



SRMUN CHARLOTTE 2021

Unity: Coming Together to Address A Changing World

March 26-28, 2021

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Virtual SRMUN Charlotte 2021 and the General Assembly Fourth. The General Assembly Fourth is one of six main organs within the General Assembly and their mission is multifaceted. Also known as the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL), they address issues of decolonization, mine removal, and atomic radiation. One of their main mandates involves overseeing all existing peacebuilding missions. Currently, there are 14 missions in progress, with the most recent being United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSCA) in the Central African Republic in the Central African Republic and their longest being the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in the Middle East.

By focusing on the mission of the General Assembly Fourth and the SRMUN Charlotte 2021 theme of “*Unity: Coming Together to Address a Changing World*” we have developed the following topics for delegates to discuss at the conference:

- I. Expanding Access to Relief Programs for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
- II. Retraining Peacekeepers to Better Adapt to Their Expanded Mandates

The background guide provides an introduction to the committee and the topics that will be debated at SRMUN Charlotte 2021. It should be utilized as a foundation for a delegate’s independent research. However, while we have attempted to provide a holistic analysis of the issues, the background guide should not be used as the single mode of analysis for the topics. Delegates are expected to go beyond the background guide and engage in intellectual inquiry of their own. The position papers for the committee should reflect the complexity of these issues and their externalities. Delegations are expected to submit a position paper and be prepared for a vigorous discussion at the conference.

Position papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State’s position, policies, and recommendations on each of the two topics. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write position papers, delegates can visit srmun.org. **All position papers MUST be submitted no later than Sunday, March 7, 2021, by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website in order to be eligible for Outstanding Position Paper Awards.**

The SRMUN Charlotte staff is very excited to see your work in the General Assembly Fourth. We wish you all the best of luck in your conference preparation and look forward to working with you in the near future. Please feel free to contact Director-General Vanessa DuBoulay or Deputy-Director-General Chantel Hover if you have any questions while preparing for the conference.

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History of the General Assembly Fourth Committee

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly Fourth Committee was formed in 1946 as one of the General Assembly's Main Committees and today remains a constituent organ of that body.¹ Originally, its purview consisted entirely of overseeing the 11 members of the UN Trusteeship Council – the legal successor to the League of Nations mandate system which was abolished in that same year along with the League itself.² Consequently, the Fourth Committee's mandate was expanded, further charging the body with ensuring the development of both democracy and peace in trust territories under its jurisdiction with the ultimate goal of facilitating their future sovereignty.³ Trust territories fell into three categories: territories held under mandates that the League of Nations established, territories that were once attached to enemy Member States during World War II, and territories voluntarily placed into the Trusteeship Council by their administering Member State.⁴ The former Member States who were administered by the Trusteeship Council were: Western Samoa, Tanganyika, Rwanda-Urundi, Cameroon, Togoland, New Guinea, Nauru, the Pacific Islands (Micronesia), and Italian Somaliland.⁵

The Committee's workload naturally decreased over time as trust territories were granted independence and, as a result, the body was preemptively merged with the General Assembly's Special Political Committee in 1993 to form the UN Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL).⁶ In May 1994, the Trusteeship Council ceased regular meetings in anticipation of Palau, the last territory under its jurisdiction, joining the UN as a full Member State.⁷ SPECPOL has mitigated over five decolonization agenda items, discussed the effects of atomic radiation, and reviews all peacekeeping operations. The committee has also overseen special political missions, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the Report of the Special Committee on Israeli Practices.

Per its mandate, SPECPOL oversees and takes reports from the following UN organs: the Committees on the Peaceful use of Outer Space (COPUOS) and on Information; the Special Committees on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34), on Decolonization (C-24) ; the UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR); and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).⁸ (The numbers following C-34 and C-24 refer to the number of Member States in the

¹ "Fourth Committee," The United Nations, <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/fourth-committee> (accessed July 26, 2020).

² "UN Documentation: General Assembly," Dag Hammarskjöld Library, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/committees> (accessed June 20, 2020).

³ "International Trusteeship," The United Nations, <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/history/international-trusteeship-system-and-trust-territories> (accessed July 26, 2020).

⁴ "International Trusteeship," The United Nations, <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/history/international-trusteeship-system-and-trust-territories> (accessed July 26, 2020).

⁵ "UN Documentation: Trusteeship Council," Dag Hammarskjöld Library, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/tc/territories> (accessed July 26, 2020).

⁶ "Committees," United Nations, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/committees> (accessed September 1, 2020).

⁷ "Trusteeship Council," United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/trusteeship-council/> (accessed September 1, 2020).

⁸ United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly* (New York: Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, 2017), 13.; United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly* (New York: Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, 2017), 75.

committees.⁹ Regarding COPUOS, SPECPOL works jointly with the UN General Assembly First Committee due to the latter body's jurisdiction over matters related to disarmament and security.¹⁰

Additionally, SPECPOL is charged with submitting a yearly comprehensive report to the General Assembly Plenary for each agenda item which has been assigned to it by them.¹¹ These reports must detail at which meeting the matter in question was considered by SPECPOL, include a summary of the discussion, and record sponsors and the voting patterns of Member on any resolutions presented to the body. The report also provides the General Assembly Plenary with final edits of any draft resolution which SPECPOL has decided warrants adoption by that body.¹²

The committee also allows for non-delegate individuals and organizations playing leading roles in their communities—referred to as “petitioners”—to address the body specifically on matters related to the decolonization in their home states.¹³ Draft resolutions are usually adopted by consensus.¹⁴ Due to their contentious nature, however, draft resolutions which regard topics under the purviews of UNRWA, the Special Committee on Israeli Practices, and, sometimes, the Special Committee on Decolonization are instead adopted by vote.¹⁵ SPECPOL has no dedicated discretionary budget, but rather advocates for the Secretary-General to increase funding to its subsidiary bodies when such resources are deemed necessary.¹⁶

Past SPECPOL draft resolutions illustrate the multifaceted nature of its mandate. One of the most recent resolutions, A/RES/74/277, pertains to comprehensively reviewing existing peacebuilding missions, while another, A/RES/74/544, discusses modifications to the General Assembly's decision-making process due to the global COVID-19 public health emergency.¹⁷ Now, the committee votes by silent procedure, and considers the resolution adopted if no Member State breaks the silence after 72 hours.¹⁸ Recent sessions have also devoted attention to the questions of Gibraltar, Guam, French Polynesia, the Western Sahara, and other areas which were formally colonized and the need for education in Non-Self-Governing Territories

⁹ United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly* (New York: Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, 2017), 13.

