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# **UNSC Historical – United Nations Security Council**

1967

Topic A: Addressing the tensions between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

Topic B: Discussing the role of world superpowers in the Middle East.

Letter From The Chair .....	3
Committee Overview .....	4
Recent UN Actions .....	4
Background of the Topic.....	5
Context of the Problem Worldwide.....	5
Questions To Consider.....	6
Main Stakeholders.....	6
Sources .....	6



# Letter From the Chair

Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to the Security Council Committee! We are Jorge Prado y Matías Riboldi, and we are thrilled to serve as your chairs for EMUN 2026. Our committee is dedicated to promoting meaningful dialogue on issues crucial to global peace and security. As members of the United Nations Security Council, we hold the responsibility of addressing international crises with diplomacy, impartiality, and a commitment to the UN Charter. During our sessions, we will examine the conflict that would become known as the Six-Day War of 1967. This brief yet highly consequential conflict reshaped the Middle East's political landscape and continues to influence regional and global dynamics today. The war raises enduring questions about preemptive self-defense, territorial occupation, sovereignty, and the role of international law. Delegates will be challenged to consider the balance between national security and international stability, and to propose solutions that not only address immediate tensions but also lay out the groundwork for long-term peace.

As we engage in debate, let us remember that our discussions have real-world implications. The Security Council is not just a forum for words—it is a body with the power to take binding action. We encourage you to think critically, speak diplomatically, and collaborate constructively to build effective, historically grounded solutions.

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## Committee Overview

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations and is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. It is the only UN body whose decisions are legally binding on all Member States, and it has the authority to establish peacekeeping missions, impose sanctions, and authorize the use of force to resolve conflicts. The Six-Day War, fought in June 1967, posed a direct threat to international peace and highlighted the Security Council's role as a forum for immediate crisis response. The conflict not only involved direct military action between UN Member States but also raised long-term questions about occupation, borders, and international law—issues that the Council continues to grapple with today. As such, this topic falls directly within the Security Council's mandate to maintain global peace and security through diplomacy, resolution, and multilateral action. Through the committee, delegates will have the opportunity to develop their position and propose solutions to this issue through worldwide perspectives. It is important to remember that the simulation timeline will begin on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1967, meaning that any future events will not be taken into account during the debate. In other words, it is up to this committee to establish a new timeline for this pivotal event, as every delegate's participation and cooperation will be crucial for the rewriting of history.

## Recent Actions

Since its establishment, the United Nations has been thoroughly involved with the affairs of the Middle East. Through international cooperation, this organization has been key for the mediation of conflict and the making of key decisions that have shaped the region to what it is now. An example of this was their involvement in the partition of Israel and Palestine, as the plans for this decision were both presented and approved in the General Assembly. This key moment awarded the Jewish state international recognition and set a precedent for many violent clashes to come. Over the years, the UN facilitated negotiations between Arab nations and Israel and even oversaw the creation of an international peacekeeping force that could enforce ceasefires in cases like the 1956 Suez Crisis. Although critics have debated about the

effectiveness of the organization's peace efforts in the long term, there is no doubt that this committee's decisions and actions will have a lasting impact on the future of the region.

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## Topic A: Addressing the tensions between Israel and its Arab neighbours

### **Background of the Topic**

After WWI, the League of Nations approved a mandate which would formally give Great Britain control over Palestine. As the Arabs were both against British rule and the ever-increasing number of immigrant Jews settling in their territory, it inevitably led to tensions which erupted into many instances of violence over the decades. With the UK's failure to reach compromises between the Jews and the Arabs and their partaking in the escalation of violence, the international community stepped in to address the issues in Mandatory Palestine. Sentiment for a Jewish state grew stronger after the Holocaust, leading to the UN-proposed "Partition Plan" which would divide the land into two states, Jewish Israel and Arab Palestine, while keeping Jerusalem a UN-controlled zone. Thanks to the influence of both the United States and the USSR, 33 countries approved, 13 countries voted against it, and 10 abstained from voting. Although the Arab states walked out as a form of protest, the plan was adopted, marking the end of British rule and the independence of Israel in 1948.

This event was followed by a series of conflicts that shaped the region over the decades. Because of strong Arab resistance, a civil conflict erupted between the Palestinians and the Israelis amidst the partition negotiations, causing the expulsion of thousands of Arabs. This later prompted Arab forces from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq to march into now Israeli territory to protect Arab Palestine and prevent the establishment of a Jewish state. This conflict, known now as the First Arab-Israeli war, lasted approximately 9 months due to the many ceasefires that failed during the three phases of the conflict. In

the end, Israel's army prevailed, as the state increased its awarded territory from the UN Partition Plan up 21%. Although both Jordan and Egypt also made territorial gains in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip respectively, Jewish success in the battlefield showed the lack of coordination in the Arab League.

