



2012 – 2013

Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Council on Palestinian Affairs

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National
Council
on US-
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Relations



Distinguished Delegates,

It is my esteemed privilege to be the first to welcome you to the 2012-2013 Model Arab League Council on Palestinian Affairs. My name is Raya Siddiqi and I am delighted to be the Chair of this Council for the National University MAL. I am currently a senior at Georgia State University pursuing an undergraduate degree in Political Science with a concentration in International Affairs and a minor in Middle East Studies. This will be my fourth year participating at the Model and my first year as the Chair of this council at the collegiate level. Previously, I have served as Chair of the Council on Palestinian Affairs and the Council of Environmental Affairs at the annual Atlanta High School Model Arab League. I have also participated in Model United Nations for seven years and served at many conferences as Director of Committees and as a member of the Secretariat.

Delegates, as members of the Council on Palestinian Affairs, you are tasked with the responsibility of surveying the issues regarding the State of Palestine and the plight of Palestinians, such issues that affect the region as a whole. The struggle of the Palestinians is not only internal, but a critical struggle that poses a threat to security within the region if not resolved adequately by member states collectively. The question of Palestine is an important one and deserves this council's full attention.

Furthermore, the outcome of this council relies on you and your decisions as delegates. Thorough and reliable research will aid you in your preparations, which will not only yield to better discussions, but also pragmatic and realistic solutions based on your country's policies. This document is meant to provide you with introductory information on the topics of our Council and the sources detailed within the background guide are an excellent starting point in further exploring the topics.

Best of luck, and I look forward to a successful conference!

Raya Siddiqi

Council on Palestinian Affairs

Topic 1: Revisiting the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative with special attention given to Clause 2.2 to determine the League's position on what constitutes a "just solution" as well as to the Arab Spring's impact on the peace plan's implementation

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

At the center of the ongoing conflict between the State of Israel and the Palestinians is the question of Palestinian refugees. This issue is considered by many to be one of the most intractable problems in any negotiated peace. The first major wave of refugees came in 1948 during the conflict between the newly founded State of Israel and its Arab neighbors – approximately 700,000 people. Today, the community of 1948 refugees, including their descendants, number over five million and are the primary cause of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)¹. Further waves of refugees were displaced in successive wars, particularly in the 1967 Six-Day War. Palestinian refugees today are scattered throughout the world, many still living in what are now permanent camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Palestinians, though divided along partisan lines on the exact details, claim that refugees should have the right to return to their homes or be compensated for their losses. Israel, however, refuses to permit the return and naturalization of Arab Palestinian refugees or their descendants². The United Nations has passed a number of non-binding resolutions on the issue, most notably General Assembly Resolution 194, which states "that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date" or otherwise be compensated for their loss³. Nevertheless, the exact meaning of this resolution has been disputed since it passed in 1948.

The Arab League has consistently backed the Palestinians in their position on refugees' right to return. In fact, the Palestinian cause as a whole became somewhat of a *raison d'être* for the organization for many years. However, Arab countries have denied citizenship and economic participation to large numbers of Palestinian refugees with the stated goal of maintaining pressure on Israel – they claim that the refugee issue will be solved when Israel allows a Palestinian state.⁴

¹ "Palestine Refugees." *UNRWA*. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, n.d. Web. <<http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=86>>.

² "Refugees - The Israeli Position." *Refugees - The Israeli Position*. Anti-Defamation League, n.d. Web. <http://www.adl.org/israel/final_status/refugees_3.asp>.

³ "194 (III). Palestine -- Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator." *A/RES/194 (III) of 11 December 1948*. United Nations, n.d. Web. <<http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/C758572B78D1CD0085256BCF0077E51A>>.

⁴ Miller, Judith, and David Samuels. "No Way Home: The Tragedy of the Palestinian Diaspora." *The Independent*. Independent Digital News and Media, 22 Oct. 2009. Web. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/no-way-home-the-tragedy-of-the-palestinian-diaspora-1806790.html>>.

Nevertheless, as the Arab League has evolved, so have the nuances of its position on refugees. This topic seeks to further refine that position in light of the current geopolitical situation and developments within the organization.

B. History of Topic in the Arab World

At its 2002 Beirut summit, the Arab League adopted the Saudi-authored Arab Peace Initiative, a plan designed to offer Israel peace with its Arab neighbors in exchange for certain conditions regarding the Palestinians. This plan calls upon Israel in Clause 2.2 (or sometimes labeled Clause 2.b.) to affirm the “achievement of a just solution to the Palestinian Refugee problem to be agreed upon in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194.”⁵ In addition, the Arab Peace Initiative asks for the withdrawal of Israeli presence from the entirety of the Palestinian Territories and acceptance of a sovereign Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital as conditions for peace with the Arab world.

