



SRMUN Atlanta 2014
***Revitalizing “An Agenda for Peace”: Preventative Diplomacy,
Conflict Resolution, and the Making of Peace in Our Time Movement***
November 20-22, 2014

Esteemed Delegates,

I welcome you to the Southern Regional Model United Nations (SRMUN) Atlanta 2014 Conference and the General Assembly (GA) Fourth Committee, also known as the Special Political and Decolonization (SPECPOL) Committee. It is my distinct pleasure to serve as your Director for this exciting committee. This is my sixth year participating with the conference and third year on staff. Previously, I have served as an Assistant Director (AD) twice and have served three times as a Director. Additionally, I am the Deputy-Director General for the SRMUN Charlotte 2015 Conference. Lastly, I am a graduate of Pace University with both a Bachelors of Business Administration in International Management, and as well hold a Masters in Public Administration from the same institution.

Serving as your ADs for this challenging committee are the dynamic team comprised of Alexandra (Ali) Silver and Patrick Hughes. This will be Ali's second time serving in the role as an AD; previously she was a Chair at SRMUN Atlanta 2012 and has been to SRMUN numerous times as a delegate. Ali is a graduate of Pace University, where she holds a Bachelors of Arts in Communications. This is Patrick's first time as a staff member. Previously, he has participated as a delegate and has been involved with Model United Nations (MUN) at Kennesaw State University. Patrick is in the midst of finishing his coursework for a Bachelors of Arts in Diplomacy and International Relations as well as a Bachelors of Business Administration in International Management.

The GA 4th committee is one of the world's largest committees of its kind and was created under the GA principal organ section of the United Nations System. Known as one of the six main committees of the GA, SPECPOL is charged with discussing topics such as decolonization, peacekeeping, mine action, and the University for Peace. Although these topics appear to encompass most of the related topics of the Fourth Committee, the work of the committee has evolved over the years to encompass other issues. SPECPOL is often utilized to act as a broad body to address the matters that do not fit into the specializations of the other five committees.

Keeping in mind the mandate and pillars of the United Nations, the GA 4th, the theme of SRMUN Atlanta 2014 conference, we have chosen the following topics for you to discuss at this year's conference:

- Topic I: The Use of Space Technology to Promote Cooperation in Environmental Disaster Management
- Topic II: Addressing the Palestinian Right of Return

The background guide serves as a base core for your research, however, and should not be utilized as your delegation's only source of research. The background guides for each individual topic are prepared in depth solely to be used as a starting point for delegates and it is expected that delegates research beyond the guide in preparation for their position paper as well as in preparation for the conference itself. Each delegation is required to submit a position paper no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and should showcase your Member State's position, policies and recommendation on each of the two topics. For more information regarding formatting and examples for position papers can be found on the SRMUN Website at <http://www.srmun.org>. All position papers MUST be submitted no later than **October 31, 2014 at 11:59 pm EST** via <http://www.srmun.org>.

Ali, Patrick and I send you the warmest regards in preparation for the 2014 SRMUN Atlanta Conference and look forward to your position papers as well as the diligent work during committee. Please feel free to contact, us should you have any questions during your preparation for the conference.

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The History for the General Assembly Fourth Committee: Special Political and Decolonization (SPECPOL)

Representatives of 50 Member States drew up the United Nations (UN) Charter during the UN Conference on International Organization held in San Francisco, California in the United States of America (USA) on 25 April 1945.¹ While effective to varying degrees on these issues, the UN continues to develop better methods to approach these agenda items and add new issues to the list. This serves to exemplify the UN Charter's Mission Statement in Article 1 Section 3, which states that the body's purpose is:

“To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.”²

The General Assembly (GA), the main body of the UN, typically delegates its work to six main committees.³ The Fourth Committee of the GA, also known as the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL), deals with a wide array of issues, such as, “decolonization, Palestinian Refugees and human rights, peacekeeping, mine action, peaceful use of outer space, public information, atomic radiation, and the University for Peace.”⁴ The committee's current focus was established in 1993 with the passage of Resolution 47/233, which merged agenda items of the Special Political Committee (SPC) with the Fourth Committee, ultimately becoming the new SPECPOL.⁵ This improved on the efficiency of the decolonization committee, after the dismantling of the Trusteeship system, which effectively neutralized a large aspect of the decolonization agenda issue.⁶

The work of the Fourth Committee has evolved over the years to encompass other issues, acting as a broad body addressing the matters that do not fit into the specializations of the other five committees.⁷ As the complexity to these issues grow, the GA has established subcommittees dedicated to singular issues, which provide analysis for the Fourth Committee.⁸ One such body is the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) confirmed by resolution 1472 (XIV).⁹ The role of COPUOS includes developing ways to use outer space peacefully within the international community, study legal problems regarding space exploration, encourage access to information and research, and create new programmes.¹⁰ Another similar body is the Committee on Information (COI) established in 1979 by resolution 34/182.¹¹ These resolutions have given the Fourth Committee a wide-ranging influence in the conduct of business within the GA.¹² Such influence can come at play when the needs of the GA change and new topics must be developed in this ever-changing world.

¹ “San Francisco Conference,” The United Nations, http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/history/sanfrancisco_conference.shtml (accessed April 1, 2014).

² Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations. June 26, 1945, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/> (accessed April 3, 2014).

³ “Main Committees,” United Nations General Assembly, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/maincommittees/index.shtml> (accessed April 1, 2014).

⁴ “Special Political and Decolonization,” United Nations General Assembly, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/fourth/> (accessed April 1, 2014).

⁵ A/RES/47/233. *Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly*. United Nations General Assembly. September 14, 1993, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r233.htm> (accessed April 4, 2014).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ “Special Political and Decolonization,” United Nations General Assembly, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/fourth/> (accessed April 1, 2014).

⁸ “Rules of Procedure,” United Nations General Assembly, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/about/ropga/aux3.shtml?body=%20http://www.un.org/en/ga/about/ropga/aux3.shtml> (accessed April 1, 2014).

⁹ “United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,” United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/COPUOS/copuos.html> (accessed April 8, 2014).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ A/RES/34/182, *Questions Relating to Information*, United Nations General Assembly. December 18, 1979, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/34/a34res182.pdf> (accessed April 9, 2014).

¹² “Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly During its Fourth Session,” United Nations General Assembly, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/4/ares4.htm> (accessed April 1, 2014).

The UN GA and its respective committees' resolutions therefore have the potential for greatly altering world politics. One such example can be seen in the passing of Resolution A/67/L.28 which established Palestine as a Non-Member State in the eyes of nearly the entire UN body.¹³ In this Resolution, the UN GA illustrated the importance of world opinion, even if it is not legally binding.¹⁴ As a subcommittee to the GA, the Fourth Committee is charged with handling this ability with similar prudence and conscientiousness. Such conscientiousness comes into play as the Fourth Committee has the authority to create ad hoc committees to address emergency issues or situations that require immediate attention, such as the Special Committee on Information established in 1949.¹⁵ The Fourth Committee also has the ability to collaborate with specific UN bodies or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to acquire information or assistance.¹⁶ For example, the Fourth Committee is provided with a comprehensive review of all UN peacekeeping from the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.¹⁷ Additionally, the Committee on the Exercise of the Rights of the Palestinian People reports on the current human rights status of the Palestinian People directly to the Fourth Committee.¹⁸ These all serve as examples of the types of committees which the Fourth Committee typically collaborates with, but is not nearly an exhaustive list.

As for funding, the UN and its agencies are funded by two sources respectively: assessed and voluntary contributions.¹⁹ Assessed contributions refer to the obligations that Member States take on when signing treaties to make payments to the UN and voluntary contributions are left open to the discretion of each individual Member State.²⁰ Contributions from voluntary sources surmise nearly half of UN funding, which goes on to finance humanitarian efforts.²¹ These efforts are conducted via organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).²²

Currently, the Fourth Committee is in its 68th session addressing a wide array of agenda items including mine action, the effects of atomic radiation, global peacekeeping efforts, the status of special political missions, and revitalizing the work of the General Assembly.²³ At the previous session, agenda items included a range of topics such as Non-Self-Governing Territories, international cooperation in the peaceful use of outer space, public information, peacekeeping, and Palestinian refugees as well as investigation of Israeli practices affecting human rights.²⁴ Many of these items were identified as needing a more descriptive report and could very well come into play in near-future sessions.²⁵

All 193 Member States of the UN are represented in the Fourth Committee, as well as the two Non-Member Observer States, The Holy See and Palestine.²⁶

¹³ "General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly to Accord Palestine 'Non-Member Observer State' Status in United Nations," The United Nations, November 29, 2012, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/ga11317.doc.htm> (accessed April 1, 2014).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly During its Fourth Session," United Nations General Assembly, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/4/ares4.htm> (accessed April 1, 2014).