For the next few years, Israel and its Arab neighbors had brief clashes, as many communities of Jews and Muslims ended in the wrong sides of the 1949 Armistice borders and experienced discrimination. Notably, Egypt allowed raids of Palestinian Militants into Israel, proving how peace was never truly established during this period. Egyptian president Gamal Nasser's rise to power complicated relations even more, as both Britain and France were angered by his anti-imperialist policies. His decision to nationalize the Suez Canal and block Israel's passage through the Strait of Tiran in was the tipping point that set off the Second Arab-Israeli confrontation, also known as the Suez Crisis, in 1956. In the matter of nine days, Israeli forces took control of the West Bank and Sinai Desert with the help of Britain and France. Although this operation became a military success for the newly formed coalition, it diplomatically backfired as the entire international community, especially the US and the USSR, pressured them to withdraw their forces from Egyptian territory. The ceasefire was solidified by the deployment of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) to monitor the removal of troops, who only operated in Egypt after Israel refused to allow them in its territory. In the end, the British and the French lost much of their influence in the Middle East because of this crisis, and Israel got shipping rights for the Strait of Tiran, but not the Suez.

Ten years after the Suez Crisis, tensions between Israel and its neighbors began worsening once again. In the West Bank, Israel started having minor clashes with Jordan. In the Syrian border, violence between Jews and Arabs also erupted, as Palestinian guerrilla operations were met with strong responses. The Soviet Union, which had grown close to Egypt, gave Cairo a false report that Israeli forces were massing near Golan Heights. In response, Egypt started preparing for conflict. Not only had they signed a mutual defense agreement with Syria in 1966, but they also later secured pacts with Jordan and Iraq in May of 1967. Nasser had received heavy criticism from other Arab states for failing to aid them in their previous clashes with Israel of the recent months, accusing the president of hiding behind the UNEF. Consequently, Nasser asked for the removal of UN's peacekeeping troops, and further pressure from Russian diplomats

made Cairo feel obliged to move troops to the Sinai Desert. Additionally, they decided to block Israeli ships from crossing the Strait of Tiran. Israel rectified their position from the previous conflict: they believed Egypt's blocking of the strait would justify for military action.

## Current Situation

Between June 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of 1967, the Middle East witnessed a rapid escalation toward full-scale conflict. Tensions had been mounting for weeks, but during this critical period, Arab states finalized military alliances and intensified troop deployments. Egypt solidified defense pacts with Jordan and Iraq, leading to the arrival of Iraqi forces in Jordan. At the same time, Egypt continued its military buildup in the Sinai Peninsula, while Syrian forces held strategic positions along the Golan Heights. Jordan prepared for conflict along the West Bank. On June 1<sup>st</sup>, Israel formed a national unity government and appointed Moshe Dayan as Defense Minister, signaling a shift towards military readiness. Despite the region's preparedness for war, the countries found themselves in a standstill. On one side, the Soviets had advised Egypt from striking first, threatening to pull support if they were to do so. The Americans made a similar request to Israel, showing that neither side would benefit from formally beginning the hostilities. It is now the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, and delegates from the Security Council's member states have joined with representatives of the Middle East to attempt a last-minute resolution, unsure if the current tensions will once again escalate into an armed conflict between Arabs and Jews...

## Context of the Problem Worldwide

In the past century, the Middle East has become one of the most important regions in the world thanks to its strategic location and its richness in resources, specifically oil. Because of this, tensions between its countries have significant impacts in other parts of the world, as global trading routes and the distribution of natural resources are hindered. For example, the prospect of war risks the interruption and closing of both the Straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal, which would affect Europe's supply of energy

and its access to the Eastern World; in other words, many economic powers depend and have stakes in the stability of these maritime passages. Moreover, a potential conflict threatens a refugee crisis, as any changes to the Green Lines would lead to more ethnic clashes and a humanitarian disaster. This was already the case in previous conflicts, as Israel's independence brought what was known as Nakba, the ethnic cleansing of thousands of Palestinians. Finally, the involvement of the United States and the Soviet Union in this conflict points to a possible a global escalation, as both superpowers have opposing interests and visions for the region.

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## Topic B: Discussing the role of world superpowers in the Middle East

### **Background of the Topic**

After World War II, two of the winning countries, the USSR and the USA, began the long-standing rivalry that would become known as the Cold War. Although this conflict consisted mainly of a geopolitical battle between Communist and Capitalist ideologies, both global superpowers often involved themselves in proxy wars to expand their spheres of influence. Since the Middle East became a key strategic point for the control of trade of resources like oil, both the Americans and their Soviets have constantly attempted to intervene and influence different countries to establish superiority.

The United States has been involved with Middle Eastern affairs ever since the creation of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, a group of individuals who were tasked with addressing the issues in Mandatory Palestine between Jews and Arabs. Although many of their recommendations were never implemented, the United States was always at the forefront of the establishment of an Israeli state, being



the first country to formally recognize them in 1948. Notably, the USSR supported the independence of Israel as well, believing that the partition plan would weaken western influence in the region. During the First Arab-Israeli war, the Soviets supplied weapons to Israel, which was crucial for their victory. On the other hand, the US maintained a middle ground in the initial years of the region's tensions, focusing on diplomatic efforts to mediate peace rather than military actions that would escalate conflict. This changed after the Suez Crisis, as heightened tensions of the Cold War prompted the Americans to engage in closer relations with the Israelis. Although Washington briefly sold weapons to both Egypt and Jordan, it was clear that the Arab world was leaning more towards the USSR's sphere of influence. Similarly to Israel in 1948, Egypt made a Czech arms deal with the Soviet Union, which made Israel align further with the western bloc. During John F. Kennedy's term, the world saw a significant shift in American foreign policy to support Israel. Not only did they start providing more financial aid than before, but both countries started collaborating in military aspects, formalizing a special relation that would be key to the development in tensions later.