Since 2002, Israel has not accepted the terms stipulated in the Arab Peace Initiative, though it ostensibly still stands as an offer. The Arab League reaffirmed the initiative at its 2007 summit in Riyadh. Nevertheless, the phrase “just solution” in Clause 2.2 remains vague and undefined. And because, as stated, the meaning of UNGA Resolution 194 is disputed, a “just solution” could mean any number of practical applications.

Furthermore, the topic names the Arab Spring as a reason to reevaluate the Arab Peace Initiative’s implementation. The Arab Spring is the commonly recognized name for the collection of uprisings and protest movements which washed across the Arab world beginning in December 2010 in Tunisia and continuing today⁶. During the course of these events, the Arab League has redefined itself and its role according to some analysts.⁷

Widely considered for many years an impotent organization in the face of crisis, the Arab League has taken dramatic steps since the Arab Spring began. For example, the League backed a NATO-enforced no-fly zone over Libya during the country’s civil war. That decision, though later softened, gave enough cover for anti-government Libyans to topple their long-time dictator Muammar Al-Qaddafi and take the first steps toward representative democracy.⁸ More recently, the League authorized sanctions against Syria in response to the conflict there and strongly backed Palestine in its quest for full UN recognition. The question the topic is posing, then, is “Why not stronger action on the Israeli-Arab Peace Process?”

⁵ "Text: Arab Peace Plan of 2002." *BBC News*. BBC, 22 Mar. 2005. Web.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1844214.stm>.

⁶ "Definition Of Arab Spring." *Open Dictionary*. Macmillan Dictionary, 14 Dec. 2011. Web.

<<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/open-dictionary/entries/Arab-Spring.htm>>

⁷ Nasr, Octavia. "Octavia Nasr | Blog: A True League of Arab States." *Octavia Nasr | Blog: A True League of Arab States*. N.p., 29 Nov. 2011. Web. <<http://blog.octavianasr.com/2011/11/true-league-of-arab-states.html>>.

⁸ CNN Wire Staff. "Arab League Backs No-fly Zone in Libya." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 12 Mar. 2011. Web. <http://articles.cnn.com/2011-03-12/world/libya.civil.war_1_arab-league-libyan-people-opposition-forces?_s=PM:WORLD>

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

As mentioned above, article 2.2 of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative mandates a just solution to the refugee problem. However, given the current treatment of Palestinians in both the Territories under Israeli control and in other Arab countries, justice remains elusive in any past or current proposed solution. This is complicated by Article 4 of the Peace Initiative, which “assures the rejection of all forms of Palestinian patriation, which conflict with the special circumstances of the Arab host countries.”⁹

Prior to the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, the refugee problem proved to be contentious. A number of UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions had addressed the topic to no avail. The Oslo Accords of 1993 laid out a framework for an eventual solution to the refugee problem in negotiations between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israel. However, the refugee problem was never fully discussed before negotiations broke down in 2000.

The goal of the council is not to outright solve the issue of Palestinian refugees, though that is the ultimate aim and should be considered in discussions. Instead, the council must focus its attention on the narrower issue of the League’s definition of a “just solution” ten years after the phrase was penned in light of the major geopolitical upheaval shaking the region.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Does my country host a significant number of Palestinian refugees? If so, how many?
- What are the legal and physical conditions that Palestinian refugees in my country face?
- Which prior resolutions, initiatives, and other declarations has my country supported or objected to concerning Palestinian refugees?
- What have experts on all sides proposed be considered a “just solution” for refugees? Do any of these match my country’s policies toward Palestinian refugees?
- How has the Arab Spring affected my government? My role in the Arab League? The role of the Arab League as a whole? Has my country voted in favor of the more dramatic actions taken by the Arab League in the past two years?
- Should the Arab League be defining contentious issues outside of negotiations?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What specifically does the Arab League expect or suggest a “just solution” to the issue of Palestinian refugees to be?
- How will the Arab League change its approach to the conflict in light of the Arab Spring, if at all?
- Is the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative still a viable solution? Should it be amended? Or discarded entirely?

⁹ "Text: Arab Peace Plan of 2002." *BBC News*. BBC, 22 Mar. 2005. Web. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1844214.stm>.

- Are investments needed to implement any of the proposed solutions?
- Can a just solution be defined without the prior cooperation of both contentious parties namely the PLO and Israel?
- In what manner can states that have failed to act unilaterally to solve this problem be expected to offer just solutions now?
- How can the League encourage proactive measures to create peace without simply passing the responsibility solely to Israel?
- Should the Arab League do more to support refugees in lieu of an immediate solution?