¹⁰ “Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,” United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, <https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/copuos/index.html> (accessed July 26, 2020).

¹¹ “UN Documentation: General Assembly,” Dag Hammarskjöld Library, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/reports> (accessed July 26, 2020).

¹² United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 75-77.

¹³ United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 76.

¹⁴ United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 76.

¹⁵ United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 76.

¹⁶ United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A/C.4/73/L.13, Effects of atomic radiation: Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.4/73/L.9, November 5, 2018, <https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/73/L.13>.

¹⁷ “General Assembly Adopts Fourth Committee Resolution on Peacekeeping Operations Review, Also Extends ‘Silence Procedure’ for Conducting Its Work until 31 July,” United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/ga12251.doc.htm> (accessed July 26, 2020).

¹⁸ United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, “General Assembly Adopts Fourth Committee Resolution on Peacekeeping Operations Review, Also Extends ‘Silence Procedure’ for Conducting Its Work until 31 July”.

(NSGTs).¹⁹ The Committee has further passed draft resolutions in support of the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2019-2023, requesting further cooperation between the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) and an expansion of UNSCREAR's membership, advocating for the expansion of Member States' space programs in order to foster technological development and mitigate the dangers posed by space debris and near-Earth objects, and many other diverse topics which fall within its expansive purview.²⁰ During the 74th Session of the General Assembly, Resolutions 80 through 118—concerning matters of decolonization, education, Israel's Occupied Territories, Palestinian refugees, and mine removal—were passed primarily on the recommendation of SPECPOL.²¹

¹⁹ United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A/C.4/73/L.5A/C.4/74/L.2, Question of Gibraltar, November 2, 2018, <https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/73/L.5>; United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A/RES/72/102, Question of Guam, December 15, 2017, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/72/102>; United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A/RES/72/101, Question of French Polynesia, December 15, 2017, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/72/101>; United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A/RES/72/95, Question of Western Sahara, December 15, 2017, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/72/95>; United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A/C.4/74/L.2, Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories, October 4, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/74/L.2>.

²⁴ United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A/C.4/74/L.5, Assistance in mine action, October 17, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/74/L.5>; United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A/C.4/74/L.5, Effects of atomic radiation, October 18, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/74/L.6>; United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A/C.4/74/L.5, Effects of atomic radiation, October 18, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/74/L.6>; United Nations General Assembly, International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, October 18, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/74/L.7>.

²⁵ Resolutions of the 74th Session,” Dag Hammarskjöld Library, <https://www.un.org/en/ga/74/resolutions.shtml> (accessed July 9, 2020).

I. Expanding Access to Relief Programs for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Introduction

Since 1948, the world over has struggled with the situation of Israel and Palestine. In an effort to assist those Palestinians who were relocated after World War II, in 1949 the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) created the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) as a temporary and subsidiary organ of the UNGA.²² Now under the purview of the General Assembly Fourth Committee, or SPECPOL, the UNRWA is stretched thin as it struggles to support nearly six million Palestinian refugees across five locations in the Near East.²³

Many Palestinian refugees, defined as “people whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, and who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict” and their descendants, depend on the UNRWA for access to basic needs and services like food, healthcare, and protection, as well as additional services to improve quality of life like education and microfinancing.²⁴ However, growing issues of increased conflict and famine, combined with the COVID-19 pandemic and further limited resources, have jeopardized the ability of the UNRWA to offer these vital services to those in need.²⁵ What was limited viewed as too limited of an offering of services in many regions before the pandemic has now been completely depleted. It is the job of SPECPOL to evaluate these services, the resources needed to make continuing offering these resources possible in the short term, as well as evaluating the methods of delivering these services to expand access to them in the long term.

History

To understand the origin of the UNRWA and the situation it now faces, it is important to understand the history of the situation in Israel and Palestine. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict dates back to the end of World War II.²⁶ In 1947, the United Nations (UN) adopted Resolution 181, a resolution intended to divide the British Mandate of Palestine into two states: an Arab state and a Jewish state.²⁷ This division created the first Arab-Israeli War which resulted in the further division of the area into three parts: Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip.²⁸ After years of armed conflict, in 1993 Israel’s Prime Minister and the negotiator named by the Palestinian Liberation Organization signed the Oslo I Accords, an agreement that set a framework for Palestinian self-governance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.²⁹

In the Second Oslo Accords the agreement was expanded to include stipulation that Israel withdraw from 450 towns in the West Bank.³⁰ In 2000, as a result of Palestinian anger at continued Israeli control of the

²² “About UNRWA,” UNRWA. https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/about_unrwa_fact_sheet_v1.pdf (Accessed January 3, 2021).

²³ “About UNRWA,” UNRWA.

²⁴ “About UNRWA,” UNRWA.

²⁵ Yazar Fares, “UN agency for Palestine refugees runs out of money as COVID-19 spreads,” UN News. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/11/1077332> (Accessed January 4, 2021).

²⁶ “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” the Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict> (Accessed January 4, 2021).

²⁷ “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” the Council on Foreign Relations.

²⁸ “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” the Council on Foreign Relations.

²⁹ “The Oslo Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process,” The Office of the Historian of the U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo>. (Accessed January 4, 2021).

³⁰ “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” the Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict> (Accessed January 4, 2021).