Evidently, both the Soviet Union and the United States went from acting as mediators in the pursuit of peace to becoming active partisans, each aligning itself with the regional actors that best served its interests. In 1967, the tensions between Israel and the Arabs raised the expectations for a new conflict. This time, however, the two global superpowers would be taking sides instead of encouraging negotiations, a fact that is raising concerns in the international community. Although the Cold War has already led to many proxy wars being fought in countries like Korea and Vietnam, the importance of the Middle East leads the world to believe that a direct confrontation between the USSR and the US is possible, an event that would bring disastrous consequences.

## Context of the Problem Worldwide

The influence of the two superpowers in the recent escalation of 1967 has intensified the rivalry between the Soviet Union and the USA. Both countries used the region to test and sell weapons to their allies, which has contributed to a massive arms buildup in the Middle East, fueling the ambitions for a new

confrontation. The absence of these two diplomatic giants in mediation efforts can also hinder the effectiveness of the Security Council's response to the issue. Since both the Americans and the Soviets hold veto power in the committee, the polarization of their stances in Middle Eastern affairs makes it unlikely that resolutions will pass easily. Moreover, the role of indirect allies of the USSR and the USA has divided the world politically, where Western nations tend to support Israel while socialists, Arabs, and developing countries backed by the USSR tend to support the Arab cause. This division affected international relations, trade, and diplomacy far beyond the Middle East.

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## Questions To Consider

- How can the Security Council ensure long-term peace and security in the region?
- To what extent should the principle of territorial integrity be upheld versus the right to self-defense?
- Should Egypt's blockade on the Straits of Tiran constitute a *casus belli*, or in other words, does it justify a war?
- What actions should be taken regarding constant border clashes between Arabs and Jews?
- How should the Security Council respond to the escalation of tensions by both Middle Eastern countries and their superpower allies?
- How do Cold War rivalries influence the Council's ability to act?
- To what extent do global superpowers like the US and the USSR have the right to intervene in foreign affairs?

## Important Terms and Definitions

**Ceasefire:** A temporary suspension of fighting, typically by mutual agreement between conflicting parties.

**Armistice:** A formal agreement to stop fighting, often preceding a peace treaty.

**Resolution:** A formal decision or expression of opinion adopted by a UN body such as the Security Council.

**Mandate:** The authority granted by the UN or another body to administer a territory or carry out a policy.

**Occupied territory:** Land that is under military occupation by a foreign power, without sovereignty being transferred.

**Annexation:** The formal incorporation of a territory into another state, often without international recognition.

**Demilitarized Zone (DMZ):** An area in which military forces or installations are prohibited.

**Diplomatic Recognition:** Official acceptance of a state or government by another state.

**Bilateral Relations:** Political, economic, or diplomatic relations between two countries.

**Multilateralism:** Cooperation among several countries toward a common goal, often through international institutions like the UN.

**Zionism:** A nationalist movement supporting the establishment and protection of a Jewish homeland in Israel.

**Pan-Arabism:** A political and cultural ideology advocating for the unity of Arab countries.

**Palestinian Refugee Crisis:** The displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians during and after the 1948 Arab–Israeli War and later conflicts.

**Green Line:** The demarcation line set out in the 1949 Armistice Agreements between Israel and its neighbors.

**UN Partition Plan:** A resolution passed by the General Assembly in 1947 that would divide Mandatory Palestine into one Jewish and one Arab state.

**Suez Canal:** A critical waterway in Egypt linking the Mediterranean and Red Seas, central to global trade and many Middle East conflicts.

**Golan Heights:** A rocky plateau in southwestern Syria (under Syrian control as of May 1967).

**West Bank and Gaza:** Territories given to Arab Palestine in the Partition Plan (under Jordanian and Egyptian control respectively as of May 1967).

**Sinai Peninsula:** A peninsula in eastern Egypt with strategic benefits to the Straits of Tiran

**Straits of Tiran:** Another critical waterway granting access to the Red Sea, specifically for Israel.

## Members

### *Permanent:*

- United States of America

- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- Republic of China
- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- French Republic

***Non-permanent:***

- Empire of Ethiopia
- Republic of Mali
- Federal Republic of Nigeria
- State of Japan
- Republic of India
- Argentine Republic
- Federative Republic of Brazil
- Canada
- Kingdom of Denmark
- People's Republic of Bulgaria

***By invitation:***

- State of Israel
- United Arab Republic (Egypt)
- Syrian Arab Republic
- Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- Republic of Iraq

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