IV. Resources to Review

<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=1422>

<http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/arab-and-israeli-peace-initiatives-last-chance-negotiations>

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/lost-moments-the-arab-peace-initiative-10-years-later/255231/>

<http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/league/peace02.htm>

<http://www.jpost.com/Magazine/Opinion/Article.aspx?id=225311>

Topic 2: Discussing means to secure Palestinian access to natural and agricultural resources and developing means of harnessing those resources to rebuild the Palestinian economy

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

The Palestinian Territories, consisting of the Gaza Strip along the Mediterranean coast and the West Bank covering the hills between the coastal plain east to the Jordan River and Dead Sea (Palestine), contain several important natural and agricultural resources. Although it maintains a high population density, particularly in the Gaza Strip, Palestine is home to a significant amount of agriculture. Grapes, almonds, fruit, olives, citrus, vegetables, and grains are all grown in Palestine, both with rain-fed and irrigated agriculture.¹⁰ In addition to land, water is an important natural resource to consider regarding this topic. Other natural resources are less abundant, though potentially significant as a source of revenue for Palestine and Palestinians, such as quarries,¹¹ potash mining, or marine resources like fishing.¹²

B. History of Topic in the Arab World

Palestinian access to the natural and agricultural resources that lie in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been severely limited, largely by restrictions in place under Israeli law such as convoluted permit laws, restrictions to investment, restrictions on trade, and restricted land access. It is essential to understand that Palestine in practice is divided into three categories of land, parceling out the territories into non-contiguous pieces – Areas A, B, and C. Area A is under full Palestinian control, and largely consists of built-up urban areas. Area B is under Israeli military control and Palestinian civil control, and Area C is under full Israeli control. Only about 40% of the West Bank falls into Areas A and B, leaving 60% under the full control of Israel including the natural resources held therein.¹³

For example, across Israeli-controlled Palestine, it is very difficult to obtain permits to repair or build wells, or even build water storage structures. Any structure without a permit is liable to be demolished by the authorities.¹⁴ Israel controls 90% of the water resources of the groundwater

¹⁰ *Palestine: Country Report to the FAO International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources*. Rep. Hebron: n.p., 1996. The Palestinian Institute for Arid Land and Environmental Studies (PIALES). Web. <<http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/agphome/documents/PGR/SoW1/east/PALESTIN.pdf>>.

¹¹ Fogelman, Shay. "Digging up the Dirt." *Haaretz.com*. Haaretz Daily Newspaper, 3 Sept. 2010. Web. <<http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/magazine/digging-up-the-dirt-1.311973>>.

¹² Smith, Paul H. "Assessing the Viability of a Palestinian State: Chapter 5." *Assessing the Viability of a Palestinian State: Chapter 5*. Reading the Enemy's Mind, n.d. Web. <<http://readingtheenemysmind.com/Chapter5.html>>

¹³ Hatuqa, Dalia. "Israel Restricts Jordan Valley Water Access - Features - Al Jazeera English." *Israel Restricts Jordan Valley Water Access - Features - Al Jazeera English*. Al Jazeera, 28 July 2012. Web. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/07/20127259518330800.html>>.

¹⁴ *Ibid*

aquifers it shares with Palestine, and Israelis consume four times more water per person than Palestinians.¹⁵ Palestinian demand for water outstrips supply by about 250%.¹⁶

Article 40 of the 1995 Oslo Agreement states that “Israel recognizes Palestinian water rights in the West Bank,” though the language is vague and implementation has been slow.¹⁷ The Camp David Accords did not include provisions on water.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

The Arab League’s tools in this area are limited – Palestine remains under the occupation of Israel, which has been firm on its stance that Israeli security and economic wellbeing trump any rights the Palestinians might have to more land, water, or other resources than they already have.¹⁸ Thus, greater access, the first part of this topic, is a difficult goal in the short term. In the long term, the council might consider the ways in which it supports Palestinian access to these resources on a legal level or when it comes to peace negotiations.

The second part of the resolution, addressing the utilization of these resources for the good of the Palestinian economy, is more easily tackled on a short-term basis. Those resources already available to the Palestinians – limited land, water, and marine resources – could be used more efficiently. For example, contributions by member states to directly aid projects focused on productivity, the sharing of expertise, or strategic planning would likely be welcome.

III. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What programs has my country developed that could be implemented in Palestine to increase efficiency in agriculture or the exploitation of other natural resources?
- Is my country involved with any projects aiding Palestinians in working to secure access to natural resources?
- What is the role of non-governmental organizations present in Palestine in relation to natural and agricultural resources?
- What are the similarities, if any, between the agricultural sectors of Palestine compared to that of its neighbors?