¹⁶ "FEATURE: The UN General Assembly's Fourth Committee – special political and decolonization issues," UN New Centre, January 2, 2013, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43868&Cr=decolonization&Cr1=#.U9P23fJ0zIU> (accessed April 1, 2014).

¹⁷ "General Assembly and Peacekeeping," The United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/ctte/CTTEE.htm> (accessed April 1, 2014).

¹⁸ "Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices," The United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/D153C5BD9337B79285257C2000765468> (accessed April 1, 2014).

¹⁹ "Background and General Analysis on UN Finance," Global Policy Forum, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/un-finance/general-articles.html#undoc> (accessed April 1, 2014).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "The UN Budget Process," Better World Campaign, <http://www.betterworldcampaign.org/issues/funding/the-un-budget-process.html> (accessed April 1, 2014).

²² Ibid.

²³ A/C.4/68/1. *Organization of Work*. United Nations General Assembly. September 20, 2013.

²⁴ "Special Political and Decolonization," United Nations General Assembly, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/fourth/67/documentation.shtml> (accessed April 1, 2014).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations. June 26, 1945, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/> (accessed April 3, 2014).

I. The Use of Space Technology to Promote Cooperation in Environmental Disaster Management

“Earth is seen from outer space there are no visible boundaries dividing the territories and people on our planet, that reminds us that we are all part of the same global community so we must work together for the greater good for all humanity, that is the spirit that inspires the work of the whole United Nations.”

-Yury Fedotov, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna²⁷

Introduction

The use of outer space for peaceful purposes traces back to one historical event in time that captured the world’s attention: the launch of the first artificial satellite Sputnik I.²⁸ In the midst of the Cold War, the International Council of Scientific Unions declared 1 July 1957 to 31 December 1958 as the International Geophysical Year (IGY) due to high cycles of solar activity during that period.²⁹ In October 1954, the Council adopted a resolution calling for artificial satellites to be launched to map the Earth’s surface during the IGY; in July 1955, the United States of America (USA) announced its plans to launch an Earth-orbiting satellite.³⁰ On 4 October 1957, the former Soviet Union (USSR) successfully launched Sputnik I into orbit, a technical achievement that alarmed the United States of America (USA).³¹ During the Cold War many feared the Soviet Union had the capability to use outer space as a means of transporting nuclear weapons and missiles from Europe to the USA.³² This single event marked the beginning of the USA-USSR space race.³³

In November 1957, following the launch of Sputnik I, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) met during their 12th Session where Member States adopted A/RES/1148 pertaining to the Disarmament Commission and Arms Reduction.³⁴ On 31 January 31 the USA countered with their launch of Explorer I, a satellite that went on to discover radiation belts orbiting the Earth.³⁵ Furthermore, the space race led the USA to pass the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958 which called for “research into problems of flight within and outside the Earth’s atmosphere.”³⁶ The Space Act also disassembled the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics and in turn transferred all of its power to what became the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).³⁷ On 13 December 1958 the GA met to discuss peaceful uses of outer space; through the adoption of A/RES/1348, the GA concluded “outer space should be used for peaceful purposes only” in the hopes “to avoid the extension of present national rivalries into this new field.”³⁸ In turn, an ad hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) was established and comprised of 18 Member States.³⁹ In 1959 the GA, under A/RES/1472, established the Committee as a permanent body, consisting of 24 Member States.⁴⁰ Present day, the Committee is active with 76 Member States, one of the largest UN Committees.⁴¹ Since its establishment COPUOS has gradually fulfilled its

²⁷ Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space – Fifty-fourth Session,

http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/pdf/transcripts/copuos/COPUOS_T628E.pdf (accessed May 20, 2014).

²⁸ National Archives: Space Exploration, <http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/space-timeline.html#time> (accessed June 22, 2014).

²⁹ Sputnik and The Dawn of the Space Age, <http://history.nasa.gov/sputnik/> (accessed June 28, 2014).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ General Assembly – Twelfth Session: Resolution 1148, http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r12_en.shtml (accessed May 20, 2014).

³⁵ Sputnik, <http://www.coldwar.org/articles/50s/sputnik.asp> (accessed June 17, 2014).

³⁶ National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958 (Unamended), <http://history.nasa.gov/spaceact.html> (accessed June 17, 2014).

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ General Assembly Fourth Committee – 792nd Plenary Meeting: Resolution 1348, http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/SpaceLaw/gares/html/gares_13_1348.html (accessed May 20, 2014).

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: History and Overview of Activities, http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/COPUOS/cop_overview.html (accessed May 20, 2014).

⁴¹ Ibid.

functions to set up programmes pertaining to peaceful uses of outer space, to review international cooperation, encourage dissemination of information and research, and study legal situations that arise during space exploration.⁴²

Law of Outer Space

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) is a Secretariat to COPUOS, providing parliamentary services and research to aid Member States in making legal decisions related to the governance of outer space.⁴³ UNOOSA's evolution can be traced back to its initial creation as a small panel of experts with the passage of A/RES/1348.⁴⁴ In its current form UNOOSA provides support and advisement to COPUOS and its subcommittees including the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (S&T) and the Legal Subcommittee.⁴⁵ It also provides assistance and instruction to developing Member States in the peaceful use of space technologies for societal development.⁴⁶ COPUOS is the lone international forum for the development of international space law.⁴⁷ In order to govern space-related activities, COPUOS developed five sets of legal principles and international legal instruments, they are as follows:

1. Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies,
2. Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space,
3. Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects,
4. Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, and,
5. Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.⁴⁸

These legal principles adopted by the GA promote international cooperation, dissemination of information, and regulate safe use of nuclear power sources to explore outer space.⁴⁹ At the 52nd Session of the Legal Subcommittee in 2013, an agreement was reached for Member States to exchange information regularly on developments of national space-related regulatory frameworks and submit the texts of their national space laws and regulations.⁵⁰ In 2014, a compilation of these works from 2009 to 2013 were made available to all Member States in the Schematic Overview of National Regulatory Frameworks for Space Activities by the Working Group on National Legislation Relevant to the Peaceful Exploration and Use of Outer Space.⁵¹

Over the past decade, Member States involved in space activities have emphasized the need for effective policies and laws on space activities on both an international and national level.⁵² In 2007, COPUOS and its Legal Subcommittee requested UNOOSA to develop a curriculum on space law, specifically for developing Member States, which could be taught in UN regional centres on space science and technology education.⁵³ The current curriculum was developed by educators to support the activities of the regional centres while serving as an educational tool compiled of supplemental reference materials that are regularly updated.⁵⁴ The curriculum consists of four modules: 1) Basic concepts of international and space law; 2) International law and other regulations applicable to remote sensing, geographic information systems, satellite meteorology and global climate activities; 3)

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/OOSA/index.html> (accessed May 20, 2014).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ United Nations Treaties and Principles on Space Law, <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SpaceLaw/treaties.html> (accessed May 20, 2014).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ National Space Law, <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/SpaceLaw/national/schematic-overview.html> (accessed May 20, 2014).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Education Opportunities in Space Law: A Directory, <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SpaceLaw/educationdirectory/index.html> (accessed May 20, 2014).

