



# SECURITY COUNCIL TOPIC GUIDE

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KALAMAZOO, MI

PRESENTED BY



## SECURITY COUNCIL

### 1. The Situation in the Middle East, Including the Palestine Question

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.<sup>1</sup> Although the partition was embraced by Jewish leaders, it was flatly rejected by Palestinian leadership and the surrounding Arab nations.<sup>2</sup> 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.

As a result of Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, success in the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections, and subsequent conflict with rival Palestinian political party Fatah, Hamas took full control of the Gaza Strip in 2007. In contrast to Fatah, which controls the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the West Bank and formally renounces violence, the core tenet of Hamas is armed resistance to Israel. This core tenet and Hamas's backing of violence has led to it being designated as a terrorist organization by the United States and European Union. Israel, supported by Egypt, has imposed a blockade on goods and people in and out of the Gaza Strip since 2007. While the stated aim of this blockade has been to prevent the movement of weapons in the Gaza Strip, it has resulted in a lack of resources for Palestinians, a reliance on international aid, and a further exacerbation of tensions in the region.<sup>3</sup>

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. Israeli government sources reported over 1,200 deaths and 240 individuals taken hostage on the first day of the conflict alone.<sup>4</sup> Of those hostages, more than half still remain in captivity as of early January 2024.<sup>5</sup>

The situation in the Gaza Strip has worsened as the conflict has continued. As of January 2024, Palestinian health officials report that nearly 23,000 Gazans have been killed from Israeli retaliatory strikes.<sup>6</sup> The Israeli government has disputed these figures, claiming that Palestinian authorities misreport fatalities.<sup>7</sup> Other news sources have noted that the Palestinian health authority is run by

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<sup>1</sup> <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/112181?ln=en>

<sup>2</sup> <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/arab-israeli-war>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-hamas>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/three-months-deaths-mount-diplomats-vie-stop-gaza-wars-spread-2024-01-07/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-hostage-families-despondency-sets-world-attention-shifts-2024-01-07/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/three-months-deaths-mount-diplomats-vie-stop-gaza-wars-spread-2024-01-07/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-gaza-health-ministry-health-death-toll-59470820308b31f1faf73c703400b033>

Hamas, further affecting its credibility.<sup>8</sup> Whatever the precise number of casualties, it is beyond dispute that the newest phase of this conflict has wrought a significant humanitarian toll, with many in Gaza having little access to clean water, food, and other necessities. Beyond injury and loss of life, the conflict has led to the displacement of a large portion of Gaza's 2.3 million civilian inhabitants, largely due to the Israeli response.<sup>9</sup> More, fighting has also intensified along Israel's northern border with Lebanon.<sup>10</sup> All told, the conflict seems to be intensifying with no clear end in sight.

The international community has become increasingly involved as the conflict has continued. Shortly after the onset of hostilities, the United States deployed a naval fleet, including two aircraft carriers, to the region.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, both the United Nations and the World Health Organization have protested the Israeli government's actions and displacement of Gazan civilians. In late December 2023, South Africa has begun proceedings against Israel in the International Court of Justice, accusing it of committing genocide.<sup>12</sup> In return, Israeli officials have accused the United Nations and other international organizations of bias, and condemned their "ongoing silence' regarding Hamas' responsibility" for the current crisis.<sup>13</sup> The United Nations has described these accusations as "misinformation."<sup>14</sup>

Although many groups have attempted to send humanitarian aid to Gaza, that process has not always been successful. Israeli military officials have refused to allow "dual use" items, or those that could be used for both military and civilian purposes, into Gaza.<sup>15</sup> This has resulted in shortages of medical equipment and other essential supplies.<sup>16</sup> Israeli sources claim that when aid does make it into Gaza, it is frequently looted by Hamas militants.<sup>17</sup> The humanitarian situation is further complicated because Egypt, Gaza's other neighbor and a fellow Arab state, has declined to allow many Palestinians to cross the border. The transfer of aid from Egypt into Gaza has also been slow and insufficient given the needs.