IV. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- While negotiations between Israel and Palestine are stalled, what actions might the Arab League take to pressure Israel to give fairer access to natural resources to Palestinians?
- What programs, projects, or new technologies can be implemented to improve the efficiency of Palestinian use of its resources?

¹⁵ Aliewi, Dr. Amjad. Proc. of The Palestinian- Israeli Management of Shared Groundwater Aquifers: Status, Realities, and Lessons Learned, Beirut. House of Water and Environment, 24-25 Apr. 2006. Web. <<http://www.hwe.org.ps/Events/Images/shared%20aquifers.pdf>>

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Hatuqa, Dalia

- How might regional organizations be utilized?
- Are contributions – monetary or otherwise – needed to achieve this goal?

V. Resources to Review

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2001/GAEF2980.doc.htm>

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/WaterRestrictionsReport18Apr2009.pdf>

Topic 3: Examining mental and psychological health concerns among Palestinian refugees in order to develop methods of detection, prevention, and treatment

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

In the language of the international community and in international law, refugees are considered at risk individuals and are classified as vulnerable communities. They are vulnerable to human rights abuses, particularly the denial or lack of mental and physical health care.

Refugees and internally displaced peoples (IDP), especially women and children are at risk of developing mental and psychological health problems because they are subjected to prolonged periods of violence, persecution, and homelessness. This can lead to long term debilitating effects such as psychiatric disorders, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), exhaustion, and chronic fatigue that affect the long term quality of life for refugees. More research needs to be conducted on the types of treatment that can aid refugees suffering from mental and psychological disorders.¹⁹

Access to mental health among refugees and IDP population has recently become a topic of discussion among scholars and professionals, and has been outlined in several relevant documents, either explicitly or implicitly: World Health Organization, Principle 1, Geneva Meeting, 1996, "everyone in need should have access to basic mental health;" UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, UN The 1951 Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, Declaration of the Consortium for Global Declaration of the Consortium for Global Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health. Additionally, individual host countries have their own set of law and rights to govern the presence of refugees, migrants, and IDPs.²⁰

Despite the presence of such treaties and conventions, the standards set in the documents are rarely enforced. Humanitarian aid often overlooks mental health issues, or at the very least, it simply deals with the visible physiological symptoms instead of assessing the psychological root causes. This is particularly the case in countries where mental health problems are considered taboo and where there is very little discussion about the seriousness of psychological and mental health concerns.²¹ According to recent reports, it is very important to address the mental and psychological health needs because access to basic mental health is a fundamental individual

¹⁹Persky, Leah, and Zaravshon Zukhurova. "Health of Refugees and Internally Displaced Peoples." *Review Digest: Human Rights and Health* (n.d.): n. pag. Web. <<http://www.du.edu/korbel/hrhw/researchdigest/health/refugees.pdf>>

²⁰"Convention on the Rights of the Child." *UNICEF*. N.p., 25 May 2012. Web. <<http://www.unicef.org/crc/>>; "1951 Refugee Convention." *UNHCR*. N.p., n.d. Web. <<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49da0e466.html>>; "Declaration of the Consortium for Global Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health." N.p., n.d. Web. <http://iacapap.org/wp-content/uploads/Declaration_GlobalInfant.pdf>.

²¹ Persky and Zukhurova.

right. Safeguarding that right allows people to live fruitful and productive lives, which will eventually lead to financial and social stability, as well as integration into the host country outside of the camps.²²

B. History of Topic in the Arab World

Since the events of the 1948 Nakba, the relationship between refugees and their host countries has not always been easy, as refugees have become intertwined in the host country's own political, social, and economic problems. The situation of refugees is especially harsh in the camps of Lebanon, Jordan, the West Bank, and the Occupied Territories. Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel are not signatories to the 1951 Convention and Protocol Relating to Status of Refugees, implying that they are not obligated under International Law to apply any of the terms and conventions of the treaty.²³

Physical, mental, and physiological illnesses are prevalent in refugee camps in the Arab World largely because of the poor living conditions to which Palestinian refugees are subjected. For instance, in refugee camps in Lebanon, 40% of households have water leaking through their roofs or walls; eight percent of households live in shelters where the roof or walls are made from corrugated iron, wood, or asbestos. Furthermore, since the Lebanese government places restrictions on building new houses, eight percent of households reported living in overcrowded conditions.²⁴

A comprehensive report conducted by the American University of Beirut and the United Nations Relief Works Agency has found that socioeconomic status and health are directly correlated, meaning that differences in income, education, and occupation lead to disparities in health. This is important as it implies that poorer sectors of the refugee populations are those most vulnerable to mental and physiological problems.²⁵