⁵³ Education Curriculum on Space Law, <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SpaceLaw/curriculum/index.html> (accessed May 20, 2014).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Satellite communications and applicable international law and other regulations; and, 4) Global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) and applicable international law and other regulations.⁵⁵

Outer Space as an Emergency Response Unit

In the dawn of the new millennia, the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) was held in Vienna, Austria from 19-30 July 1999 under the theme “Space Benefits for Humanity in the Twenty-first Century.”⁵⁶ The conference adopted The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, which recommended 33 actions to allow space technologies to play a role in finding solutions for global challenges in the new millennium.⁵⁷ In order to protect Earth, the Declaration called for “a worldwide monitoring strategy to be developed for long-term global observations, building on existing capabilities.”⁵⁸ Since UNISPACE III the use of space-based information and solutions greatly increased.⁵⁹ Realizing a need for increased awareness of the vital role of early warning systems, UNOOSA organized regional workshops between 2000 and 2004 on the use of space technology for disaster management.⁶⁰ In October 2004, UNOOSA brought the results to an international workshop in Munich, Germany consisting of 170 Member States, which greatly expanded from the original amount of 51 Member States from 2000.⁶¹ Known as the Munich Vision: a Global Strategy for Improved Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Using Space Technology, the Member States agreed on a global strategy that would assist developing Member States acquire access to and use space technology for disaster management.⁶² All information was passed forward to the ad hoc expert who was reviewing a proposal for a single platform that would close the gap between space and disaster management.⁶³ On 14 December 2006, the UN approved the proposal and developed the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) through the passing of A/RES/61/110.⁶⁴ To ensure disasters are dealt with properly, space-based information is integrated into infrastructure, operational procedures, plans, and policies.⁶⁵ UN-SPIDER currently defines a disaster in nine different forms: 1) Drought - an extended period of time with deficient rainfall; 2) Earthquake – a shaking and vibration at the Earth’s surface caused by movement along the fault plane or by volcanic activity; 3) Epidemic – occurrence of a health-related event or illness that is large or unexpected. They are commonly caused by infectious disease such as cholera, meningococcal meningitis, typhoid, or viral hemorrhagic fever; 4) Extreme Temperature - extreme highs and extreme lows; 5) Flood – where water is not wanted; temporary condition of complete or partial inundation of land from tidal waters or overflow of inland; 6) Mass Movement – collapse of slope masses such as debris, rock, snow/ice, and soils; 7) Tsunami – Japanese origin in which “tsu” means harbor and “name” means wave hence “harbor wave.” A series of waves traveling average speeds of 450-600 miles per hour and travels outward in all directions; 8) Volcano – a mountain containing molten rock that erupts due to pressure from gases; and 9) Wildfire – an unplanned, unwanted fire.⁶⁶

In recent years the space community has established global and regional Emergency Mechanisms to support disaster response operations via satellite map images. Emergency Mechanisms include but do not limit the European Union’s Copernicus Emergency Management Service, the International Charter Space and Major Disasters, Sentinel Asia, SERVIR, an acronym meaning “to serve” in Spanish, a program through NASA, and the United

⁵⁵ United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs *Education Curriculum on Space Law*,

<http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SpaceLaw/curriculum/index.html> (accessed May 20, 2014).

⁵⁶ Space Technology and Disaster Management, <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SAP/stdm/index.html> (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: *Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development*, <http://www.un.org/events/unispace3/pressrel/e30pm.htm> (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁵⁹ Space Technology and Disaster Management, <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SAP/stdm/index.html> (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: *Disaster and Risk Management Guides*, <http://www.un-spider.org/knowledge-base/disaster-risk-management-guides> (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT).⁶⁷ UNOSAT is a technology-based programme under UNITAR implemented collaboratively with UN and non-UN organizations and with support from the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN).⁶⁸ The programme's Humanitarian Rapid Mapping Service delivers imagery analysis and satellite solutions to development and relief organizations outside of and within the UN system.⁶⁹

UN-SPIDER has been the source of various projects and the central hub for collaborations. One such project is the Rapid Impact and Vulnerability Analysis Fund (RIVAF), which is a part of the Global Pulse Initiative, launched by the Secretary General of the UN in 2010.⁷⁰ UNOOSA RIVAF: Understanding Poverty Assessment through Disaster Impacts, points out the Global Economic Crisis (GEC) effects on the links between livelihood, poverty, and vulnerability in order to understand natural disasters.⁷¹ Furthermore, the project examines how impacts of natural disasters directly affect GEC impacts on the poor and vulnerable.⁷² To test this hypothesis UN-SPIDER launched a project alongside RIVAF called A Visual Analytics Approach to Understanding Poverty Assessment through Disaster Impacts in Latin America and Africa.⁷³ This newer project created a set of unique, unexamined circumstances that had a negative effect on livelihood, poverty, and vulnerability.⁷⁴ The results of the study concluded three factors that can reduce the population and the government to cope with natural disaster impacts: 1) The effects of the GEC manifested first through reduced remittances from abroad; 2) Through a reduction in tax revenues due to decreased imports and exports; and, 3) Through unemployment.⁷⁵

In July 2010, UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER and the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies (JBGIS) published 'Geoinformation for Disaster and Risk Management – Examples and Best Practices,' a collection of the various case studies and material on what can be done with geoinformation in support of disaster and risk management including applications, experiences, methods, and systems.⁷⁶ This paved way for another UN-SPIDER project the "Value of Geo-Information for Disaster and Risk Management (VALID) – Benefit Analysis and Stakeholder Assessment," aiming to produce a publication with evidence of economic, humanitarian, organizational benefits based on cases analyses and expert stakeholder assessments by applying geoinformation to disaster management.⁷⁷

The Use of Space Technology for Environmental Management

In today's world all Member States in one form or another are practicing users of space-based solutions such as applications for sustainable development, Earth observation and navigation satellite, or telecommunication.⁷⁸ A reason for this widespread use of technology is the low cost.⁷⁹ Small satellites being developed at affordable rates led to the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises marketing their creations worldwide, a development that not only contributed to promoting the use of space technology but also created new opportunities for international space cooperation.⁸⁰ Due to these developments a new line in the framework of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications was made called the United Nations Basic Space Technology Initiative (BSTI); its mission, "to enhance access to space application tools for sustainable development through building capacity in basic space

⁶⁷ United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: *Emergency Mechanisms*, <http://www.un-spider.org/space-application/emergency-mechanisms> (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁶⁸ UNITAR Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), <http://www.un-spider.org/space-application/emergency-mechanisms/unitar-operational-satellite-applications-programme-unosat> (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: *Projects*, <http://www.un-spider.org/projects> (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ The RIVAF project: Understanding Poverty Assessment through Disaster Impacts, <http://www.un-spider.org/projects/rivaf-project-understanding-poverty-assessment-through-disaster-impacts> (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: *Projects*, <http://www.un-spider.org/projects> (accessed June 17, 2014).

⁷⁸ Basic Space Technology Initiative (BSTI), <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SAP/bsti/index.html> (accessed June 22, 2014).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

technology.”⁸¹ One use for current space technology is in the medical field to control disaster.⁸² Through the usage of satellites in orbit containing Geographic Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) technologies it is now easier to combine ecological, environmental, and remotely sensed data to predict and prevent infectious diseases.⁸³ When disaster strikes communications on the ground can be damaged or destroyed.⁸⁴ In this instance, GIS data is used to filter the contaminated area and separate it.⁸⁵ Also, GIS, GPS, and satellite communications provide immediate assistance by acting as an early warning system to distribute geographical alarms and information on preventative health measures in the case of a catastrophic event.⁸⁶

Other services satellites provide for disaster risk management and emergency response include geo-positioning, navigation, remote sensing, telecommunication, television, and weather forecasting.⁸⁷ For example, Earth Observation satellites provide images of the Earth’s surface in two forms: panchromatic spectral format, which are black and white images of Earth’s surface exposed to visible light, and multispectral format, images using four bands of the electromagnetic spectrum: blue, green, red, and near infrared.⁸⁸ In September 1984, a Panel of Experts on Remote Sensing from Space recognized the importance of coordinating international Earth observation efforts to better benefit society.⁸⁹ The Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) was originally developed to make it easier for users to access and utilize data, but in response to a changing environment CEOS had to evolve and create partnerships.⁹⁰ Over the past three decades CEOS Agencies have launched collaborative missions and developed ways to communicate with external organizations to meet their Earth observation needs and requirements.⁹¹ In 2013, the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) took over as chair of CEOS, adopting a new governance and a renewed mission statement; through CEOS “the space agencies support more effective decision-making in key areas such as disaster risk management, agricultural productivity, monitoring and management of the world’s forested regions, climate monitoring and research and data democratization.”⁹² A formal cooperation framework between CSA and the Germany Aerospace Center (DLR) was signed in September 2013 to further develop peaceful uses in areas of Earth observation, satellite operations, space exploration, and space technology.⁹³ Enhancing its use of GPS, Cuba has installed an early warning system that detects electrical storms at the Institute of Geophysics and Astronomy (IGA).⁹⁴ Another Member State getting involved in the use of satellites is the Republic of Korea (Korea).⁹⁵ In 2011, Korea established the second Space Development Basic Plan which mandates the government to create and update a national space plan every five years.⁹⁶ Korea operates a geostationary satellite and Korea Multi-Purpose Satellite (KOMPSAT) and is currently developing a new geostationary satellite programme GEO-KOMPSAT-2 for environmental monitoring, ocean monitoring, and meteorological missions.⁹⁷ The Korean Aerospace Research Institute, who is a member of the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters, makes its satellite data

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Woori Moon. “Review of Space Application Support for Disaster and Emergency Medicine.” UN-SPIDER, August 2008, pg. 5, http://www.un-spider.org/sites/default/files/TN-KP-018%20%5BTelemedicine%20Comprehensive%20Review%5D_1.pdf (accessed June 22, 2014).

