

Committee: General Assembly 3rd: Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM)
Topic: Self-Sovereignty and Human Rights in Occupied Palestine
Country: The Portuguese Republic
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The Portuguese Republic acknowledges the long and controversial Israeli-Palestinian conflict which is older than the United Nations itself. In order to address self-sovereignty and human rights in occupied Palestine, the problem is rooted in three key issues: border disputes, right of return, and security. Even though there are some theological and religious differences, the conflict is not completely intractable as many believe it to be. Rather, competing nationalisms is a more accurate term for the origin of the dispute between the Palestinians and Israelis.

The international community since the 20th century has become better at managing these conflicts rather than resolving them. In 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 194 which defined the principles and rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and receive compensation. However, many of the articles are left unfulfilled and is opposed by Israel and rejected by the Arab states. Palestinian refugees claim they have a right of return guaranteed by the “Geneva Conventions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights”¹. Then in 1967 the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 was unanimously approved after the Six-Day War. The resolution called for “the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict”². Although it was not fully implemented, the resolution represents diplomatic efforts between Member States to end the conflict.

In 2014, the Portuguese parliament passed a resolution which recognizes a Palestinian state. This resolution calls for the government of Portugal to “recognize, in coordination with the European Union, the State of Palestine as an independent state, in accordance with the principles of international law”³. Foreign Minister Rui Machete advocates for establishing long-term peace between the Israelis and Palestinians and other Portuguese lawmakers believe talks will ensure security in the region. Such a resolution along with others in Europe pressures and calls for relaunching the peace process as tens of thousands of lives have been lost in this century alone due to the conflict⁴.

The Portuguese Republic calls upon Member States to advocate for Palestine to become the 194th member state of the United Nations in order to increase their credibility and legitimacy and which could eventually lead to self-sovereignty. However, this cannot be the main focus of debate since our committee does not have the power to grant Palestine membership. When the local authorities cannot be trusted, the international community needs to have a role in protecting human rights. This is why the Portuguese Republic proposes the L.A.N.D plan. Local organizations (such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), accessibility to help for victims of human rights violations, national interests (shifting them to focus on human rights), and deterrence can lead to moving forward with the peace process. Both Israel and Palestine must be held accountable for committing potential war crimes and must be responsible for upholding the human rights of people in the region. Peace cannot exist without justice.

¹ “Refugee Right of Return.” *Global Policy Forum* , Global Policy Forum , www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/index-of-countries-on-the-security-council-agenda/israel-palestine-and-the-occupied-territories/48028.html.

² Bennis, Phyllis. “What Has Been the Role of the UN in the Israel-Palestine Struggle.” *Trans Arab Research Institute (TARI)*, Jan. 2001, tari.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=15.

³ “Portugal's Parliament Calls for Recognition of Palestinian State.” *Haaretz*, Haaretz, 13 Dec. 2014, www.haaretz.com/portuguese-lawmakers-recognize-palestine-1.5345473.

⁴ “Portugal's Parliament Calls to Recognize 'Palestine'.” *Arutz*, Sheva , 12 Dec. 2014, www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/188592.

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