Palestinian refugees in the Middle East have lived through stressful events such as conflict, poverty, and poor living conditions, which all lead to severe mental stress. Many have had to relocate several times because of political problems in the host country, and most families have experienced the loss of one or more close relatives. As a result, new generations of refugees are growing up demoralized, feeling like there are no opportunities available. To further

²² Chabaan, Jad, Hala Ghattas, Rima Habib, Sari Hanafi, Nadine Sahyoun, Nisreen Salt, Karin Seyfert, and Nadia Naamani. *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. Rep. American University of Beirut (AUB) and the United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, American University in Beirut, 2010. Web. <http://fafsweb.aub.edu.lb/aub-unrwa/files/AUB_UNRWA_report_final_draft.pdf http://fafsweb.aub.edu.lb/aub-unrwa/files/AUB_UNRWA_report_final_draft.pdf>.

²³ Signatories to the [convention](http://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetailsII.aspx?&src=UNTSOnline&mtdsg_no=V~2&chapter=5&Temp=mtdsg2&lang=en), United Nations Treaty Collection, Web, http://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetailsII.aspx?&src=UNTSOnline&mtdsg_no=V~2&chapter=5&Temp=mtdsg2&lang=en

²⁴ Chabaan, Jad, Hala Ghattas, Rima Habib, Sari Hanafi, Nadine Sahyoun, Nisreen Salt, Karin Seyfert, and Nadia Naamani

²⁵ Ibid.

exacerbate the situation, children do not have any room to play, and education in the UNRWA schools is weak. These feelings have lasting effects into maturity, especially since they cannot find adequate work opportunities once they become adults.²⁶

The effects of prolonged exposure to the conditions in refugee camps, the political climate of the host country, and to the vulnerabilities of an unstable home life, are more severe among refugee children. In 2010 and 2011 more than half the consultations in clinics run by Doctors without Borders or the UN were children and adolescents under the age of 21.²⁷ Doctors without Borders found that there were children and adolescents exhibiting highly aggressive behavior. They also found that the insecurities of life in the camps and under the Israeli occupation were leading to high number of cases of children with PTSD.²⁸ Children who have been exposed to the violence of the occupation developed PTSD and depression, which in turn lead to weaker school performance, feeling insecure, and to varying degrees of functional impairment. Other mental and psychological symptoms experienced by children and adolescents include: bedwetting, nightmares, learning difficulties [reading and speech], concentration and memory problems, weaker academic performances, aggressive behavior, phobic levels of fear including fear of leaving the house, chronic neurosis, nail biting, headaches, sleeping problems, bad dreams, fear of loud noises that resemble bombs or military drills, and avoidance of social interaction.²⁹ Palestinian refugee women are also vulnerable to developing psychological and mental health problems, especially when living in extremely poor living conditions. For instance, research conducted in the Al Ain refugee camp in the occupied territories shows that women are suffering from increased level of mental and psychological stress for many reasons. This includes the fact that they have lost the productive role they once had in their communities and are now instead confined to the camp and to the home that are constantly subjected to over crowdedness and poor living conditions. Women still have greater responsibilities in the house, and in the Gaza Strip most household are headed by women, which implies that women are bearing the burden of camp life. This increased stress, anxiety, and depression not only affects their mental state of being, but also severely affects their physical health. This can lead to heart diseases, chronic fatigue, and anxiety.³⁰

²⁶ Vickers, David, and Sammi Masri. "'Mental Health Needs Assessment in Palestinian Refugee Camps.'" Response International, Sept. 2005. Web. <http://www.responseinternational.org.uk/archives_articles/MHNA_Report.pdf>.

²⁷ "Trauma of Palestinian Children Increasing, Say Health Groups." *The Electronic Intifada*. N.p., 27 July 2007. Web. <<http://electronicintifada.net/content/trauma-palestinian-children-increasing-say-health-groups/10212>>.

²⁸ Gunttman-Steinmetz, Sarit, Anat Shoshani, Khaled Farhan, Moran Aliman, Gilad Hirschberger, "Living in the crossfire Effects of exposure to political violence on Palestinian and Israeli mothers and children," in *International Journal of Behavioral Development January 2012 vol. 36 no. 1 71-78*. <<http://jbd.sagepub.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/content/36/1/71>>

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ AL-Khatib, Issam A., Rania N. Arafat and Mohamed Musmar, "Housing environment and women's health in a Palestinian refugee camp," *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*. Web. <www.tandfonline.com>

Many in the aid community do not address mental health issues, exacerbating the issue. The UNRWA, the Red Crescent, and private clinics are mostly concerned with providing primary care. Furthermore, there are few mental health data or assessment reports available to assist donors and aid organizations in the provision of such services. Support networks to assist individuals suffering from mental illness, especially as Arab culture often considers these issues as taboo, are weak and insufficient. Lastly, there are very few mental health experts available in the camps, and doctors and clinics tend to deal with the physical symptoms and not with the psychological causes.

