs by claiming to be acting in the state's best interests (Peretz). With the 1948 war and its consequences so vividly reminisced, Israel's ultimate denial of full Arab integration within Israel's democracy draws from a period of confusion and fear for both internal and external security. As such, the drastic change in power called upon Israel's leaders to establish absolute control over its borders (Peretz). With the increasing pressure to assimilate the remaining Arab population, the Israeli government decided upon drastic internal policies that reflected its fear for security and continued suspicion towards Israeli Arabs. On the other hand, other scholars perceive Israel's early state policies as a process of trial and error, fluctuating between "aspirations and good intentions." As such, Arab Israelis were often prevented and denied from political leadership greater than the local level. Furthermore, intrinsic internal factors ultimately shaped Israel's early policies to manipulate and control the Arab community. In order to prevent social and political cohesion within the Palestinian community, Israel's security policy strived to maintain fragmentation to maintain Israeli dominance over its enemies. Most importantly, Israel took control of basic market forces in the West Bank, thus allowing Israel to limit Palestinians' own productive capacity while boosting its own economy (Migdal). As Israel opened their market to the West Bank and Arab labor through their "open bridges" policy, Arabs were forced to depend upon Israel's economy for survival.

Furthermore, Israeli early policies in 1948 were largely controlled by David Ben Gurion, who served as both Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. Strictly concerning himself with the security of the Jewish state, Gurion failed to perceive Israel as a Jewish-Arab entity under a binational state. As a result, Israel's state policies were influenced by its notion to maintain absolute superiority over the Arab community. Within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Jews were entrusted with absolute control over religious foundations such as the Arab Supreme Council, causing immense resentment within the Israeli Arab community (Peretz). The Prime Minister's advisor for Arab affairs was partially responsible for supporting loyal Arab leaders and monitoring the political successes of the Mapai party; however, Gurion's belief in Israel as a Jewish state further alienated Arabs from socio-economic equalities. Additionally,

although the Mapai party was held responsible for establishing policies towards Arab Israelis, the politically-based institution was accused for abusing their political power for personal advantages. Further, the Ministry of Education has been accused for investing in less unique programs for the Arab community and only providing extra care for Jews, indicating that Palestinian students receive inferior allocations for student-focused programs (Golan-Agnon). Another primary institution that shaped the lives of Israeli Arabs was the Ministry of Minorities, which monitored cultural propaganda and acted as the custodian of absentees' property by maintaining communication between the foreign office and Israeli army. In both the social and political spheres, Arabs have received far less representation in Israel's decision-making system, which further accentuates the lack of trust towards Arab opinion and authority.

Policies such the 1950 Law of Return and 1952 Nationality Law influenced the daily life of Israeli Arabs as it re-emphasized a distinctive Jewish Israeli state, thus excluding the needs and social identity of Arab citizens in Israel. Under Israel's "absolute control" policy, Arabs were subject to limited freedom and opportunities to succeed both politically and economically, causing large resentment within the Arab community. Specifically, the Absentee Property Law and Land Acquisition Law was detrimental to the daily lives of Arabs, where their land properties and acquired ownerships were seized by the Israeli government under the pretense of "national security." As such, Arab Israelis have greatly opposed Israel's policies, claiming that the enforcement of Arabs to prove citizenship rights by residence as largely discriminatory. The Ministry of Interior, responsible for issuing permits for permanent residents and citizenship status, shaped Arab Israeli daily life by administering properties of Arab absentees and establishing a local government system. As Arab Israelis continued to be considered a threat to the state, Israel's fear for security caused strict enforcement towards its Arab Israel community, whose lives continued to be affected by such biases.