⁸³ Ibid. pg. 8.

⁸⁴ United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: *Disaster Medicine, Telemedicine and Integrated Vector Management*, <http://www.un-spider.org/health-support-guides/disaster-medicine-telemedicine-and-integrated-vector-management> (accessed June 20, 2014).

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: *Technology Guides*, <http://www.un-spider.org/knowledge-base/technology-guides> (accessed July 15, 2014).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, http://www.ceos.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=25&Itemid=73 (accessed June 8, 2014).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: Activities of Member States. November 25, 2013, http://www.unoosa.org/pdf/reports/ac105/AC105_1058Add01E.pdf (accessed July 3, 2014).

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

available for disaster management, relief, and rehabilitation.⁹⁸ As of October 2013, the Institute had provided satellite footage to disaster-affected Member States on 74 different occasions including the tsunami in Madagascar, flooding in Mozambique, Senegal, Sudan, and USA, and an earthquake in China.⁹⁹

Current Situation

Following the conclusion of the sixth BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) Summit held in Brazil from 14-16 July 2014, Brazil and India signed an agreement that would allow Brazilian Earth stations to receive and process data from Indian Remote Sensing satellites (IRS).¹⁰⁰ India Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a statement, “The agreement provides for the reception of data from AWiFS [Advanced Wide Field Sensor] and LISS-III [Linear Imaging Self Scanning Sensor] payloads of IRS satellites, including but not limited to the Resourcesat-2 at Cuiaba Earth station in Brazil on a government-to-government basis.”¹⁰¹ The agreement mandates the Brazilian Space Agency (AEB) to make the National Institute for Space (INPE) the executive agency and work collaboratively with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).¹⁰² The terms of the agreement on ISRO’s part is to provide the collected data from the areas within INPE’s Earth station radius and the proper hardware to facilitate the reception of IRS satellite data and train INPE’s technical staff on IRS satellite data reception and processing; in return, INPE will be responsible for setting up the provided hardware, distribute and archive the data to make it publicly available.¹⁰³

Another recent satellite data receiving system has been implemented called the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD).¹⁰⁴ The RCMRD, host to UN-SPIDER’s Regional Support Office in Kenya, installed a new satellite receiving station obtaining data from Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectro-radiometer (MODIS) sensor and Earth Observation satellites.¹⁰⁵ Through this system, RCMRD can manage the tools needed to control ground station antenna to track and monitor real-time status.¹⁰⁶ The installation came after multiple requests from Member States in areas ranging from crop monitoring to disaster early warnings.¹⁰⁷ The MODIS sensor aboard satellites will map Earth’s surface every two days acquiring data from oceans and the lower atmosphere.¹⁰⁸ However, recent events have shown positive and negative implications of satellite systems. On 15 July 2014, MODIS acquired an image of typhoon Rammasun at 1:00 PM local time moments before it made landfall in the Philippines; 20 deaths have been attributed to the storm’s heavy rain and wind.¹⁰⁹ In contrast, days before Hurricane Arthur hit the coast of North Carolina, USA on 5 July 2014, the USA’s National Hurricane Center posted a forecast map of the storm surge to help citizens prepare.¹¹⁰ It was the first time the aforementioned Center used this tool to show how high off ground level to move goods in order to prevent water damage and predict the hardest hit places; there were no deaths or injuries from Hurricane Arthur.¹¹¹

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ “India, Brazil sign agreement on IRS satellite data”. July 17, 2014, http://geospatialworld.net/News/View.aspx?id=29441_Article (accessed July 18, 2014).

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Statement from India Prime Minister Narendra Modi. July 16, 2014, <http://pmindia.nic.in/details167.php> (accessed July 18, 2014).

¹⁰⁴ United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: *RCMRD installs MODIS satellite data receiving station*, <http://www.un-spider.org/news-and-events/news/rcmr-installs-modis-satellite-data-receiving-station> (accessed July 18, 2014).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: *Philippines: Satellites track Typhon Rammasun*, <http://www.un-spider.org/news-and-events/news/philippines-satellites-track-typhoon-rammasun> (accessed July 18, 2014).

¹¹⁰ United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: *National Hurricane Center: Decisive tools for storm surge preparedness*, <http://www.un-spider.org/news-and-events/news/national-hurricane-center-decisive-tools-storm-surge-preparedness> (accessed July 20, 2014).

¹¹¹ Ibid.

To continue finding ways of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes COPUOS held its 57th Session from 11-20 June 2014 in Vienna, Austria.¹¹² Parts of the agenda included the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee's 51st Session held 10-20 February 2014 and the report of the Legal Subcommittee's 53rd session held from 24 March to 4 April 2014.¹¹³ Moving forward, COPUOS is working to implement A/RES/68/75 adopted by the GA on 11 December 2013 during the 68th Session stating that the benefits of space applications and technologies can be used toward the post-2015 development agenda process.¹¹⁴

Global Cooperation to Assist in Disaster Management

Only in the past decade have satellites been useful tools for assisting in the medical field in a disaster situation.¹¹⁵ However, problems still occur when it comes to restrictions on flow of information and unexpected weather.¹¹⁶ Today, a "rapid response" to a disaster is still counted in days rather than hours, which is why there is a need for the global community to pool their satellites together in order to cut down response time and use their data to assist aids on the ground.¹¹⁷ Another problem that occurs with space-based technology is the weather.¹¹⁸ In 2007, cloud coverage prevented the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from obtaining images of the Ebola outbreak in Uganda.¹¹⁹ One initiative underway is collaboration between the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Space Agency (ESA) to establish a user-driven Telemedicine via Satellite programs.¹²⁰ The program will aim to deliver medical care and treatment via satellite while training health workers in how to use space-based technologies.¹²¹

Conclusion

An important matter to consider is the disconnect between the medical field and the usage of space technology, as well as a disconnect in the global community in assisting each other to prevent disasters. Space-based technology can track outbreaks, natural disasters, prevent deaths, and much more, but the issue of a possible arms race in outer space is still mentioned in A/RES/68/75 adopted in 2013. The use of outer space technology has advanced immensely over the past sixty years. Since its inception that led to a space race, this technology has evolved to benefit humanity while simultaneously being reviewed through a legal and regulatory lens. The UN has taken steps to ensure international dialogue through the establishment of a committee in this area consisting up multiple treaties and principles. Innovations in space technology have assisted the global community by acting as an emergency response unit through observation operating as an early warning system. Not only can this system save lives by foreseeing disaster, but through its GIS and GPS technologies it can predict and prevent infectious diseases. Although these advancements are useful, problems still arise with dissemination of information and response time.

Committee Directive

In their research, delegates should consider ways to overcome the obstacles of utilizing space-based technologies in medical disaster relief; how can doctors become more familiar with the technology and prevent the spread of disease? In weather related situations such as Typhoon Rammasun, how can mesoscale models be improved for tracking the forecast? Are there early warning systems implemented in Member States that could benefit disaster struck Member States? Furthermore, delegates should take into account how to cut down unit response time after disaster has struck. On a global level, delegate should research existing partnerships and how they have utilized their

¹¹² Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space – Fifty-seventh Session June 11-20, 2014, http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/pdf/limited/l/AC105_L289E.pdf (accessed May 31, 2014).

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ GA 68th session Resolution 68/75, http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/pdf/gares/A_RES_68_075E.pdf (accessed June 28, 2014).