Another important concern is the cost of providing psychological health care. UNRWA covered the costs of physiological health care at hospitals outside the camps in the past, but now the organization is facing severing cutbacks and funding problems that it can no longer cover such costs. This implies that the cost of treating physiological illness falls directly on the family, which is an increased burden. Due to the prohibitive cost of the treatments, most cases remain undetected and untreated. This may lead to severe problems in the future, especially as children reach maturity.³¹

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

One path toward achieving a solution is to increase awareness about mental and psychological health concerns through programs that reduce the taboo. Another would be to develop centers to detect and treat these illnesses. Organizations can also work to develop community-based support programs for those suffering from mental illnesses. UNRWA and other aid organizations might integrate psychological care into their health programs and provide support to at-risk groups. Additionally, the affordability and accessibility should be considered.

One way to alleviate mental health concerns is to include mental health under the definition of primary care so that all clinics in refugee camps will be able to detect and treat psychological issues. Additionally, host countries can develop new national policies for the treatment of mental illness. Before all this can be done, a comprehensive assessment of mental health needs may need to be completed.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How will mental illness affect the stability and productivity of future generations of refugees if left undetected?
- If psychological concerns mean that refugees are less likely to be financially stable or to integrate into the host country, then what kinds of problems will this lead to in the host countries?

³¹ AUB and UNRWA Survey, <http://fafsweb.aub.edu.lb/aub-unrwa/files/AUB_UNRWA_report_final_draft.pdf
http://fafsweb.aub.edu.lb/aub-unrwa/files/AUB_UNRWA_report_final_draft.pdf>.
Response International: http://www.responseinternational.org.uk/archives_articals/MHNA_Report.pdf

- As a host country, how does the refugee community affect our policies, politically, economically and socially?
- How will the refugee community improve if mental and physiological illness are detected and treated at early stages?
- What policies and measure are the host countries and the Arab League donor nations taking to improve the living conditions in refugee camps and to reduce the occurrences of major physical and psychological health concerns?
- How are mental health concerns like stress, anxiety, and hopelessness negatively affecting youth? Are they more likely to be unemployment and apathetic? Are they more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs?

IV. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Why is it important for the Arab League to address this issue?
- How much pressure can the Arab league exert of UN agencies and smaller organizations to improve the treatment and detection of mental and psychological concerns?
- How will solving this problem actually lead to greater social and financial stability for refugees and how will this in turn affect the host country?

V. Resources to Review

Internet Sources:

- [Health of Refugees and Internally Displaced Peoples](#)
- [Division of Mental Health and Preventions of Substance Abuse, World Health Organization, Geneva, 1996](#)
- [Signatories to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees](#), United Nations Treaty Collection
- [Text of the Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees](#), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- [Mental Health and Asylum Seekers](#), Advancements in Psychiatric Treatment, Rachel Tribe
- [Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care](#), UNICEF
- [Declaration of the Consortium for Global Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health](#), World Federation for Mental Health
- [Delivering Health Services Against All Odds](#), UNRWA Health Programme
- [Socio-economic survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon](#), December 2010, American University of Beirut

- [OPT: Growing number of children with anxiety disorders](#), IRIN, humanitarian news and analysis, a service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ramallah, 26 July 2011
- [Addressing Poor Living Conditions to Improve Health in Palestinian Camps in Lebanon](#), Dr. Rima Habib, Research and Policy Memo #4, April 2010. Policy and Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, American University of Beirut
- [Mental Health Needs Assessment in Palestinian Refugee Camps, Lebanon](#), Response International
- [Health conditions in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem and in the occupied Syrian Golan](#), World Health Organization, SIXTY-SECOND WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY Provisional agenda item 14, 14 May 2009
- [Briefing Paper: Terminal Decline? Palestinian Refugee Health in Lebanon](#), Medical Aid for Palestinians
- [Determinants of Mental Health Among Palestinian Refugee Youth](#), Rima Afifi, PhD, MPH, American University of Beirut
- [Palestinian refugees outside the occupied Palestinian territory](#), The Lancet, Volume 373, Issue 9669, Pages 1063 - 1065, 28 March 2009
- [UN Convention of the Rights of the Child](#), <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

