



UN SECURITY COUNCIL BACKGROUND GUIDE

MID-AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
DECEMBER 1-2, 2023
LANSING, MI

PRESENTED BY



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A. THE SITUATION IN NIGER

In July 2023, Niger's President Mohamed Bazoum was seized and military troops (junta) declared an end to the current political regime citing dissatisfaction with security, the economy, and social governance. The junta suspended all of Niger's institutions, implemented a country-wide curfew, and closed all land and air borders.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) met on July 30, 2023 and issued a communique that, in part, affirmed the legitimacy of President Bazoum's status as head of state, condemned the attempt to overthrow constitutional order in Niger, and sought the immediate release of President Bazoum. The communique imposed a one-week deadline for the Niger military to comply or the members of ECOWAS would seek to restore constitutional order itself. The diplomatic efforts by ECOWAS were refuted by the coup's leadership and the one-week deadline passed without resolution. In response to ECOWAS's threats to use military intervention, the junta also threatened to kill President Bazoum.

Meanwhile, President Bazoum and his family remained held in the basement of his palace amid growing concern about their health and captivity conditions due to reports of no electricity, no water, and only canned foods to eat. In an effort to show its strength, the junta brought charges of treason against President Bazoum and, on August 21, 2023, declared the formation of a new government.

Many western states, including Germany, the United Kingdom, and France, called for President Bazoum's release and restoration of democracy. The junta demanded the withdrawal of the French military and demanded that the French ambassador to Niger be removed from power. Although French President Emmanuel Macron initially refused the demands, he later agreed to remove all French troops from Niger by the end of 2023 and to recall the ambassador and her staff. The junta celebrated this development as supportive of its movement.

As of late September 2023, President Bazoum remains captive. He has petitioned the ECOWAS Court of Justice for his release and reinstatement to presidential office.

[Niger soldiers declare coup on national TV - BBC News](#)

[Final communique – Extraordinary Summit of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government on the political situation in Niger \(latest version\) | Economic Community of West African States \(ECOWAS\)](#)

[Niger's ousted president 'running low on food' under house arrest after coup | Halstead Gazette](#)

[Niger coup: Ousted President Bazoum to be charged with high treason, junta says - BBC News](#)

[Niger: coup military regime forms government | Africanews](#)

[Crisis in Niger: Macron announces that the French ambassador will stay despite the pressure of the putschists \(bfmtv.com\)](#)

[France to withdraw ambassador and troops from Niger after coup, Macron says \(france24.com\)](#)

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B. The Situation in the Middle East

The Middle East continues to be a highly volatile region posing unique challenges for the United Nations's efforts to maintain international peace and stability. In 1947, the United Nations passed Resolution 181, which endorsed the partition of British Mandatory Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states.²¹ Although the partition was embraced by Jewish leaders, it was flatly rejected by Palestinian leadership and the surrounding Arab nations.²² A war quickly broke out over the formation of the new Jewish state. Over the next several decades, periodic violence marred the region as conflicts broke out both between the new state of Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as between Israel and Palestinian groups.

Nearly 80 years after the passage of Resolution 181, the situation remains dire. In early October, 2023, violence again erupted. On the 50th anniversary of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and on a weekend marked by several important Jewish holidays, Iranian-backed Hamas militants invaded Israel from the Gaza Strip. Within hours, reports of mounting death tolls and rampant acts of violence against civilian populations were shared. At the end of the first day of fighting, observers reported hundreds of civilian fatalities on each side of the conflict.²³

The situation in the Gaza Strip has worsened as the conflict continues. As of October 15, 2023, some 2,670 people have been killed and over 9,000 injured since Israel fired retaliatory air strikes. Israel has called for the relocation of approximately 1.1 million individuals living in the Gaza Strip within 24 hours. The United Nations intervened and asked Israel to withdraw the order, warning of "devastating humanitarian consequences." The World Health Organization has called the mission "impossible." During the evacuation, an air strike hit a convoy fleeing northern Gaza, resulting in the deaths of many, including women and young children.²⁴

Israel has expressed its intent to invade Gaza, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, threatening to "take Hamas apart." The United States has sent a second air strike carrier to the eastern Mediterranean to help "deter hostile actions against Israel or any efforts towards widening this war." Nearly half of Gaza's population has been displaced and faced a dwindling supply of food and water after Israel cut off all supplies. Fighting has intensified near Israel's northern border with Lebanon.²⁵ The conflict seems to be intensifying with no clear end in sight.

²¹ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/112181?ln=en>

²² <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/arab-israeli-war>

²³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/israel-opt-civilians-on-both-sides-paying-the-price-of-unprecedented-escalation-in-hostilities-between-israel-and-gaza-as-death-toll-mounts/>

²⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67039975>

²⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/10/15/world/israel-news-hamas-war-gaza>

With decades of grievances motivating each belligerent, the conflict is unlikely to be fully resolved in the near future. This agenda topic is limited to the situation in Israel, including the ongoing conflict and Israeli relations with the Palestinian leadership and its neighboring states. Delegates should not address unrelated conflicts in the region. In addressing the current situation, delegates should consider ways to promote a swift and just end to the conflict, the establishment of a durable peace in the region, and mechanisms for developing trust and goodwill between the belligerents. Delegates may also wish to consider humanitarian matters related to the conflict, such as the possibility of war crimes and any appropriate international response, access to food and medicine for civilians in the region, and the protection of important cultural and religious sites during the conflict.

****Please note that the current conflict is ongoing. Current events may change the dynamics of this debate at the conference and this background guide is providing historical context to a developing conflict****