West Bank, the Palestinians launched what would become known as the second intifada, once again starting years of armed conflict between the two.³¹ In the years since numerous attempts at peace have been made. However, continuing disagreements over borders combined with conflict with surrounding states has allowed the situation to continue to devolve.

As such, what was originally intended to be a temporary agency in operation for one year with the mission of finding a “just and durable solution” for Palestinian refugees after the passing of Resolution 181, has continually been renewed by the UNGA.³² Most recently, the UNGA extended the mandate of the UNRWA to June 30, 2023.³³ Unlike other UN bodies, the UNRWA has always and continues to provide its services through aid programs directly to Palestinian refugees.³⁴ Since becoming operational on May 1, 1950, the organization has functioned in and around its 58 refugee camps, where nearly half of the world’s current total refugee population lives.³⁵ Services are offered to all registered refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.³⁶ Primary services offered include healthcare, support services, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, and education.³⁷

Funding for the UNRWA comes nearly entirely from voluntary contributions by UN Member States, including regional government and the European Union.³⁸ Additionally, shared projects with other UN Agencies contribute as a source of funding and resources for UNRWA, amounting to nearly USD 47 million in 2019.³⁹ Finally, local businesses, schools, and NGOs partner with UNRWA providing local resources and opportunities in communities that might else not be available to the refugee populations.⁴⁰

As of 2019, the UNRWA was responsible for providing resources and aid to nearly 5.6 million Palestinian refugees.⁴¹ The UNRWA Budget General Fund is approved by the UNGA every two years and is used to provide access to resources for these refugees.⁴² UNRWA outlines strategic budgetary priorities for the UNGA to consider and to justify its spending estimates relying on five strategic outcomes for the organization: “Refugees’ rights under international law are protected and promoted; Refugees’ health is protected and the disease burden is reduced; School-aged children complete quality, equitable and inclusive basic education; Refugee capabilities are strengthened for increased livelihoods opportunities; and Refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of food, shelter and environmental health.”⁴³

³¹ “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” the Council on Foreign Relations.

³² “Who We Are,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are> (Accessed January 4, 2021).

³³ “Who We Are,” UNRWA.

³⁴ “UN Relief & Works Agency (UNRWA): History & Overview,” Jewish Virtual Library. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-and-overview-of-unrwa> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

³⁵ “UN Relief & Works Agency (UNRWA): History & Overview,” Jewish Virtual Library.

³⁶ “UN Relief & Works Agency (UNRWA): History & Overview,” Jewish Virtual Library.

³⁷ “How We Spend Funds,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/how-you-can-help/how-we-spend-funds> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

³⁸ “How We are Funded,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/how-you-can-help/how-we-are-funded> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

³⁹ “How We are Funded,” UNRWA.

⁴⁰ “How We are Funded,” UNRWA.

⁴¹ “Core Programme Budget,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/how-you-can-help/how-we-spend-funds/core-programme-budget> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁴² “Core Programme Budget,” UNRWA.

⁴³ “Core Programme Budget,” UNRWA.

Additionally, UNRWA has a separate fund for emergency appeals. These emergency appeals are utilized in situations where basic rights are violated and basic needs are not able to met. More so than providing access to resources to provide for the opportunity to gain more skills and build a better life, the emergency assistance is for needs such as access to clean drinking water, protection from violence in the area, and recovery from destroyed property.⁴⁴ As of 2020 there are two ongoing Emergency Appeals: the Emergency Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal.⁴⁵

Resources Provided by UNRWA

UNRWA provides its resources and aid directly to registered Palestinian refugees. Education is one of the primary resources offered by UNRWA, recognizing that access to a quality education is “fundamental to helping each child achieve their full potential and a human right.”⁴⁶ UNRWA works directly in 711 elementary and preparatory schools, ensuring that over 526,000 students have access to the materials and educational resources they need to excel.⁴⁷ Additionally, UNRWA offers high level education and technical training through its eight Vocational Training Centres which serve nearly 8,000 students.⁴⁸

UNRWA also maintains a partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to expand access to educational resources offered by the organization to Palestinian Refugees.⁴⁹ This partnership began at the start of the UNRWA, providing for significant expansion of the reach of the education programs offered.⁵⁰ The UNESCO partnership also brought about educational reform, known as the Education Reformed Strategy, spearheaded by UNRWA in partnership with the Director-General of UNESCO beginning in 2011.⁵¹ The goal of this program is to “establish a strong enabling environment, whereby schools and teachers receive appropriate, timely professional and administrative support; decisions are evidence-based, in place and embedded within a comprehensive set of education policies and frameworks.”⁵²

UNRWA also provides basic healthcare and health services to Palestinian refugees.⁵³ Through 143 primary health facilities, UNRWA provides comprehensive primary care services that help to promote and foster a health life – such as diagnoses and management of chronic and non-chronic conditions and disease, education regarding healthy living, and preventative services – to nearly 3.5 million Palestinian refugees.⁵⁴

⁴⁴ “Emergency Appeals,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/how-you-can-help/how-we-spend-funds/emergency-appeals> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁴⁵ “Emergency Appeals,” UNRWA.

⁴⁶ “Education,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/education> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁴⁷ “Education,” UNRWA.

⁴⁸ “Education,” UNRWA.

⁴⁹ “Education,” UNRWA.

⁵⁰ “Education,” UNRWA.

⁵¹ “unrwa research in progress: 2016 perceptual survey findings,” UNRWA. https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/perceptual_survey_factsheet.pdf (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁵² Education Reform, UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are/reforming-unrwa/education-reform> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁵³ “Health,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/health> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁵⁴ “Health,” UNRWA.