Online and Print Journals

- Ziad Abdeen, Radwan Qasrawi, Shibli Nabil and Mohammad Shaheen, "Psychological reactions to Israeli occupation: Findings from the national study of school based screening in Palestine," *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 32:290, 2008.
- Physiological impact of the intifada on Palestinian children in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Ahmad M. Baker. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*: Volume 60, Issue 4
- Issam Al Khatib, Rania Arafat, Mohamed Musmar, "Housing Environment and women's health in a Palestinian refugee camp," *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*, Vol 15, no.3 (2005): 181-191.
- Sylvie Mansour, "A Week in Jenin: Assessing Mental Health Needs Amid the Ruins," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Summer 2002), pp. 35-43
- Sarit Gunttman-Steinmetz, Anat Shoshani, Khaled Farhan, Moran Aliman, Gilad Hirschberger, "Living in the crossfire Effects of exposure to political violence on Palestinian and Israeli mothers and children," in *International Journal of Behavioral Development* January 2012 vol. 36 no. 1 71-78.
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Topic 4: Supporting political unity between Palestinian factions and parties in order to promote effective statecraft

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Palestinian political parties and factions are numerous and diverse, a sign of healthy democratic roots. Nevertheless, in the face of the breakdown of negotiations over final status agreements with Israel, Palestinian political disunity is a potential obstacle to achieving peace. The Arab League, a supporter of the Palestinian cause from its inception, and its individual members have maintained influence with Palestinian parties as funders, safe havens, and mediators. It will be up to this council to discuss methods to promote Palestinian unity and mutual respect between parties in order to build the institutions Palestinians hope will someday become the basis of an independent state.

Delegates should, as a start, understand the various political parties and institutions that make up the Palestinian landscape. Most Palestinian political parties began as armed groups focused on resisting Israel and creating an independent state. In 1964, the Arab League played a part in the founding of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as an umbrella for these resistance groups. After Egypt, Jordan, and Syria were soundly defeated by Israel in the 1967 Six-Days War, the PLO came into its own as the representative of the Palestinian people. Various groups constituted the PLO – the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Communist Palestine People’s Party (PPP), etc. – groups that still operate today. However, the largest was Fatah, led by Yasser Arafat who was also chairman of the greater PLO.³² The PLO is still considered the main negotiator and international representative of the Palestinians.

Nevertheless, Israel did not recognize the PLO until the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords. Via those same agreements, Israel granted varying degrees of control of select areas of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip to Palestinians. To administer these areas, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was created.³³ The PNA was dominated by the PLO, which in turn was dominated by Yasser Arafat and his Fatah party. The Oslo Accords stipulated that no party that refused to renounce terrorism could be elected to the PNA, excluding the major Islamist parties,

³² "The Palestine Liberation Organization | Middle East Research and Information Project." *The Palestine Liberation Organization | Middle East Research and Information Project*. Middle East Research and Information Project, n.d. Web. <http://www.merip.org/palestine-israel_primer/plo-un242-pal-isr-primer.html>.

³³ "The Oslo Accords." *The Oslo Accords | Middle East Research and Information Project*. N.p., n.d. Web. <http://www.merip.org/palestine-israel_primer/oslo-accords-pal-isr-prime.html>.

Islamic Jihad and Hamas. However, in 2006, after Arafat's death, the PNA held elections in which the Islamist parties were tacitly allowed to participate – Hamas won the most seats, but the international community objected. After several months of political maneuvering and breakdown between Hamas and Fatah, Hamas staged an armed takeover of the Gaza Strip.³⁴ Both sides have made overtures to reconciliation, but the territories remain divided between the West Bank controlled by the internationally backed Fatah government of Mahmoud Abbas and Salam Fayyad, and the Gaza Strip controlled by the Islamist group Hamas led by Ismail Haniya.³⁵

B. History of Topic in the Arab World

The political fault lines that divide the Palestinian people and territories are detrimental to both current political institutions and the prospects for a future state. The question of Palestinian statehood has been debated for several decades now. The Arab League has been a vocal supporter of Palestinian self-determination for decades. More than 130 countries now recognize the State of Palestine, which declared independence in 1988.³⁶ The claim to statehood for the Palestinians is based on several United Nations resolutions since 1947, including UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) (1947) and Security Council Resolution 242 (1967).³⁷

In 2011, the Palestinian Authority made an official bid to become a full member of the United Nations General Assembly, with a goal of achieving full statehood status from the United Nations.³⁸ The Arab League supported this move.³⁹ While the bid failed, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) plans to push for “non-member state” status, an elevation from its current status but not full membership. (Currently, only the Vatican holds this status).⁴⁰ However, even these lowered expectations may not be met and future negotiations with Israel may be stillborn if Palestinian political forces cannot find common ground. Only a unified Palestine can overcome the obstacles the new state would face.