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 parties. 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. Last, delegates should

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/civilians-or-hamas-dual-use-issue-complicates-gaza-aid-efforts-2024-01-05/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/three-months-deaths-mount-diplomats-vie-stop-gaza-wars-spread-2024-01-07/>

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

<sup>11</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/ford-navy-israel-hamas-iran-25a387e50b4ad9054e8be753c59464e4>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20231228-app-01-00-en.pdf?cf\\_chl\\_tk=i1jiWxi30qZCn8EyHiY9ZZRtFT9o1FcXyD5cIPdaiUI-1704667448-0-gaNycGzNDDs](https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20231228-app-01-00-en.pdf?cf_chl_tk=i1jiWxi30qZCn8EyHiY9ZZRtFT9o1FcXyD5cIPdaiUI-1704667448-0-gaNycGzNDDs)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/a/israel-forces-out-un-official-in-palestinian-territories-/7380956.html>

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/civilians-or-hamas-dual-use-issue-complicates-gaza-aid-efforts-2024-01-05/>

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/gaza-aid-trucks-stolen-by-gunmen-and-looted-as-convoy-start-crossing-from-israel/>

consider whether and how the current conflict affects the Palestinian path to sovereignty, including the nature of the Palestinian presence at the United Nations.

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### 2. The Situation in the Great Lakes Region



In 2000, and following a history of instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United Nations Security Council passed Resolutions 1291<sup>18</sup> and 1304,<sup>19</sup> which called for an “international conference on peace, security, democracy and development in the Great Lakes region.” In November 2004, the first International Conference on the Great Lakes took place and continues to operate programs centered on peace and security; democracy and good governance; economic development and regional integration; humanitarian and environment issues; cross cutting issues; and gender, women and children.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the Conference, a Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region was created in February 2013<sup>21</sup> and continues to be tasked with supporting the implementation of the Peace Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework.<sup>22</sup> The PSC Framework was initially signed by 11 different countries (Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, DRC, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) with two additional countries (Kenya and Sudan) joining in early 2014. The PSC Framework is “geared towards addressing the root causes of violent conflict and ending recurring cycles of violence and suffering in eastern DRC and the Great Lakes region.”<sup>23</sup>

While there had been positive strides as a result of the Conference and PSC Framework - with the peaceful DRC elections in 2018 being one of the most significant - rising hostilities in the eastern region of the DRC now puts the entire region at risk.<sup>24</sup> A group of rebels, known as M23, have committed murders, rape, and other war crimes.<sup>25</sup> This has caused up to 1,000 people per day to flee the region, resulting in the displacement of nearly seven million people internally within the DRC as of mid-December 2023.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>18</sup> “United Nations Security Council Resolution 1291” (Feb. 24, 2000), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/313/35/PDF/N0031335.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> “United Nations Security Council Resolution 1304” (June 16, 2000), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/485/59/PDF/N0048559.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. “Programs,” (last accessed Dec. 27, 2023), <https://icglr.org/programs/>.

<sup>21</sup> United Nations Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. “Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region,” (last accessed Dec. 27, 2023), <https://dppa.un.org/en/mission/special-envoy-great-lakes-region>.

<sup>22</sup> “Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region,” (Feb. 24, 2013), from <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/scanned-on-24022013-125543.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> “Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region,” from <https://dppa.un.org/en/mission/special-envoy-great-lakes-region>.

<sup>24</sup> Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, “Africa: Great Lakes Envoy Urges International Support Amid Rising Hostilities” (Oct. 18, 2023), <https://ungreatlakes.unmissions.org/africa-great-lakes-envoy-urges-international-support-amid-rising-hostilities>.

<sup>25</sup> Human Rights Watch. “DR Congo: Killings, Rapes by Rwanda-Backed M23 Rebels,” (June 13, 2023), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/06/13/dr-congo-killings-rapes-rwanda-backed-m23-rebels>.

<sup>26</sup> BBC News. “DR Congo election: ‘We would vote for peace - if we had a vote,’” (Dec. 13, 2023), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-67681710>.



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### 3. The Situation in Haiti

Haiti is grappling with a severe security crisis marked by escalating violence and failing governance following the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. Gangs control over 80% of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, leading to a surge in killings, abductions, extortion, and sexual violence. In late 2023, the United Nations Security Council authorized a multinational-backed security force, led by Kenya, to assist the Haitian police.

Haiti's challenges stem from a long history of political instability, dictatorships, and foreign interventions, with the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake prompting the controversial UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti. Political turmoil under President Moïse and gang violence have contributed to the deteriorating security situation. The 2021 assassination, coupled with natural disasters, exacerbated instability, criminal violence, and a humanitarian crisis.