In 2011, UNRWA reformed its health offerings based on the World Health Organization (WHO) values to offer the Family Health Term approach to care, which focuses on “holistic care of the entire family.”⁵⁵

As increased and ongoing conflict continue to plague the Near East, UNRWA places significant focus on offering protection services for Palestinian refugees.⁵⁶ This protection goes beyond protection during armed conflict, and include protections for the basic human rights of Palestinian refugees, many of which have been threatened due to ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, as well as increased vulnerability of women and children to violence and abuse.⁵⁷ In its Protection Framework, UNRWA outlines that protection not only encompasses protecting and preserving the rights of Palestinian refugees, but also advancing those rights.⁵⁸ Further, the UNRWA has been encouraged by UNGA to pay particular attention to women, children, and those with disabilities, ensuring that they are afforded the same rights and opportunities as other Palestinian refugees.⁵⁹ In 2017, the UNRWA’s Medium Term Strategy, or outline of strategic priorities for 2016-2021, expanded the jurisdiction of the UNRWA’s Protection Division to include mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services due to an overwhelming increase in concern for and situations including adverse mental health and psychosocial issues.⁶⁰

Additionally, one of the most pressing challenges faced by Palestinian refugees is that of struggling to meet a “decent standard of living.”⁶¹ To help combat this challenge by creating and sustaining jobs within the community, thereby reducing poverty and empowering Palestinian refugees, the UNRWA offers microfinancing programmes.⁶² First offered in the Gaza Strip in 1991, the UNRWA microfinance programme now operates in the West Bank, Jordan, and Syria.⁶³ This programme gives refugees access to credit lines and related services, allowing them to start up small businesses or even create self-employment opportunities.⁶⁴ Having started with a capital fund of less than USD 300,00, since 1991 the UNRWA has provided clients with access to over USD 531 million.⁶⁵ Additionally, the microfinance programme puts particular emphasis on supporting youth ideas for self-employment, offering specific financing programs for those between the ages of 18 and 30 years.⁶⁶

Finally, the UNRWA also offers additional resources and aid in areas more typically thought of as refugee aid. The Relief and Social Services Programme provides both direct and indirect social protection services to help Palestinian refugees get on and stay on their feet, such as quarterly social safety net assistance to the most impoverished refugees, and maintaining records such as birth and death certificates.⁶⁷ UNRWA also devotes resources to improving the infrastructure of the 58 refugee camps its hosts, which are home to

⁵⁵ “Health,” UNRWA.

⁵⁶ “Protection,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/protection> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁵⁷ “Protection,” UNRWA.

⁵⁸ “Protection,” UNRWA.

⁵⁹ “Protection,” UNRWA.

⁶⁰ “Protection,” UNRWA.

⁶¹ “Microfinance,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/microfinance> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁶² “Microfinance,” UNRWA.

⁶³ “Microfinance Overview,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/overview?program=41> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁶⁴ “Microfinance Overview,” UNRWA.

⁶⁵ “Microfinance Overview,” UNRWA.

⁶⁶ “Microfinance,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/microfinance> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁶⁷ “Relief and Social Services,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/relief-social-services> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

roughly one third of the 5.6 million Palestinian refugees the organization serves.⁶⁸ The final service offered by UNRWA is that of emergency response, an effort to mitigate the impact of local hostilities on Palestinian refugees.⁶⁹ These efforts are focused primarily on providing those impacted by immediate conflict, such as being displaced or facing human rights abuses, with the resources needed to meet basic needs.⁷⁰

Current Situation

UNRWA operations in the Near East are extensive and provide access to necessary resources for millions of Palestinian refugees who continue to be impacted by increased violence and displacement. In particular, levels of food insecurity and unemployment have risen drastically among the Palestinian refugee population, while poverty levels are alarming.⁷¹ Armed conflicts in Syria, Lebanon, and the Gaza Strip only continue to exacerbate matters.⁷² And with limited access to funding and relying almost entirely on Member State contributions to fill its funding sources, 2020 has been especially hard on the UNRWA and significantly limited its ability to provide access to resources for Palestinians. As the situation in the Near East remains constant and does not seem to be improving, the resources offered by the UNRWA are needed more now than ever before, and the Agency is facing an uphill battle to provide even a fraction of the resources it is designed to.

Syria

The UNRWA has operated in Syria since its inception.⁷³ Many of the Palestinian refugees who fled to Syria in 1948 were from the northern part of Palestine, with additional refugees fleeing the Golan Heights when the area was occupied by Israel, or Lebanon when the Member State was engulfed in war in 1982.⁷⁴ However, the work of the UNRWA became more complicated and critical in 2011 when pro-democracy protests erupted in Syria, leading to an immediate clash between protestors and the government.⁷⁵ Violence continued to escalate and rebel brigades began to form in opposition to the government throughout the Member State, leading to a civil war between pro-government forces and revolutionary forces demanding the resignation of President Assad.⁷⁶ Now entering its ninth year, the conflict has assumed sectarian tones and pits the Sunni majority of Syria against the Shia Alawite sect (which President Assad belongs to).⁷⁷

The UNRWA provides services for 438,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria, who have been among those most impacted by the crisis in Syria.⁷⁸ In fact, nearly 60 percent of Palestinian refugees in Syria have been

⁶⁸ “Infrastructure and Camp Improvement,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/infrastructure-camp-improvement> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁶⁹ “Emergency Response,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/emergency-response> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁷⁰ “Emergency Response,” UNRWA.

⁷¹ “About UNRWA,” UNRWA. https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/about_unrwa_fact_sheet_v1.pdf (Accessed January 3, 2021).

⁷² “Where We Work: Syria,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/syria> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁷³ “Where We Work: Syria,” UNRWA.

⁷⁴ “Where We Work: Syria,” UNRWA.

⁷⁵ Lucy Rogers, David Gritten, James Offer, and Patrick Asare, “Syria: The story of the conflict,” BBC News. March 11, 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁷⁶ Lucy Rogers et al, “Syria: The story of the conflict,” BBC News.

⁷⁷ Lucy Rogers et al, “Syria: The story of the conflict,” BBC News.