Instead of a bi-national state, the Israeli government was largely controlled under one socio-political nationality. The state of Israel was considered a unity parliament regime, with its legislative power vested in the Knesset. Headed by Ben Gurion, whose Declaration of the State of Israel prioritized Jewish interests above all, the Arab-Palestinian community was subject to Israel's systematic inequalities. Although Israel's parliamentary democracy should

grant equal status to all its Israeli citizens, its regime was largely vested under parliamentary supremacy from 1948 to 1966, which instigated harsher policies towards Arabs for the sake of state security.

The shift from Israel's suspicious attitude towards Arabs to perceiving the Arab minority as an enemy has intensified over the past decade (Peleg and Waxman). As a result, this perception has contributed to a rightward shift in Israeli politics that threatens the political freedom of Palestinians in Israel and potentially the very future of Israel's democracy. The increasing intolerance of the Jewish majority toward Arab political activism has rendered immense legal restriction on Arab Palestinians' political freedom. As second-class citizens to Jews, Israel's early state policies towards Arab has prompted fierce Palestinian resistance; hence, the Palestinians had to confine their social activism to middle-level politics (Rouhana & Huneidi).

Due to their sudden lack of political influences and access, Palestinian resistance has often come in the form of social protests. Israel transformed into a "racializing state," which pursued religious and racial categorization of citizens that disadvantaged Palestinians and favored Jewish groups (Sa'di). As such, Palestinians' did not truly enjoy equal civil citizenship following 1948. Although social protests are supposed to be granted under Israel's free state, Israel strived to undermine Palestinians' collective behavior and social movement, and instead aimed to maintain fragmentation in order to remain superior over the Palestinian community. Although Israel recognizes Arabs as a community and allows them to preserve their distinct culture, it fails to apply the same constitutional democratic rights to Arab Palestinians; therefore, rather than being a binational state, Israel is ultimately a Jewish and democratic state. In doing so, Israel has plunged into a war of physical, mental, and spiritual separation between its ethnic minority groups and maintaining stability.

International Response:

In modern-day politics, Arab-Palestinians have veered back towards the two-state solution, despite repudiating the initial UN proposal in 1947. In justifying their rejection of the original UN partition to divide the state of Israel equally, the Palestinians believed that the UN Resolution 181 inflicted upon them a great historic injustice (Abdel). Although the two-

state solution has created hope for Israel-Palestine future, successful internal occupation is unlikely to be effective as a two-state solution requires increased economic interdependence and cultural cooperation. Unfortunately, despite solutions proposed to resolve such detailed territorial disputes, hope for establishing the state of Palestine is bleak while Israel's struggle for internal peace heightens.

The Arab Peace Initiative aims to establish Israel's formal recognition and peaceful relations with 22 Arab nations in exchange for territory. However, as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict draws back to decades of racial, ethnic, religious, and historical hatred, the simple act of surrendering territory remains an unachievable goal today. The failure of API lies within the notion of "indivisibility," where land disputes, such as Jerusalem, remains an all-or-nothing case that cannot be shared or negotiated. Particularly, the Holy land is deeply ingrained within religious and cultural roots; thus, the two-state solution in segregating Israeli lands between Jews and Arabs is unlikely to succeed. Hence, the API's proposition to exchange this religiously sacred and appraised land for "recognition and normal relations" is far from becoming a plausible achievement. For one, Israel may not truly need recognition by Arab states as their permanent seat within the international community is already sufficient international recognition in itself. Secondly, Israeli-Palestinian relations is far-off from peaceful restoration by the mere act of territorial trade as suggested by the API.

Nonetheless, the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative still holds political significance due to its partial attempt to draw strategic negotiations and peaceful settlements. Ultimately, the API has served in its initial role in providing diplomatic conversations and solutions to the ongoing relationship between Israel and Palestine; however, its lack of success indicates the necessity for both Israel and Palestine to demonstrate mutual rationality and state interests without cultural and religious biases.