¹¹⁵ Woori Moon. "Review of Space Application Support for Disaster and Emergency Medicine." UN-SPIDER, August 2008, pg. 16, http://www.un-spider.org/sites/default/files/TN-KP-018%20%5BTelemedicine%20Comprehensive%20Review%5D_1.pdf (accessed July 16, 2014).

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid, pg. 13.

¹²¹ Ibid.

partnership to assist in disaster management. Furthermore, delegates should study their own and other Member State's space programs to consider potential partnerships i.e the recent partnership of Brazil and India.

II. Addressing the Palestinian Right of Return

"You seem to be surprised to hear that there are still problems of 1948 to be solved, the most important component of which is the right to return of Palestinian refugees. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is not just an issue of military occupation and Israel is not a country that was established "normally" and happened to occupy another country in 1967. Palestinians are not struggling for a "state" but for freedom, liberation and equality, just like we were struggling for freedom in South Africa
– Former South African President Nelson Mandela¹²²

Introduction

The question of the Palestinian refugees' right to return to their ancestral land remains contentious for UN delegates due to the depth of the historical and political context. While many leaders including but not limited to Nelson Mandela and Former United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Kofi Annan have all indicated that the Palestinians are imbued with a given right to return, implementing such a right has proven difficult for the international community.¹²³ Additionally, those Member States which harbor Palestinian refugees (i.e. Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq) have often experienced political difficulty and occasionally have increased the hardship of the refugees due to either indecision or internal conflict.¹²⁴ Even the Palestinians remain conflicted over the nature of their return and actions by certain groups have served to delegitimize the request to return to Palestine. Therefore, implementing the termed "guaranteed" right proves to be the most difficult question that a UN delegate can face. Solving the proximate causes of the Palestinian Diaspora involves a complex set of circumstances that requires an adequate knowledge of history, cultural shifting as well as current political movements. Previous attempts by the international community to mitigate the damages done to Palestinian refugees and implement their return to Palestine have had questionable effectiveness. Nevertheless, the question of Palestinian refugees' right of return remains at the forefront of the UN agenda and a challenge for all delegates.

History

While being present in the region for centuries, the mentality of Palestinians being a separate demographic did not begin to emerge among themselves until the 1830s with Muhammad Ali's, the then leader of Egypt, consolidation of control over Palestine.¹²⁵ The first Palestinian Revolt that resulted, while not more than marginally successful, had a larger purpose than ousting Muhammad Ali.¹²⁶ It was the first nationalist movement of the Palestinians and thereby initiated a sense of identity beyond just the region's name. The sense of identity, or lack thereof, has been a primary focal point for those resisting the Palestinian right to return. As UN initiatives highlight a people group's rights, opponents of the Palestinians right to return term their identity as being a subset of the broader Arab identity and not demanding equal rights.¹²⁷ UN delegates debating either side must thereby first identify their Member State's position on Palestinian identity which is profoundly intertwined with the question of the legitimacy of Palestinian refugees' quest to return.

Such a challenge to the Palestinian identity stems from post-World War I (WWI) influences. With the loss of Ottoman control, the Palestinians were forced to organize their own political groups (Al-Muntada al-Adabi and Al-

¹²² "Mandela's Memo to Thomas Friedman About Israel & Palestine." Keshart.com, <http://www.keghart.com/Mandela-Palestine> (accessed May 5, 2014).

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Kimmerling, B., & Migdal, J. S. (2003). *The Palestinian people: a history*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, [http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=6NRYEr8FR1IC&oi=fnd&pg=PR8&dq=Kimmerling,+B.,+%26+Migdal,+J.S.,+\(2003\).+The+Palestinian+people:+a+history.+Cambridge,+Mass.:+Harvard+University+Press.&ots=URow-MegLh&sig=RTcngpwjxqZ7TxvCUkgcaFfIIVc#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=6NRYEr8FR1IC&oi=fnd&pg=PR8&dq=Kimmerling,+B.,+%26+Migdal,+J.S.,+(2003).+The+Palestinian+people:+a+history.+Cambridge,+Mass.:+Harvard+University+Press.&ots=URow-MegLh&sig=RTcngpwjxqZ7TxvCUkgcaFfIIVc#v=onepage&q&f=false) (accessed April 15, 2014).

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ "Israel: where choosing your identity is a form of resistance." Miftah.org, <http://www.miftah.org/display.cfm?DocId=22578&CategoryId=13> (accessed June 27, 2014).

Nadi al-Arabi.)¹²⁸ These political groups became the first tangible identity for the Palestinians to grasp.¹²⁹ When the first Palestinian Congress convened in 1919, the prospective future of Palestine was outlined by the Palestinian Arabs.¹³⁰ While an anti-Zionist sentiment was unanimous, Jews were not initially banned from entering Palestine.¹³¹ Rather, they simply had to recognize Palestinian majority.¹³² However, the ability of the Palestinians to rule themselves would quickly be suppressed by the British Balfour Declaration in 1917.¹³³ The Balfour Declaration is a transmission between the then United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to the then leader of the British Jewish community and identified the Jewish population as the British preferred population.¹³⁴ While not strictly opposing Palestinians, it made clear that the creation of a Jewish State was critical to British foreign policy.¹³⁵ Additionally, the Jewish population would later identify the Palestinians as being prospective Israeli citizens and thereby denying their nationalistic identity beyond a minority demographic.¹³⁶

While technically holding the vast majority of the population, some historians suggest that their political freedom was being suppressed, thereby making the people group a political minority.¹³⁷ When referenced in the international community, the British would simply refer to the Palestinians as "non-Jewish communities," despite it being easier to describe the Jews as non-Palestinian communities.¹³⁸ Even still, the recently formed League of Nations, predecessor to the UN, had Jewish representation.¹³⁹ Meanwhile, 90 percent of Palestine's population had to voice any concerns via the British.¹⁴⁰ During this period, Jewish literacy and wealth rose at a much greater pace than the Palestinians, who had a literacy rate of this time at less than 25 percent.¹⁴¹ Representing 90 percent of the population, the Palestinians received less than a quarter of the resources available.¹⁴² Palestinian identity was further stemmed with the United Kingdom's attempted withdrawal of the Balfour Declaration in 1937 through the Peel Commission.¹⁴³ The Peel Commission identified a future British withdrawal from Palestine and a possible compromise of a two-state solution between the Palestinians and Jews.¹⁴⁴ While appearing genuine in purpose, the Peel Commission illustrated to the Palestinian Arabs that control over their homeland was not a negotiable point for their governors.¹⁴⁵ Al-Muntada al-Adabi and Al-Nadi al-Arabi ceased to exist as viable political groups during this time.¹⁴⁶ UN delegates must hold in mind that the disparity that arose during this period has influenced activists on either side.

In 1948, the Palestinians experienced the "Nakba" or cataclysm of their people.¹⁴⁷ When Israel declared independence and the subsequent war with the Arab states occurred, the Palestinians were caught in between.¹⁴⁸ In

¹²⁸ Kimmerling, B., & Migdal, J. S. (2003). *The Palestinian people: a history*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, [http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=6NRYEr8FR1IC&oi=fnd&pg=PR8&dq=Kimmerling,+B.,+%26+Migdal,+J.+S.+\(2003\).+The+Palestinian+people:+a+history.+Cambridge,+Mass.:+Harvard+University+Press.&ots=URow-MegLh&sig=RTcngpwjxqZ7TxvCUkgcaFfIIVc#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=6NRYEr8FR1IC&oi=fnd&pg=PR8&dq=Kimmerling,+B.,+%26+Migdal,+J.+S.+(2003).+The+Palestinian+people:+a+history.+Cambridge,+Mass.:+Harvard+University+Press.&ots=URow-MegLh&sig=RTcngpwjxqZ7TxvCUkgcaFfIIVc#v=onepage&q&f=false) (accessed April 15, 2014).

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Cleveland, W. L. (2013). *A history of the modern Middle East* (5th ed.). Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press. (Text)

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ "Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel." Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20establishment%20of%20state%20of%20israel.aspx> (accessed June 20, 2014).

¹³⁷ Cleveland, W. L. (2013). *A history of the modern Middle East* (5th ed.). Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ "Mandate for Palestine - Report of the Mandatory to the League of Nations (31 December 1924)." Mandate for Palestine - Report of the Mandatory to the League of Nations (31 December 1924). <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/A87D21F4E57F2D0F052565E8004BACE0> (accessed May 15, 2014)

¹⁴¹ Cleveland, W.L. (2013). *A history of the modern Middle East* (5th ed.) Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press. (Text).