⁷⁸ “Where We Work: Syria,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/syria> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

displaced at least once due to the conflict.⁷⁹ One of the most essential aid services offered by UNRWA to refugees in Syria is that of the cash assistance programme, providing over 400,000 Palestinians with cash assistance.⁸⁰ This programme has a significant impact on poverty levels in the Member State, reducing the number of Palestinians living in absolute poverty (defined to mean living on less than USD 2 per day) from 90 percent of the population in Syria to 74 percent in 2017.⁸¹ However, due to limited funding and the increase of additional aid needed elsewhere, beginning in 2018 the UNRWA had to reduce both the frequency of its cash distribution and the amounts, reducing the impact and benefits of the programme.⁸²

Additionally, services such as the provision of food, clean water, sanitation, and education have been disrupted by the conflict.⁸³ UNRWA can currently only access ten of the 12 camps in Syria, and even in those that it can access, many of the installations themselves remain inaccessible or have been destroyed.⁸⁴ For example, 40 percent of the UNRWA classrooms and nearly 25 percent of UNRWA's health centres are currently unusable due to the conflict.⁸⁵

Gaza Strip

The Gaza Strip is a piece of land along the Mediterranean Sea determined to be part of Palestinian Territory in the Oslo Accords.⁸⁶ First occupied by Egypt and captured by Israel during the 1967 Middle East War, it appeared that Palestinian may finally maintain control of the land when Israeli troops withdrew in 2005.⁸⁷ However, following the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006 in which the militant Islamist group Hamas won control of the legislature, Hamas ejected all forces loyal to the Palestinian Authority in 2007, solidifying control over the Strip.⁸⁸

Since Hamas gained control over the Gaza Strip, both Israel and Egypt have blockaded the region, significantly restricting movement of people and goods under the claim that doing so is in the interest of limiting the actions of the militants in control in Gaza.⁸⁹ 1.4 million of the 1.9 people that inhabit the Gaza Strip are Palestinian refugees. Now entering its 14th year, the blockade and resulting violent conflict have had detrimental effects on the already perilous situation in Gaza, leaving over 80 percent of the population dependent on international assistance.⁹⁰ Although the population of Gaza is well educated and highly skilled, the blockade has led to one of the highest unemployment rates in the world, holding steady at levels

⁷⁹ "Where We Work: Syria," UNRWA.

⁸⁰ "Where We Work: Syria," UNRWA.

⁸¹ "Where We Work: Syria," UNRWA.

⁸² "Where We Work: Syria," UNRWA.

⁸³ "Where We Work: Syria," UNRWA.

⁸⁴ "Where We Work: Syria," UNRWA.

⁸⁵ "Where We Work: Syria," UNRWA.

⁸⁶ "Israel-Palestinian conflict: Life in the Gaza Strip," BBC News. May 15, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20415675> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

⁸⁷ "Israel-Palestinian conflict: Life in the Gaza Strip," BBC News.

⁸⁸ "Israel-Palestinian conflict: Life in the Gaza Strip," BBC News.

⁸⁹ "Israel-Palestinian conflict: Life in the Gaza Strip," BBC News.

⁹⁰ "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/gaza-strip>. (Accessed January 12, 2021).

above 50 percent.⁹¹ To put it into perspective, in 2000 there were fewer than 80,000 Palestinian refugees who relied on UNRWA for assistance.⁹² Today, that number is well over one million.⁹³

Some of the most significant crises impacting Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are lack of access clean water and electricity.⁹⁴ Nearly 95 percent of the population lacks access to clean water, a basic human right and need.⁹⁵ In 2018 the level of access to electricity rose in some parts of the territory, now ranging from five to twelve hours per day depending on the day and location.⁹⁶ Without consistent and reliable access to electricity, a number of other basic services are continually disrupted, such as education, healthcare, and sanitation services, as well as the ability.⁹⁷ Additionally, lack of electricity undermines what is already a fragile economic structure, making manufacturing and agricultural programmes nearly impossible to maintain.⁹⁸

In 2014, following a significant escalation in hostilities in Gaza, the UNRWA declared a humanitarian emergency in the Strip.⁹⁹ This emergency status remains ongoing, and although progress has been made in the rebuilding of Gaza and improving access for Palestinian refugees to basic resources, the situation continues to deteriorate particularly in regards to the mental wellbeing of those refugees.¹⁰⁰ In an attempt to be more effective in combatting the ongoing crisis in the Gaza Strip, the UNRWA continues to reevaluate and make improvements to its services in Gaza as part of the Agency-wide reform initiated in 2016.¹⁰¹ However, this consistently devolving situation is further compounded by the lack of funding and resources available to the UNRWA, and although the UNRWA is the largest UN organization in Gaza and an essential pillar of stability for the 1.4 million Palestinian refugees it serves, the Agency must continually make decisions about which services to further restrict to remain within budget.¹⁰²

COVID-19 Pandemic

In early 2020, the world was overcome by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic impacted every state around the world, and had and continues to have a particularly negative impact on the world's most vulnerable populations, which includes Palestinian refugees. The UNRWA partnered with WHO and various Ministries of Health in an effort to try to minimize the impact of the pandemic on the refugee camps and the refugees within them.¹⁰³ Among the priorities of the UNRWA during this time period were

⁹¹ "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA

⁹² "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA

⁹³ "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA

⁹⁴ "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA

⁹⁵ "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA

⁹⁶ "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA

⁹⁷ "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA

⁹⁸ "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA

⁹⁹ "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA

¹⁰⁰ "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA

¹⁰¹ "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA

¹⁰² "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," UNRWA

¹⁰³ "first 100 days and beyond unrwa's health response to covid-19 pandemic," UNRWA. https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/spp_-_first_100_days_and_beyond_-_unrwas_health_response_to_covid-19_-_final.pdf (Accessed January 12, 2021).

the continuation of vital health services offered in all five of the field locations of the UNRWA.¹⁰⁴ To do so, UNRWA established quarantine centers, innovative programs like home delivery e-health services to continue to assist refugees when they couldn't physically visit a health centre, and establishing a triage program to better identify which needs had to be met first.¹⁰⁵