³⁴ "Palestinian National Authority." *Encyclopedia of the Middle East*. N.p., n.d. Web.

<http://www.mideastweb.org/Middle-East-Encyclopedia/palestinian_authority.htm>.

³⁵ "Palestinian Rivals: Fatah & Hamas." *BBC News*. BBC, 17 June 2007. Web.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5016012.stm>.

³⁶ "International Recognition of the State of Palestine." Palestinian National Authority, 4 Apr. 2006. Web.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20060404211437/http://www.pna.gov.ps/Government/gov/recognition_of_the_State_of_Palestine.asp>.

³⁷ "Document: Palestine National Council: Political Communique, 15 Nov 1988." *Document: Palestine National Council: Political Communique, 15 Nov 1988*. Al-bab, 2009. Web. <<http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/pal/pal4.htm>>.

³⁸ Staff, CNN Wire, Kevin Flower, Richard Roth, Joe Vaccarello, and Fionnuala Sweeney. "U.N. Security Council to Send Palestinian State Bid to Admissions Committee - CNN.com." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 26 Sept. 2011. Web. 10 Oct. 2012. <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/09/26/world/un-palestinian-statehood/index.html?hpt=imi_c2>.

³⁹ "Arab League Backs Palestinian UN Statehood Plan." - *The National*. Abu Dhabi Media, 15 June 2011. Web. <<http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/arab-league-backs-palestinian-un-statehood-plan>>.

⁴⁰ McMahan, Robert, and Johnathan Masters. "Palestinian Statehood at the UN." *Council on Foreign Relations*. N.p., 27 Sept. 2012. Web. <<http://www.cfr.org/palestinian-authority/palestinian-statehood-un/p25954>>.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

In February 2012, Fatah and Hamas signed a unity agreement, led by their top leaders Mahmoud Abbas and Khaled Meshaal, respectively.⁴¹ However, the deal was largely symbolic, and did little to promote unification or even coordination on the ground.⁴² The recent peace deal between Hamas and Fatah, however, is a good first step to the development of political unity in Palestine. This committee might use the peace deal as a launching point for any future resolutions promoting support of internal unity in Palestine. Palestinian national identity, rather than Gazan and West Bank identities, or Hamas and Fatah, or any other identity crisis, is essential in any attempts to achieve statehood or unity. This is not a question of supporting peace talks to establish a Palestinian state, but rather a question of assisting the Palestinians politically and internally to assure the establishment of a truly effective and viable state, whenever the opportunity finally does present itself.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What is the current status of unity talks between Hamas and Fatah?
- Who are the main political leaders of both parties? What are their personal histories? What ideologies do they support? Who are their successors?
- Has the general Palestinian population been polled on these issues? What is the result?
- Is my country a major financial backer of the PNA? Of Hamas? Of Fatah?
- What level of involvement has my country had in this issue so far, and what can be done to encourage further positive efforts?
- What can be done to bring the main parties together on the laundry list of ideological differences they espouse?
- Has my country signed any relevant treaties, or been involved in any of the recent peace talks to establish a Palestinian state?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- To what level should non-state actors be involved?
- How can funding be used as a tool by the Arab League to achieve greater unity?
- Should a new election be held? How can elections be held that are free and fair?
- How can Hamas be incorporated into a unity deal without angering major actors in the process, such as the US, the EU, and Israel?

⁴¹ Sherwood, Harriet. "Palestinian Factions Fatah and Hamas to Form Unity Government." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 6 Feb. 2012. Web. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/feb/06/palestinian-factions-fatah-hamas-unity-government>>.

⁴² Abunimah, Ali. "Hollow 'reconciliation' in Palestine - Opinion - Al Jazeera English." *Hollow 'reconciliation' in Palestine - Opinion - Al Jazeera English*. Al Jazeera, 9 May 2012. Web. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/05/20115962939402933.html>>.

- What previous documents are relevant to the topic, and how should they be updated/revised?
- Should any regional bodies be utilized, and if so, how?

IV. Resources to Review

UNGA Resolution 181

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/un/res181.htm>

UNSC Resolution 242

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/un/un242.htm>

“Palestine Papers”

<http://www.aljazeera.com/palestinepapers/>

Council on Foreign Relations: Backgrounder on Palestinian Statehood at the UN

<http://www.cfr.org/palestinian-authority/palestinian-statehood-un/p25954>

Larbi Sadiki, “*The Internal Nakba*”

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/05/2012518102424900281.html>