Gangs, notably the G9 coalition, hold significant power, causing disruptions like blockades and violence. Fuel subsidy cuts in 2022 triggered protests and blockades, worsening the humanitarian crisis and food insecurity affecting over four million people. The country also faces a cholera outbreak, with gang activity hindering public health efforts. The government and police are overwhelmed and are facing personnel shortages, while vacant elected positions contribute to instability. Haiti's vulnerability to natural disasters, combined with inadequate infrastructure and political unrest, complicates its challenges. Due to conditions in the country, Haitian migrants have regularly sought refuge in other countries around the world for decades. However, Haitian refugees have often faced numerous administrative and legal obstacles in receiving asylum in other countries.

Due to the wide-ranging and persistent challenges facing Haiti and its development, the international community is tasked with building on recent efforts to find novel and effective solutions to ensure peace, security, and humanitarian assistance for the people of Haiti.

1. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/02/world/americas/un-kenya-mission-haiti.html>
2. <https://www.france24.com/en/americas/20230816-thousands-of-haitians-flee-gang-violence-in-port-au-prince-district>
3. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview>
4. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minustah>
5. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/04/1135647>
6. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-title-42-immigration-policy-why-is-it-expanding-2023-01-17/>
7. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/what-is-title-42-policy-immigration-what-happens-ending-expiration/>

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### 4. Non-Proliferation and the Situation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On January 10, 2003, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) announced that it was no longer bound by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the international agreement intended to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.<sup>27</sup> However, this withdrawal remains to be recognized by many countries. Shortly after this withdrawal, six-party talks between the United States, DPRK, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Japan, the Russian Federation, and China began, with the goal of a peaceful resolution on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. Unfortunately, despite some brief moments of cooperation, the parties involved could not come to an ultimate, sustainable agreement and talks ceased in 2009. Throughout the years, talks of non-proliferation agreements with the DPRK have occurred, however the nuclear ambitions of the DPRK, and its leader since 2011, Kim Jong Un, remain steadfast.

The DPRK's military stature and nuclear ambitions remain concerning to many countries, especially to its neighbor, the ROK, and nearby Japan, as well as their allies, chiefly the United States. Since 2009, the DPRK has continued its nuclear enrichment efforts and long-range missile development, all in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. More recently, since 2022, the country has conducted over 100 missile tests. As of 2022, the DPRK's military consists of a 1.2 million person army, an estimated 30 nuclear warheads (with the materials to produce up to 40 more), and advanced chemical and biological weapon programs.<sup>28 29</sup>

While information coming out of the country is sparse, the DPRK remains to be one of the most isolated and repressed countries in the world. Due to the extreme political ideology and propaganda, North Koreans have no access to the internet and virtually no contact with the outside world.<sup>30</sup> Due to sanctions and political isolation, the condition of the economy is poor and millions of North Koreans live in poverty. Food shortages, poor health care, and a lack of basic human rights for North Koreans remain a concern to the international community.

In January 2024, the DPRK was accused by the United States and others of transferring ballistic arms to Russia for use in its war with Ukraine.<sup>31</sup> The United States has stated that it would raise concern of such arms transfers with the UN Security Council.<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, the ROK claims the DPRK has fired artillery towards ROK islands in January 2024, the latest event in decades of conflict and consternation which have seen periods of relative calm giving

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<sup>27</sup> [https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/pdfs\\_koreachapt2.pdf](https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/pdfs_koreachapt2.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/northkoreaprofile>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/north-korea-nuclear-weapons-missile-tests-military-capabilities>

<sup>30</sup> <https://libertyinnorthkorea.org/learn-nk-challenges>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/04/us/politics/north-korea-russia-missiles.html>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-67888793>



way to high tensions<sup>33</sup> Additionally, the DPRK remains to be a cybersecurity threat. In one recent event, hacking groups affiliated with the DPRK stole an estimated \$600 million worth of cryptocurrency for the funding of their weapons programs in 2023.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/5/north-korea-fires-artillery-towards-souths-islands-prompting-evacuations>

<sup>34</sup> <https://thehackernews.com/2024/01/north-koreas-cyber-heist-dprk-hackers.html>

