



ICJ OPINION TO ISRAEL – PAPER - II

ICJ & Palestinian crisis

The Palestinian problem traces its roots back to the early 20th century, with the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent British mandate over Palestine. The Balfour Declaration of 1917, in which Britain expressed support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, marked the beginning of escalating tensions between Jewish and Arab populations.

In 1947, the United Nations proposed a partition plan to create separate Jewish and Arab states. This plan was accepted by the Jewish community but rejected by the Arab states and the Palestinian Arabs, leading to the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948. Israel declared independence, and subsequent wars in 1956, 1967, and 1973 further complicated the territorial disputes.

Key Issues

1. **Territory:** Disputes over borders, particularly the territories of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, which were occupied by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War.
2. **Refugees:** The displacement of Palestinian people and their right of return.
3. **Settlements:** The construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, viewed as illegal under international law by many countries and international organizations.
4. **Jerusalem:** Both Israelis and Palestinians claim Jerusalem as their capital, creating a highly contentious issue.

Israeli occupied Territories

Since the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel has occupied the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. These areas are central to the conflict, with the international community largely considering the occupation illegal under international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the acquisition of territory by force.

Settlements

Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are a major point of contention. These settlements are seen as an impediment to the peace process and the creation of a viable Palestinian state. The international community, including the United Nations, has repeatedly called for a halt to settlement expansion.

Israel justifies its presence in these territories as necessary for security reasons, citing threats from various militant groups. However, the presence of Israeli military forces and the construction of a separation barrier have led to significant hardships for Palestinian residents.



Recent Developments

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) recently issued a nonbinding advisory opinion stating that Israel's continued presence in Palestinian territories is unlawful and must end immediately. The ICJ also called for an immediate halt to settlement construction and the removal of existing settlements.

About ICJ

The ICJ, located in The Hague, is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It settles legal disputes between states and gives advisory opinions on international legal issues referred to it by the UN General Assembly, Security Council, or other UN organs and specialized agencies.

Advisory Opinions

The ICJ's advisory opinions, such as the recent one on Israel's presence in Palestinian territories, are not legally binding but carry significant moral and political weight. They are intended to clarify international law and provide guidance to the international community.

Reaction to the Advisory Opinion

Israel has rejected the ICJ's advisory opinion, arguing that it mixes politics with law and is fundamentally flawed. Israel maintains that the opinion ignores its security needs and the complex realities of the Middle East. Israel also emphasized that the opinion is not legally binding and accused the Palestinian Authority of using international tribunals to bypass direct negotiations.

Relevance to India

Diplomatic Relations

India has historically supported the Palestinian cause and was one of the first non-Arab countries to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). India has consistently advocated for a two-state solution, with a sovereign, independent, and viable Palestinian state coexisting peacefully with Israel.

Strategic Interests

India's relations with Israel have grown significantly in recent decades, particularly in areas such as defense, agriculture, and technology. Balancing its support for Palestinian rights with its strategic partnership with Israel is a delicate diplomatic task for India.

International Law and Multilateralism

As a country that values international law and multilateralism, India pays close attention to ICJ opinions and the broader international response to such issues. The ICJ's advisory opinion on Israel's presence in Palestinian territories highlights the importance of adhering to international legal principles, which is a cornerstone of India's foreign policy.



Domestic Implications

India's own experiences with territorial disputes and conflicts underscore the importance of international legal frameworks and peaceful negotiations. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the ICJ's role in addressing it offer valuable lessons for India in handling its regional disputes and promoting stability and peace.

Conclusion

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a deeply entrenched issue with significant implications for regional and global stability. The recent ICJ advisory opinion underscores the complexities of the conflict and the challenges of finding a peaceful resolution.

MAIN PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. **Discuss the historical context and key issues that form the basis of the Palestinian problem. How do these issues contribute to the ongoing conflict?**
2. **Examine the role of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, focusing on its recent advisory opinion. How does this opinion impact the conflict and what are its implications for international law?**

ANSWERS:

Question 1:

Discuss the historical context and key issues that form the basis of the Palestinian problem. How do these issues contribute to the ongoing conflict?.

Introduction : The Palestinian problem stems from a complex historical context dating back to the early 20th century. After the decline of the Ottoman Empire, Britain took control of Palestine under the League of Nations mandate. The 1917 Balfour Declaration, in which Britain supported the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, ignited tensions between the Jewish and Arab populations.

In 1947, the United Nations proposed a partition plan to create separate Jewish and Arab states. This plan was accepted by the Jewish community but rejected by the Arab states and Palestinian Arabs, leading to the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948. Israel declared independence, and subsequent wars in 1956, 1967, and 1973 further complicated the territorial disputes.



The key issues fueling the conflict include territorial disputes, particularly over the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, which were occupied by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War. The status of Palestinian refugees displaced by these conflicts and their right of return remains a contentious issue.

Additionally, the construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories is seen as illegal under international law and an impediment to peace.

Jerusalem is another highly contentious issue, with both Israelis and Palestinians claiming it as their capital.

Conclusion : These issues contribute to the ongoing conflict by perpetuating mutual distrust and hostility, making it challenging to reach a peaceful resolution.

The complex interplay of historical grievances, territorial disputes, and conflicting national aspirations continues to impede efforts toward lasting peace in the region.

Question 2:

Examine the role of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, focusing on its recent advisory opinion. How does this opinion impact the conflict and what are its implications for international law?

Introduction : The International Court of Justice (ICJ) plays a significant role in providing legal clarity and guidance on international disputes.

Core : In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the ICJ recently issued a nonbinding advisory opinion stating that Israel's presence in Palestinian territories is unlawful.

The ICJ called for an immediate end to settlement construction and the removal of existing settlements, emphasizing that Israel's occupation violates international law, including the prohibition on acquiring territory by force and the right to self-determination for Palestinians.

Israel has rejected the ICJ's advisory opinion, arguing that it conflates politics with law and disregards Israel's security needs and the complex realities of the Middle East. Israel maintains that the opinion is not legally binding and views it as fundamentally flawed.

The ICJ's opinion, although nonbinding, carries significant moral and political weight. It reaffirms the international consensus on the illegality of the Israeli settlements and the occupation of Palestinian territories.

This opinion impacts the conflict by highlighting the need for adherence to international law and by potentially influencing international diplomatic efforts and public opinion.

Conclusion : For international law, the ICJ's advisory opinion underscores the importance of legal principles in resolving international disputes. It reinforces the notion that occupation and settlement activities violate established legal norms.



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The opinion serves as a reminder to the international community about the need for a legal framework in addressing such conflicts and promotes the use of legal mechanisms to seek justice and peace.



**P.L. RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY | 1447/C, 3rd floor, 15th Main Road,
Anna Nagar West, Chennai-40. Ph.No.044-42323192, 9445032221
Email: plrajmemorial@gmail.com Website: www.plrajiacademy.com
Telegram link: <https://t.me/plrajiyas2006> YouTube: P L RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY**