



Permanent sovereignty
of the Arab population in
the Occupied Palestinian
Territory and in the
Occupied Syrian Golan
over their natural
resources





Introduction:

Palestinians have experienced a dramatic decline in their living standards and a regression of the economy due to internal and external movement restrictions, limited control over natural resources, restricted access to local and international markets, limited access of Palestinian laborers to their former work in Israel and low rates of economic production.

Following the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, portions of the territories have been governed in varying degrees by the Palestinian Authority. However, Israel does not consider East Jerusalem nor the former Israeli - Jordanian no man's land to be parts of the West Bank. Israel claims that both fall under full Israeli law and jurisdiction.

Problem:

The West Bank barrier construction is isolating thousands of people from their land, dividing communities and restricting access to essential services. The restriction on internal movements within the West Bank is contributing to the collapse of an already fragile economy.

The West Bank and the Gaza Strip

Both of these territories were part of former British Mandate of Palestine, and both have populations consisting primarily of Arab Palestinians, including historic residents of the territories and refugees who fled their homes in the territory that became Israel after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Around 300,000 Israeli settlers also live in the West Bank (Not including a further 200,000 in East Jerusalem and a further 50,000 in the former Israeli-Jordanian no-man's land). Both territories were allotted to the Arab state under United Nations Partition Plan of 1947, but the West Bank was occupied by Jordan and the Gaza Strip was occupied by Egypt after the 1948 war. Thereafter, Israel seized control of these territories after the 'Six-Day War.'

In the Gaza Strip, the situation is the most critical. The food security of its 1.5 million people has been steadily deteriorating since Israeli sanctions in June 2007 including a suspension of all exports, a decrease of imports and tight restrictions on the type of goods permitted to enter through crossings -- frequently closed by Israel on security grounds, citing Gaza-based militant attacks.

The Israeli reluctance to leave the conquered territories can be attributed to the distribution of natural resources among other factors. The Mountain Aquifer, from which Israel draws over a third of its fresh water resources, has 83% of its recharge area located in the West Bank. The portion of the Coastal Aquifer that lies in the Gaza Strip has been overexploited for many years, and its water —Gaza's only significant source of fresh water— has become

History:

The territories, which were originally contained within the British Mandate of Palestine, were captured and occupied by Jordan and by Egypt in the late 1940s, and captured and occupied by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. In 1980 Israel claimed to annex East Jerusalem from the West Bank, but United Nations Security Council Resolution 478 declared this null and void and required that it be rescinded forthwith, while affirming that it was a violation of international law.





brackish and of limited use due to infiltration of sea water.

In 2000 the Israeli government started to construct the Israeli West Bank barrier, separating Israel and several of its settlements, as well as a significant number of Palestinians, from the remainder of the West Bank. In 2004, the International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion stating that the barrier violates international law. In a related case the Israeli Supreme Court, sitting as the High Court of Justice, stated that Israel has been holding the areas of Judea and Samaria in belligerent occupation, since 1967. The court also held that the normative provisions of public international law regarding belligerent occupation are applicable. The Regulations Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, The Hague of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War 1949 were both cited.

In 2005, Israel legislated that all of the residents in the Gaza Strip and in four settlements in the northern West Bank as part of Israel's unilateral disengagement plan would have to abandon their homes. Some settlers resisted the order, and were forcibly removed by the IDF.

In 2007, after Hamas defeated Fatah in the Battle of Gaza (2007) and took control over the Gaza Strip, Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza. Rocket attacks and Israeli raids, such as Operation Hot Winter continued into 2008. A ceasefire was agreed in June 2008, but at the end of December 2008 Israeli forces began Operation Cast Lead, launching the Gaza War that left an estimated 1,166-1,417 Palestinians and 13 Israelis dead.

East Jerusalem

While East Jerusalem is considered by many to be part of the West Bank, it is treated separately in negotiations. The 1947 UN Partition Plan had contemplated that all of Jerusalem would be an international city (within an international area which was supposed to include Bethlehem too). However after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War Jordan captured East Jerusalem and the Old City, and Israel captured and annexed the western part of Jerusalem. Jordan annexed East Jerusalem along with the rest of the West Bank in 1950, but no nations gave de jure recognition to this annexation.

Israel captured East Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War and a few weeks later ordered to apply its "laws, jurisdiction and administration" in its territory in several towns and villages surrounding it. In 1980 Israel passed the "Jerusalem Law" proclaiming "united Jerusalem" as the Israeli capital, thus officially annexing East Jerusalem. However, United Nations Security Council Resolution 478 declared this action to be "null and void", and that it "must be rescinded forthwith". It also called upon countries which held their





diplomatic delegations to Israel in Jerusalem, to move them outside the city.

committee must work to present an acceptable and yet fair resolution.

East Jerusalem is a significant point of controversy because it includes Jerusalem's Old City and some of the holiest sites of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, such as the Temple Mount, Western Wall, Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. These sites are a valuable source of income by tourism.

The West Bank provides water to Israel's population and water, being a scarce commodity in the region, is a resource that neither side can part with. However, access to and control of these resources must be shared and the committee is encouraged to address these concerns.

The Syrian Golan

The Golan Heights are of great strategic importance in the region. Syria has never stopped demanding that the land be returned, and in 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution calling on Israel to end its occupation of the Golan, while declaring all the legislative and administrative measures taken by Israel in the Golan null and void.

East Jerusalem is currently occupied by IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) but its population is predominantly Arab. Furthermore, Israel has unilaterally annexed East Jerusalem to the Israeli state although the UN does not recognize the unified city. East Jerusalem is home to some of the most famous holy sites in the world and is a source of revenue for whichever side controls it. It also serves as a trading hub for the Palestinian people. Without East Jerusalem and its settlements, a Palestinian state is destined to collapse because of economic instability. However, its strategic location just miles from Israeli West Jerusalem is a security concern for Israel. Therefore, the chair wishes to point out that a resolution that fails to detail an arrangement that addresses all the above-mentioned concerns will not ensure long-term stability.

The Syrian Golan is home to some of the most scenic sites in the region and is hence, a great source of tourism revenue.

Solution

The goal of the committee must be to pass a resolution that works towards stabilizing the middle east by presenting the parties involved with an acceptable compromise. It is evident that these regions are vital for the survival of the entities involved due to the natural resources they offer and all parties are refusing to give up what they believe is rightfully theirs. However, the committee cannot ignore that all sides have violated international law and as things stand, Israel has not complied with UNSC resolutions (242, 465, 497). As a result, the

Lastly, the strategic location of the Syrian Golan and its natural resources make this territory a very strong point of contention. While Israel occupies two-thirds of it, majority of the population residing in the region is Arab. Syria has been the historic power that occupied the region and continues to lay claim to the land. However, control of this land offers control of the land trading routes. As a result, Israel refuses to surrender the territory on the basis of security.





Moreover, the land also generates tourism revenue that both sides want. The resolution must address this concern too and pronounce its ruling.

Above all, the production and trading of merchandise in the disputed settlements is a valuable source of tax revenue that a Palestinian state would need to attain financial and political stability.

However, Israel's economy is equally burdened and in need of stability too. Therefore, the committee must be clear with regards to how income generated from the disputed settlements will be distributed.