The international community has held significant power in shaping the course of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In some cases, however, the UN has only heightened tensions through negligent errors of Resolution 242 and pressuring Israel to return lands following their victory in 1967. Just this past June, Israel parliament approved a controversial piece of legislation that defined the state of Israel as the nation-state of Jewish people, causing critics to argue upon the marginalization of Arab-Palestinians. Further, the U.S.'s heavy

involvement within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has sparked negative response among Arab nations, particularly due to Israel's dependency on American support for state legitimacy and international support. This past September, the U.S. announced its discontinuation of financial support to UNRWA (The United Nations Relief and Works Agency) for Palestinian refugees. The implications of this event indirectly perpetrates Arab-Palestinian identity and the "Right of Return" as perceived within the international community.

CASE STUDY: ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND ITS EFFECT ON ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Despite the obvious effects of the decades-long Israel-Palestine conflict on the sociopolitical stability of both countries as well as the Middle East as a whole, the collateral impact of said conflict on economic development via environmental damage and degradation has been ominous. In conjunction with the thousands of lives lost in only the past several years due to constant warfare afforded by Israeli occupation in Palestine, the disruption of public works and services has exacerbated ongoing water shortages and has seriously threatened the state of sustainable agriculture and nature conservation across both regions (Cole).

Much of the environmental degradation is a direct result of Israel's expansionist policy, the tenet upon which the country was built, which typically manifests itself as the establishment of illegal Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory. A comprehensive report by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics released in 2010 indicated 144 Israeli-recognized settlements in Palestine West Bank, as well as an additional 221 unrecognized outposts (Ramahi). Despite the growth rate of Israeli settlers within the West Bank reducing every year as of 2017, the rate is still above the national average (Magid et al). The presence of these illegal settlements and the construction of bypass roads to link the illegal communities have separated off present-day Palestinian towns, forming what are known as settlement axes. These axes fragment unified Palestinian territory and isolate said communities from the surrounding environment and resources. These axes exist alongside existing Palestinian roadways, choking infrastructure and preventing commodity transportation, causing the Palestinian economy to slowly stall (Ramahi).

The fragile condition of the Palestinian economy additionally contributes to the exaggerated effect of environmental degradation. The lack of access to natural resources is facilitated by settlement axes as well as the provisions listed in the 1994 Paris Economic Protocol. This not only outlined financial and economic relations between Israel and Palestine, but also deepened the dependency of the Palestinian economy on Israeli trade and labor (Arafah). As a result, the Palestinian economy is supported on only a few exports, the standout exports being labor and agriculture. Moreover, taking into account the fact that the country is overly-reliant on agriculture and has possessed relatively the same GDP for

the past five years (Stub), Palestine, at its current state, needs natural resources and suitable land and soil more than ever in the midst of a conflict and financially-demanding wartime economy.

A growing concern, compounding existing issues surrounding previously-mentioned Israeli settlements, is the increasing contamination of Palestinian land and groundwater. Israeli settlements have been pumping millions of cubic meters of wastewater into Palestinian valleys and the Jordan River Basin (Ramahi) for the past few years; valleys containing freshwater aquifers and agriculturally-viable soil such as Wadi al-Nar and Wadi Qana have recently experienced an increase in proportions of nitrates and salts, making existing water unfit for human-use and currently-irrigated fields unsuitable for agriculture. With the economy of Palestine already expected to weaken this upcoming year in the form of a GDP growth decline of 2.5% (The World Bank), the environmental limitations of poor water quality and absence of fertile soil, environmental degradation is a glaring issue. To add to Palestine's own struggles, Israel stands to lose a great deal financially due to the potential of mountain water aquifers, which supply both Israel and the West Bank, to become extremely contaminated due to unrestricted wastewater contamination by illegal Israeli settlements. Moreover, the lack of arable land in Israel available for agriculture as well as Palestine economic shortcomings indicates that environmental preservation is key to economic sustainability (Lidman et al).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What are the implications of a one-state versus two-state solution?
How does this tie into the notion of indivisibility?
2. How has U.S. foreign policy influenced the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

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