At first, the spread of COVID-19 was well contained by the UNRWA. At the end of May 2020, there were only 158 confirmed cases of COVID-19 amongst the 5.6 million Palestinian refugees served by the UNRWA.¹⁰⁶ However, beginning in July, the number of cases began to surge, particularly in the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria.¹⁰⁷ As such, the UNRWA launched a USD 94.6 million COVID Emergency Appeal, claiming that the funds would cover the resources needed to “mitigate the worst impacts of the pandemic on 5.6 million registered Palestine refugees in the Middle East until the end of December 2020, with a special focus on health, cash assistance and education.”¹⁰⁸ Yet on November 9, 2020, UNRWA spokesperson Tamara Alrifai informed the world during a press briefing that the UNRWA had run out of money.¹⁰⁹ The number of confirmed COVID cases among refugees jumped from fewer than 200 in July to nearly 17,000 at the beginning of November.¹¹⁰ According to Philippe Lazzarini, the Commissioner General of the UNRWA, without additional funding by the end of November 2020, the UNRWA would have to make devastating sacrifices to be able to continue to offer any services at all, including cutting or even eliminating the pay for its 28,000 Palestinian employees.¹¹¹

In response to the cry for funding assistance from the UNRWA, a number of organizations, governments, and regional bodies, such as the Qatar Fund for Development, the European Union, and the governments of Spain and India, contributed additional funds to the UNRWA in 2020.¹¹² However, the UNRWA continues to struggle with limited funds and increased burdens. Not only is the UNRWA combatting increased violence and conflict in the Near East while attempting to provide access to both basic aid and life improving resources such as microfinancing and quality education, now the UNRWA is also attempting to provide lifesaving care to over 5.6 million Palestinian refugees, many of whom lack access to food, clean water, and basic sanitation services.

Conclusion

Since its inception in 1948, the UNRWA was intended to be a temporary agency that supported the needs of Palestinian refugees until a permanent solution could be found. With that permanent solution eluding Palestinians thus far, the UNRWA is a consistent and essential pillar of care and life for Palestinian refugees in the Near East. However, funding challenges and increased conflict have required the Agency to do more with less in recent years, and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has strained the funding accounts of the

¹⁰⁴ “first 100 days and beyond unrwa’s health response to covid-19 pandemic,” UNRWA.

¹⁰⁵ “first 100 days and beyond unrwa’s health response to covid-19 pandemic,” UNRWA.

¹⁰⁶ “first 100 days and beyond unrwa’s health response to covid-19 pandemic,” UNRWA.

¹⁰⁷ “UNRWA LAUNCHES US\$ 94.6 MILLION COVID-19 APPEAL FOR CONTINUED PANDEMIC RESPONSE,” UNRWA. September 4, 2020. <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-launches-us-946-million-covid-19-appeal-continued-pandemic-response> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

¹⁰⁸ “UNRWA LAUNCHES US\$ 94.6 MILLION COVID-19 APPEAL FOR CONTINUED PANDEMIC RESPONSE,” UNRWA.

¹⁰⁹ Yazan Fares, “UN agency for Palestine refugees runs out of money as COVID-19 spreads,” UNRWA. November 10, 2020. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/11/1077332> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

¹¹⁰ Yazan Fares, “UN agency for Palestine refugees runs out of money as COVID-19 spreads,” UNRWA.

¹¹¹ Yazan Fares, “UN agency for Palestine refugees runs out of money as COVID-19 spreads,” UNRWA.

¹¹² “Press Releases,” UNRWA. <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases> (Accessed January 12, 2021).

Agency to levels never seen before. Now more than ever Palestinians are reliant on aid from the UNRWA, at the same time the UNRWA is struggling more than ever before to provide these services.

Committee Directive

As the body responsible for overseeing the operations of the UNRWA, delegates should consider and devise solutions to the challenges faced by UNRWA today, as well as anticipating those that UNRWA will face over the coming years. Even before the pandemic, UNRWA was encountering difficulty raising funds to provide its services. While the Agency redesigned its offerings in 2016, delegates should consider if there are newer, more effective ways that the Agency could be offering assistance. What else could the Agency do to expand access to its resources, and expand the resources available?

Additional questions that delegates should consider are: What can SPECPOL do to help combat the current challenges faced by the UNRWA? When the pandemic has concluded, what will be left of the UNRWA to help Palestinian refugees recover from its impacts? What can the global community do now to ensure that these vital resources remain available to those who need them? Are there other existing programs or partnerships that the UNRWA can look to as an example for improvement? What actions have other Member States taken to help their vulnerable populations?

II. Retraining Peacekeepers to Better Adapt to Their Expanded Mandates

Introduction

Originally founded with the intent of supporting territories in a transition to sovereignty, in the early 1990s the United Nations General Assembly Fourth Committee found itself without territories to oversee.¹¹³ As such, in 1993 the Committee merged with the Special Political Assembly, creating the United Nations Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL), charged with (among other things) the task of overseeing peacekeeping operations around the world.¹¹⁴ Peacekeeping operations have been a staple of United Nations (UN) activity nearly as long as the UN has existed. The first peacekeeping mission was deployed in 1948 to the Middle East, and more than 70 operations have been deployed in the years since then.¹¹⁵

However, in the years since the first mission was deployed, the world and the best way of doing things has constantly changed and evolved. When initially founded, peacekeeping missions were intended to do just that, keep the peace.¹¹⁶ However, over many years of increased and more complex conflicts, the mission of peacekeepers changed. The many peacekeeping failures of the 1990s caused the UN to reassess the role of peacekeepers entering the 21st century, but that was the last real evaluation of operations to ensure that peacekeeping missions are well trained and able to confront the challenges they will be presented with.¹¹⁷

As conflicts continue to grow more complex, it is the responsibility of SPECPOL to ensure that peacekeepers have what they need to give them the best chance of success in completing their missions. The need for intervention in multidimensional conflicts with just as complex peacekeeping operations is not expected to diminish in the coming years, and in fact the needs of Member State are expected to continue to shift towards specialized capabilities, such as police forces and political support.¹¹⁸ As such, SPECPOL must ensure that all peacekeepers are equipped with everything they need to successfully assist the Member States they are deployed to.