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

fact, by the time of Israeli independence, the Palestinians still represented over two-thirds of the population.¹⁴⁹ However, in 1951, the UN stated figures which estimated that 711,000 Palestinians were now international refugees.¹⁵⁰ Of the 160,000 that remained in the newly created state of Israel, one-quarter were internally displaced and thereby economically and politically inept.¹⁵¹ Once this occurred, the Palestinians became not only a political minority, but a populace minority as well.¹⁵² The Palestinian Diaspora remains in large numbers throughout the Middle East, but with little political or economic opportunity and is estimated to be approximately 4.95 million.¹⁵³

Even still, the people would be referred to as Palestinian Arabs by the international community until 1964 when the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was established.¹⁵⁴ Only then would the identity of "Palestinians" be fully instituted.¹⁵⁵ In 1967, the Palestinians would experience yet another exodus of nearly 300,000 refugees after the Six-Day War.¹⁵⁶ At this time, the Palestinians focused their cause on a right to return which supplemented their quest for identity. However, the Camp David Accords, which served to outline a peace settlement between Egypt and Israel in 1978, illustrated that the international community did not consider the Palestinian refugee cause to be at the forefront of issues.¹⁵⁷ During this conference, Palestinians were not consulted concerning the framework for peace in the Middle East and the refugee's right to return was not discussed.¹⁵⁸ Subsequently, the UN rejected the framework in A/RES/34/70 "On the Situation in the Middle East" stating that all partial agreements and separate treaties that did not meet the Palestinian rights and comprehensive solutions to peace were unacceptable.¹⁵⁹ This oversight was eventually rectified in 1993 with the Oslo Accords between Israel and Palestine, which granted life to the two-state solution, but still left the question of Palestinian refugees to another date.¹⁶⁰ The Oslo Accords thereby represent the first major initiative that grants Palestinians a separate identity and acknowledges the question of their right to return as being a negotiable point.¹⁶¹ While substantive discussions concerning the Palestinian refugees have not taken place since, Israel and the international community's recognition of the Oslo Accords and the PLO necessitates that the refugee's return must be granted along an undetermined timeline.¹⁶²

Current Situation

Since the Oslo Accords, the call to return to Palestine has changed drastically. In November 2012, the Palestinian Authority (which the Oslo Accords recognize as the legitimate government of Palestinians), President Mahmud Abbas, stated that the claim of return was not to his original hometown, but to a Palestinian state to be established at the pre-1967 border line.¹⁶³ This represents a drastic shift in Palestinian policy, which had assumed that the "Nakba" would be rectified. Not surprisingly, this declaration was quickly condemned by Hamas and other fundamentalist pro-Palestinian groups.¹⁶⁴ Additionally, the issue has become much more complex for the UN. In addition to

¹⁴⁹ McDowall, David; Claire Palley (1987). *The Palestinians*. Minority Rights Group Report no 24. p. 10, <http://www.lib.muohio.edu/multifacet/record/mu3ugb1872520> (accessed May 20, 2014).

¹⁵⁰ Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (1951, September 28,) United Nations General Assembly Records, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/8D26108AF518CE7E052565A6006E8948> (accessed May 20, 2014)

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Cleveland, W. L. (2013). *A history of the modern Middle East* (5th ed.). Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press. (Text).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ "The War of the Israeli Historians." *Annales*, <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ssfc0005/The%20War%20of%20the%20Israeli%20Historians.html> (accessed May 20, 2014).

¹⁵⁷ "Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs." MFA.gov, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/camp%20david%20accords.aspx> (accessed June 20, 2014).

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ "A/RES/34/70 of 6 December 1979." A/RES/34/70 of 6 December 1979, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/6118CF31EC9EB7FB852560DA006E47F3> (accessed June 27, 2014).

¹⁶⁰ "Israel-Palestinian Peace Process: Declaration of Principles On Interim Self-Government Arrangements ("Oslo Accords")." Declaration of Principles, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/dop.html> (accessed June 27, 2014).

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ "By keeping Abbas under a glass ceiling, Israel is forgetting its real enemy." *Haaretz.com*, <http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/east-side-story/by-keeping-abbas-under-a-glass-ceiling-israel-is-forgetting-its-real-enemy-1.474066> (accessed June 27, 2014).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

becoming more focused on relief efforts, the current Syrian crisis has resulted in more than 650,000 Palestinians being displaced.¹⁶⁵ Due to the lack of access by observers and international assistance, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has faced tremendous difficulty in logistics to bring aid to the Palestinians.¹⁶⁶ Paradoxically, the new refugees created by the Syrian crisis has resulted in an increase in pressure to the surrounding Member States hosting Palestinians, such as but not limited to Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq.¹⁶⁷ Although the Syrian Palestinian numbers cannot be easily verified, the UN estimates that there are currently 6 million refugees; the largest being in Jordan (3 million), Israel (1.65 million) and Lebanon (0.5 million), although registered numbers are far lower.¹⁶⁸ UN delegates thereby face the challenge of insufficient information and complex logistical scenarios all of which serve to delay negotiations on the Palestinian's return to Palestine.

In Jordan, Palestinian refugees have received some of the highest degrees of education of any of their counterparts but include significant levels of conditioning that serve to guarantee that each child wishes to return to Palestine and leave Jordan.¹⁶⁹ While education to the Palestinians is granted in Jordan, they still remain marginalized. Both in education and law, Palestinians receive lesser privilege than the other Arab citizens.¹⁷⁰ In part, the Palestinians have been seen as a possible threat to Jordan's King Abdullah dynasty.¹⁷¹ Should all Palestinians in Jordan be granted full citizenship and remain in Jordan, they would quickly overpower the population and represent a majority group.¹⁷² In fact, many have called for a new Palestinian state to replace the Kingdom of Jordan rather than await Israeli negotiation.¹⁷³ Largely, the proponents of granting citizenship in the current host States will rid the Palestinians of refugee camps and promote a better living situation for the new generation.¹⁷⁴

Due to being a clear minority in Lebanon, the Palestinians have been concentrated in camps or neighborhoods throughout the country, presumably to allow for quick relocation once they are able to return to Palestine.¹⁷⁵ One such neighborhood, Shatila, exists on the outskirts of Beirut and clearly represents an economic disparity between the minority Palestinians and the rest of Lebanon. Shatila exists within sight of much more affluent Beirut districts, but remains equivalent to a refugee camp despite multiple generations living within its walls.¹⁷⁶ From 16-18 September 1982, one of the political factions of Lebanon's civil war entered Shatila and massacred Palestinians.¹⁷⁷ Numbers of casualties ranged from 700-3,500 depending on the reporting body.¹⁷⁸ Lebanon continues to maintain the refugee camp's status and resists UNRWA aid to the Palestinians within its borders, thereby limiting international assistance.¹⁷⁹

Upon the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, Palestinian homes were torched.¹⁸⁰ Many of the Diaspora experienced a second exile during this time period.¹⁸¹ Despite being removed from their homes for nearly 75 years,

¹⁶⁵ Sherlock, Ruth. "2.5 million displaced in Syria crisis." The Telegraph, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/9675532/2.5-million-displaced-in-Syria-crisis.html> (accessed June 27, 2014).

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ "Palestinian Refugees: An Overview." Palestinian Refugees: An Overview, <http://prn.mcgill.ca/background/index.htm> (accessed June 27, 2014).

¹⁶⁹ Toameh, K. (2012, August 6). Anti-Palestinian Discrimination in Jordan Now It's Official. Anti-Palestinian Discrimination in Jordan, <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3249/anti-palestinian-discrimination-jordan> (accessed May 15, 2014).

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Anziska, S. (2012, September 16). A Preventable Massacre. NYTimes. Retrieved December 10, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/17/opinion/a-preventable-massacre.html?_r=0 (accessed May 15, 2014).

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ziadah, R. (2007, March 11). Palestinian Refugees of Iraq. The Electronic Intifada, <http://electronicintifada.net/content/palestinian-refugees-iraq/6801> (Accessed May 15, 2014).