History

Peacekeeping has always been a highly dynamic, fast paced, and quickly changing field. When peacekeeping was first utilized in 1948, the world was largely divided into two spheres and the Security Council was frequently paralyzed due to Cold War tensions.¹¹⁹ At that time, peacekeeping missions were deployed to the Middle East to help maintain ceasefire agreements and assist with local stabilization efforts.¹²⁰ The first ever peacekeeping missions, both of which are still in operation today, were the UN Truce Supervision Organization deployed to help bring stability to the Middle East, and the UN Military

¹¹³ “Committees,” United Nations, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/committees> (accessed January 13, 2021).

¹¹⁴ “Committees,” United Nations.

¹¹⁵ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹¹⁶ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹¹⁷ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹¹⁸ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹¹⁹ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹²⁰ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

Observer Group in India and Pakistan.¹²¹ These missions consisted largely of unarmed troops and political observers.¹²²

It was not until 1956 when the first armed peacekeeping mission was deployed.¹²³ Known as the First UN Emergency Force, this mission was intended to help secure and then supervise cessation of hostilities between the various parties involved in the Suez Crisis.¹²⁴ Since then, nearly every peacekeeping operation has consisted of armed officers in combination with political, military, and civilian observers.

The original UN peacekeeping operations were “traditional” missions, or missions that involved “generally observational tasks performed by military personnel.”¹²⁵ Following the end of the Cold War, the objective of UN peacekeeping missions and therefore the way in which they were conducted shifted.¹²⁶ The new, “multidimensional” missions would become more involved in the peacemaking process, “designed to ensure the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements and assist in laying the foundations for sustainable peace.”¹²⁷ These missions had to confront the reality that although peacekeeping was originally intended to keep the peace between different Member States, conflicts that needed UN intervention were increasingly intra-state and many times involved a civil war.¹²⁸

This shift widely expanded the realm of what a peacekeeping operation was asked to do. Instead of focusing on primarily military stabilization, peacekeepers were now being asked to engage in a variety of complex and delicate tasks such as “helping to build sustainable institutions of governance, human rights monitoring, security sector reform, and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.”¹²⁹ Up until this point, trained military personnel constituted the backbone of all UN peacekeeping operations.¹³⁰ However, with this shift in focus the UN also needed to shift its personnel. In addition to armed military personnel, UN peacekeeping missions began to consist of a variety of subject experts like administrators, economists, police forces, legal experts, civil affairs and governance specialists, and human rights observers.¹³¹

However, specialized training for these forces was limited despite the incredibly complex situations they would encounter on the ground. Although the mission and scope of peacekeeping operations had changed, the way in which the UN trained peacekeepers had not changed enough. At first, this didn’t appear to be a problem. The UN Security Council authorized over 20 new peacekeeping missions in the late 1980s and early 1990s, anticipating the ability to build off of the success that peacekeeping organizations had experienced in recent years.¹³²

¹²¹ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹²² “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹²³ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹²⁴ “First United Nations Peacekeeping Force,” UNEFI. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/past/unefi.htm> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹²⁵ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹²⁶ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹²⁷ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹²⁸ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹²⁹ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹³⁰ “Military,” United Nations Peacekeeping. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/military> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹³¹ “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹³² “Our History,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

However, the 1990s brought with them a new slate of challenges that UN peacekeeping operations were not equipped to handle. The Security Council authorized mandates that were too narrow in scope to succeed, and sanctioned missions that it did not have the resources to provide for.¹³³ Peacekeeping forces were sent to places such as the Former Yugoslav Republic and Somalia to help establish peace, but were not equipped with the training and resources to do so.¹³⁴ As such, the 1990s consisted of a number of UN peacekeeping failures and led the Security Council and UNGA to commission inquiries and reports on the failed missions.¹³⁵

As a result of the events of the 1990s, the UN examined and reevaluated peacekeeping operations moving into the 21st Century with the goal of strengthening the organization's capacity to effectively manage and sustain field operations.¹³⁶ First and foremost, in 1992, then Secretary-General created the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in the interest of strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat in peacekeeping missions, as well as adding more control and management over peacekeeping operations.¹³⁷ As such, SPECPOL no longer maintained direct managerial oversight of peacekeeping missions, but instead shifted its jurisdiction to a "comprehensive review of the question of peacekeeping operations as well as a review of special political missions."¹³⁸

The DPKO was constructed with three primary offices of operation: the Office of the Rule of Law and Security Institutions, the Office of Military Affairs, and the Policy, Evaluation, and Training Division (DPET).¹³⁹ Under the new structure, the DPET is mandated to develop comprehensive and standardized training curriculums to guide better peacekeeping.¹⁴⁰ DPET is also responsible for evaluating how the standardized processes are being applied and use that information to improve the training process moving forward.¹⁴¹ There are three subdivisions under DPET to accomplish these goals: the Policy and Best Practice Service, the Integrated Training Service (ITS), and the Evaluation Team.¹⁴² Of these, the ITS was formed specifically to address the tasks of directing and coordinating peacekeeping training.¹⁴³

Further focused on reform, in 2017, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres launched Action 4 Peace (A4P), a central framework for peacekeeping reform and policymaking with the intent of strengthening peacekeeping operations and commitments to them.¹⁴⁴ Through A4P, the Secretary-General "called on Member States, the Security Council, host countries, troop- and police- contributing countries, regional