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

the Palestinians continue to live in refugee camps.¹⁸² Largely, this is due to the political factions from preventing the groups from moving on.¹⁸³ Using checkpoints and other such factors to prevent development, the governments guarantee that the only hope for Palestinian progress is a return to Palestine.¹⁸⁴ The governments of neighboring States do not wish for Palestinians to become settled within their own state.¹⁸⁵ Otherwise, they fear the minority could gain prominence in the region.¹⁸⁶ The Arab League has instructed its Member States to deny citizenship to original Palestine Arab refugees (or their descendants) "to avoid dissolution of their identity and protect their right to return to their homeland."¹⁸⁷ The UN thereby faces a difficult challenge of negotiating human rights principles and relief aid for a people group that has been marginalized by nearly all relevant actors. For UN delegates, finding a compromise between seeking aid and support while also respecting the wishes of the host Member State remains a delicate balance.

Actions Taken by the UN and other multilateral organizations

By every standard, the Palestinians right of return is meant to be guaranteed by the UN. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the most pivotal document for the UN, states in article 13(2) that "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country."¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless, securing this right has proven troublesome for the UN and other multilateral organizations. In the UN General Assembly (GA), many resolutions on the topic have little to no enforceable value and are subsequently not considered binding by the relevant parties. The UDHR has been brought up in the UN GA often. In GA Resolution 3236, the body reaffirmed "the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted, and calls for their return."¹⁸⁹ Therefore, any doubt on the Palestinians right to return has been attempted to be erased by the UN. The UN Security Council (SC) has made vague efforts at supplementing this effort with enforceable measures, but with few tangible results. SC Resolution 242 passed in 1967 and represents the first noticeable call for a "just solution" to Palestinian Refugees.¹⁹⁰ SC Resolution 242 also called for Demilitarized Zones in Palestine so as to guarantee economic and social growth for the returned refugees.¹⁹¹ Yet, Palestinian areas remain 47 years later heavily militarized and Palestinian refugees reside in heavily degraded refugee camps.¹⁹² Therefore, the UN has in large part moved away from implementing return and has taken up action to mitigate the effects on individuals within the Palestinian Diaspora.¹⁹³ For UN delegates, this new direction will have to be considered alongside the recent developments in the Middle East and the impact they will have on logistically attempting mitigation.

One body which has been heavily utilized for this purpose is the UNRWA. Originally intended to provide public work jobs and direct relief for the Palestinians, the UNRWA has since become a supplier of education, health care, social services and emergency aid for some 5 million Palestinian refugees.¹⁹⁴ What makes the UNRWA's mission unique is double-fold. Firstly, it controversially exists as the only multilateral refugee agency dedicated to a single people group.¹⁹⁵ Secondly, it identifies Palestinian refugees as "any person whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ "Palestinians are oppressed by Arabs, not Israel." (2012, March 27). Reporting on the Middle East Science and Education, <http://cnpublications.net/2012/03/27/palestinians-are-oppressed-by-arabs-not-israel/> (accessed May 15, 2014).

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ "A Million Expatriates to Benefit From New Citizenship Law." Arab News, <http://www.arabnews.com/node/256886> (accessed June 20, 2014).

¹⁸⁸ UN. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." UN News Center, <https://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/universal.asp> (accessed June 20, 2014).

¹⁸⁹ UN. "United Nations Official Document." UN News Center, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/3236\(XXIX\)&Lang=E&Area=RESOLUTION](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/3236(XXIX)&Lang=E&Area=RESOLUTION) (accessed June 20, 2014).

¹⁹⁰ S/RES/242 (1967) of 22 November 1967." S/RES/242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7D35E1F729DF491C85256EE700686136> (accessed June 20, 2014).

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² "Where We Work UNRWA." UNRWA, <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work> (accessed June 27, 2014).

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ "UNRWA in Figures." UNRWA.org, <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011080123958.pdf> (accessed June 20, 2014).

¹⁹⁵ "Where We Work UNRWA." UNRWA, <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work> (accessed June 27, 2014).

of the 1948 conflict.¹⁹⁶ There are some concerns that this mandate will have to be changed in years to come as there are only an estimated 50,000 people remaining that fit this definition.¹⁹⁷

For those refugees not falling under the UNRWA's jurisdiction, the UN has designated the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as the appropriate agency.¹⁹⁸ While aid to refugees is part of the UNHCR's mission, the primary focus is implementing voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third Member State for displaced people.¹⁹⁹ Due to this focus, the UNHCR has had trouble implementing any efforts with Palestinian refugees as each of these options are often not available.²⁰⁰ Additionally, the UNHCR's definition of a refugee requires consensus on a nationalistic identity. The definition reads:

“Any person who is outside the country of his nationality or, if he has no nationality, the country of his former habitual residence, because he has or had well-founded fear of persecution by reason of his race, religion, nationality or political opinion and is unable or, because of such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of the government of the country of his nationality, or, if he has no nationality, to return to the country of his former habitual residence.”²⁰¹

Therefore, the power of the UNHCR to implement assistance to the Palestinian refugees is severely limited by international consensus on the nature of their return. While available for implementing a return, it cannot act decisively until an agreement of some form is made.

In large part, the GA 4th committee has acted as a forum for the Palestinian refugee right to return. During the 68th session, UNRWA's Commissioner-General briefed the Committee and claimed that the refugees had become part of “one of the largest human displacement disasters of modern times” as six out of 12 Palestinian camps in Syria had become battlegrounds.²⁰² Additionally, he stated that the Gaza Strip economy was moribund and forced displacement in the West Bank was increasing settler violence.²⁰³ The GA 4th committee has been the principle UN body implementing resolutions on the Palestinian refugee status and notably passed nine resolutions during the recent 67th session.²⁰⁴ On February 5, 2013, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon encouraged the GA 4th committee to better assist the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP).²⁰⁵ Primarily, the GA has annually renewed the mandate of CEIRPP, but has also used reports made by the CEIRPP to consider the question of Palestinian right to return.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the primary focus of the GA 4th committee has become to assess the implementation of assistance to Palestinian refugees by multilateral organizations while awaiting more conclusive decisions on their right to return.

Conclusion

¹⁹⁶ “UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.” UNRWA, <http://www.unrwa.org/> (accessed June 27, 2014).

¹⁹⁷ “UNRWA in Figures.” UNRWA.org, <http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2013042435340.pdf> (accessed June 20, 2014).

¹⁹⁸ “History of UNHCR.” UNHCR News, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cbc.html> (accessed June 27, 2014).

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ UN General Assembly, Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/RES/428(V)), [Resolution], 1950, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/5/ares5.htm> (Accessed June 20, 2014)

²⁰² UN. “Palestine Refugees ‘Contemporary Symbol’ of Difficulties of Peacemaking, High Cost of Failures, Head of United Nations Relief Agency Tells Fourth Committee.” UN News Center, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/gaspd546.doc.htm> (accessed June 27, 2014)

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ United Nations General Assembly Fourth Committee, Press Release GA/SPD/524, 2012, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/gaspd524.doc.htm> (accessed June 20, 2014).

²⁰⁵ United Nations Palestinian Rights Committee, UNISPAL, Palestinian Rights Committee Meetings—348th meeting, 2013, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/mtg.htm> (accessed May 30, 2014).

²⁰⁶ “UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable rights of the Palestinian People.” UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/com.htm?OpenForm> (accessed May 30, 2014).

Throughout the modern history of the Palestinian people, they have existed as either a political or populace minority in whatever state they reside in. While Israel has been accused of being the primary repressor, other Member States including but not limited to the United Kingdom, Lebanon and Jordan have also appeared to some as marginalizing the Palestinians and prevented them from developing or expanding economically, socially, or politically. The result in each of these Member States has been the creation of Palestinian groups dedicated to creating a political voice. Calling for a return to Palestine has been at the forefront of these groups. However, through political marginalization, poor economic development, lack of citizenship and numerous other factors, these groups have achieved little progress. It remains to be seen whether the international community will be able to assist the Palestinians in achieving tangible progress. Meanwhile, even the Palestinians do not fully agree on the very nature of the Diaspora's return as seen by the controversial statement made by President Abbas.²⁰⁷ While the nature of the Palestinian return or even the question of their return is negotiated, it has fallen to the UN as one of the few organizations ardent on assisting the current situation for the Palestinians. Further implementing this cause, therefore, remains among the forefront of a UN delegate's assignments.

Committee Directive

It is the directive of the GA 4th committee to assess the current situation of Palestinian refugees and determine appropriate measures towards securing their right to return. Meanwhile, the committee should examine the means of mitigating the effects of refugee camps and determining solutions to logistical issues organizations face in the current situation. The levels of poverty and human right violations as guaranteed by the UDHR are also a concern for the committee. The committee is charged with assessing the impact of the Palestinian refugee status on their UN guaranteed rights and how any violations that exist are being dealt with. Additionally, the committee must determine how to deal with those Member States or non-state actors who are in violation. How will refugees have their basic needs met in terms of education, social development, child rights, and basic survival needs? What is the current international community's attitude towards the Palestinians and how does this align with previous UN resolutions? In what ways can the UN further implement previous resolutions?

It is important to note each Member State's current host status of Palestinian refugees. Although not necessarily listed as a host with the UNRWA, it is important to observe smaller denominations of refugees entering the Member State. Member States will often denote their policy towards refugees in general and allow the UNHCR to determine the process for the refugee's logistics. The question of this definition is paramount either at large or specifically for the UNRWA. While possessing no policing or administrative powers, the UNRWA remains a critical tool of the UN to provide logistical support for willing Member States in relief aid as well.²⁰⁸ The result, therefore, can be larger "refugee cities" that host numerous demographics. In addition to this, to what degree does a Member State implement or assist in the preexisting structures for Palestinian Refugee aid? A delegate for the UN GA 4th committee should be able to align new resolutions with previous ones in an effort to make the UN more effective in creating long lasting solutions for the Palestinian refugees.

²⁰⁷ "By keeping Abbas under a glass ceiling, Israel is forgetting its real enemy." Haaretz.com, <http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/east-side-story/by-keeping-abbas-under-a-glass-ceiling-israel-is-forgetting-its-real-enemy-1.474066> (accessed June 27, 2014).

²⁰⁸ "UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East." UNRWA, <http://www.unrwa.org/> (accessed June 27, 2014).

Technical Appendix Guide (TAG)

Topic I: The Use of Space Technology to Promote Cooperation in Environmental Disaster Management

United Nations Global Pulse

<http://www.unglobalpulse.org/about-new>

The Global Pulse is an innovation initiative of the UN Secretary-General on big data. The initiative functions as a network where research for Big Data for Development is conceived and used toward humanitarian action. The data offers a better understanding of the changes in human well-being with real-time feedback.

United Nations/Mexico Symposium on Basic Space Technology – “Making Space Technology accessible and affordable”

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/SAP/bsti/mexico2014.html>

The symposium will take place October 20-23, 2014. The objectives of the symposium will be to review capacity building in basic space technology, examine issues of implementing small satellite programs, legal issues of space technology discuss the Basic Space Technology Initiative and much more.

United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs: Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements Governing Space Activities

http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/SpaceLaw/multi_bi/index.html

This page will provide links to international space agency agreements and Member State’s legal liabilities.

United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: UN-SPIDER-WORLD

<http://www.un-spider.org/un-spider-world>

An interactive world map highlighting where there is emergency support, outreach events, Regional Support Offices, National Focal Points, Technical Advisory Missions, and multiples of these items in one area.

United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: Space Application Matrix

<http://www.un-spider.org/story/space-application-matrix>

The Space Application Matrix gives you the options to select different disasters, the viewing point of the disaster, and the phase in disaster management. The matrix then shows case studies based on your choices.

International Committee on Global (ICG) Navigation Satellite Systems

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/SAP/gnss/icg.html>

The ICG was founded in 2005 under the UN to promote voluntary cooperation on matters relating to satellite-based positioning, navigation, timing, and value-added services. The ICG encourages coordination amongst global navigation satellite systems and regional systems.

Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2013

<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/2013/en/home/download.html>

This report gives the economic impact disasters had on businesses and infrastructure in 2013.

Topic II. Addressing the Palestinian Right of Return

Bowker, Robert. *Palestinian refugees: mythology, identity, and the search for peace*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003. (Text)

This easily accessible book challenges the issues surrounding identity and its consequences on Israeli-Palestinian relations. Robert Bowker uses memory and mythology as identifiers for Palestinian sociology and politics. The critical impact this plays on the UNRWA as well as refugees themselves is highly insightful.

Khalidi, Walid. "Why did the Palestinians Leave." Palestine-Studies.

<http://www.palestine-studies.com/enakba/exodus/Khalidi,%20Why%20Did%20the%20Palestinians%20Leave.pdf>

Walid Khalidi examines the original “Nakba” or Palestinian exodus in 1948 and the reasons surrounding it. Largely, he attempts to either prove or disprove the Israeli position that the Palestinian exodus was triggered by orders from Arab leaders. This issue remains critical to arguments of whether the Palestinians should remain under the term “refugees.”

Lapidoth, Ruth. "Palestinian Refugees: Do Palestinian Refugees Have a Legal "Right of Return" to Israel?." Do Palestinian Refugees Have a Legal "Right of Return" to Israel?

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/refreturn.html>

In this short document, Ruth Lapidoth outlines Israel’s claim that the Palestinians have no legal right to return. Using general international law, relevant UN documents and interstate agreements, she creates an argument from a side often not heard from in UN debates.

LeVine, Mark. "Why Palestinians have a right to return home." Aljazeera.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/09/2011922135540203743.html>

Mark LeVine attempts to use history and his understanding of international law to examine whether a right to return exists. He thoroughly examines legal rights, creation of Israel, and the war of 1948 in conjunction with Geneva conventions and UN documents. Also examined is the case of special refugee status granted to the Palestinians.

"Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East." United Nations.

http://books.google.com/books?id=FevC50LQeYcC&pg=PR12&lpg=PR12&dq=palestinian+refugees+united+nations+effectiveness&source=bl&ots=aXjrYONf08&sig=Ko6wm_6hHVhTixggMtnCrX21RSQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=kzH MU6X7Ccq-sQTrhYGYDA&ved=0CCgQ6AEwAjkK#v=onepage&q=palestinian%20refugees%20united%20nations%20effectiveness&f=false

In this report from the Commissioner-General of the UNRWA, the needs and status of the Palestinian refugees are examined. Noticeably, the Commissioner-General outlines the effectiveness of the UNRWA program. This could be greatly helpful in determining logistical problems in mitigating damages done to Palestinian Refugees.

"Fact Sheet No.20, Human Rights and Refugees." OHCHR.

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FactSheet20en.pdf>

Human Right issues surrounding refugees at large are examined in this document. Noticeably, the treatment of asylum seekers is noted with violations of liberty and security. Types of refugees are defined as well.

Fischbach, Michael. "The United Nations and Palestine Refugee Property Compensation." Palestine-Studies.

<http://www.palestine-studies.org/enakba/legal/Fischbach,%20The%20UN%20and%20Palestinian%20Refugee%20Property.pdf>

In this work, the UNs focus on property compensation to Palestinian refugees is highlighted. The shrinking of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP)’s role and its twelve year examination becomes critical to the technical side of the issue. The author highlights the failure of the UNCCP’s mission and the role that “red-line” rhetoric played upon it.

Rubin, Jennifer. "Is the U.N. making the Palestinian ‘refugee’ problem worse?." Washington Post.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/post/is-the-un-making-the-palestinian-refugee-problem-worse/2012/05/23/gJQAxW0BkU_blog.html

While examined from the question of whether the United States should continue heavily funding the UNRWA and similar programs, this article critically analyzes the effectiveness of the UN. Most noticeable in the argument is the lack of concrete figures in terms of refugees. Additionally, the UNRWA’s mandate is brought into question.

YouTube. "unrwa." YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/unrwa>

The UNRWA has provided a youtube site that provides physical examples of their cause. Education and human rights themes can be more easily seen as well as news interviews concerning recent crises.

Guardian News and Media. "UNRWA investigating discovery of 20 rockets found in empty Gaza school." theguardian.com.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/17/unrwa-investigating-20-rockets-empty-gaza-school-palestinian>

Many critics of the UNRWA have believed it to be a supporter of terrorist activities within Palestinian areas. With Hamas using UNRWA schools to store rockets, these critics will likely receive a boost in rhetoric. This article gives insight into the danger this poses to the UNRWA and may be supplemented with other news sources.