¹³³ "Our History," United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹³⁴ "Our History," United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹³⁵ "Our History," United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹³⁶ "Our History," United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹³⁷ "Historical Timeline of UN Peacekeeping," United Nations Peacekeeping. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/historical-timeline-of-un-peacekeeping> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹³⁸ "Special Political and Decolonization," United Nations General Assembly. <https://www.un.org/en/ga/fourth/> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹³⁹ "Department of Peace Operations," United Nations Peacekeeping. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/department-of-peace-operations> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹⁴⁰ "Department of Peace Operations," United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹⁴¹ "Department of Peace Operations," United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹⁴² "Peacekeeping Resource Hub," United Nations Peacekeeping. [https://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community/about#:~:text=The%20Integrated%20Training%20Service%20\(ITS,capabilities%20to%20implement%20mission%20mandates.](https://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community/about#:~:text=The%20Integrated%20Training%20Service%20(ITS,capabilities%20to%20implement%20mission%20mandates.) (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹⁴³ "Peacekeeping Resource Hub," United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹⁴⁴ "Reforming Peacekeeping," United Nations Peacekeeping. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/reforming-peacekeeping> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

partners and financial contributors to renew our collective engagement with UN peacekeeping and mutually commit to reach for excellence.”¹⁴⁵ The Declaration of Shared Commitments of A4P is a document created after months of deliberation between those parties involved in peacekeeping operations, and includes eight focus areas for peacekeeping mission to improve upon.¹⁴⁶ These priorities include commitments in the areas of performance and accountability, and conduct of peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations, both of which include the need for better and more comprehensive training.

Peacekeeper Training

Peacekeeping training is defined as “any training activity which aims to enhance mandate implementation by equipping UN military, police or civilian personnel, both individually and collectively, with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to: a) meet the evolving challenges of peacekeeping operations in accordance with principles, policies and guidelines, as well as lessons learnt from the field; b) perform their specialist functions in an effective, professional and integrated manner and; c) demonstrate the core values and competencies of the UN.” Although in recent years the UN has taken drastic steps toward improving the coordination of peacekeeper training, one of the biggest sources of differentiation in peacekeeper training is the fact that peacekeepers are generally actively serving in the military of their Member State and contributed by that Member State to serve in UN forces. This reality is unavoidable, as UN peacekeeping operations cannot maintain a reserve of forces.¹⁴⁷ The UN is only able to deploy military personnel when the Security Council authorizes them to do so, requiring peacekeeping operations to train peacekeepers not only in the general ways of peacekeeping immediately before deploying, but also in the specific complexities of the situation they are about to encounter.¹⁴⁸

Before a peacekeeper is deployed, they are mandated to complete pre-deployment peacekeeping training based on UN standards.¹⁴⁹ As is mandated by UNGA Resolution A/RES/49/37, Member States are responsible for training their peacekeeping forces before they deploy using the materials compiled by ITS.¹⁵⁰ In other words, this training is coordinated by the ITS but delivered by a Member State’s trainer in that Member State.¹⁵¹ The Core Pre-deployment Training Materials are designed to provide a peacekeeper with the foundation that they need to effectively serve their mission.¹⁵² This training must be completed by all peacekeeping personnel, whether military, civilian, or police, and is intended to equip peacekeepers with an understanding of the guiding principles that should govern their time as a peacekeeper.¹⁵³ The training encompasses a wide variety of priorities and subjects such as conduct and discipline, sexual exploitation and abuse, the protection of civilians, human rights, gender mainstreaming, conflict related sexual violence, child protection, and environmental protection.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁵ “Action 4 Peacekeeping (A4P),” United Nations Peacekeeping. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/action-for-peacekeeping-a4p> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹⁴⁶ “Action 4 Peacekeeping (A4P),” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹⁴⁷ “Military,” United Nations Peacekeeping. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/military> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹⁴⁸ “Military,” United Nations Peacekeeping.

¹⁴⁹ “Pre-Deployment Training,” United Nations Peacekeeping Resources Hub. <https://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community/pre-deployment> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹⁵⁰ “Pre-Deployment Training,” United Nations Peacekeeping Resources Hub.

¹⁵¹ “Pre-Deployment Training,” United Nations Peacekeeping Resources Hub.

¹⁵² “Pre-Deployment Training,” United Nations Peacekeeping Resources Hub.

¹⁵³ “Pre-Deployment Training,” United Nations Peacekeeping Resources Hub.

¹⁵⁴ “Pre-Deployment Training,” United Nations Peacekeeping Resources Hub.

In addition, the ITS offers specialized pre-deployment courses for both civilian and police personnel deploying on a peacekeeping mission.¹⁵⁵ These courses must be completed before departure, and serve to better prepare each category of personnel for the work that they may face while on their deployment.¹⁵⁶ However military personnel are not given specialized training beyond the Core training, as the responsibility for effective military training lies with each respective Member State.¹⁵⁷

There are certain personnel deployed on a peacekeeping mission who qualify for more specialized and focused training. This training, known as Functional Training, is administered by ITS officials focused on specific priority areas of the mandate of mission, particularly regarding responsibilities of personnel like political affairs officers or police experts on a mission.¹⁵⁸ Functional training is separated into three categories: Specialised, Reinforcement, and Leadership.¹⁵⁹ The Reinforcement Training is primary used to help certain personnel on a mission recognize and understand a cross-cutting theme that they, in their roles, will be required to act upon during their time in operation.¹⁶⁰

Peacekeeping Challenges

Currently, the UN has 14 ongoing peacekeeping missions that employ nearly 100,000 people and cost approximately USD 7 billion annually.¹⁶¹ Having transformed from the days of maintaining peace at a border shared by Member States, in recent years, peacekeeping missions have evolved even further, transforming to deal with increased threats of violent extremism.¹⁶² As wealthier and more developed Member States continue to see increased stability within their borders, they become increasingly reluctant to provide a significant amount of troops for UN peacekeeping missions.¹⁶³ As such, peacekeepers deployed are primarily from developing Member States with fewer educational and training resources, and tend to be less prepared to handle the situations the complex and volatile situations they encounter.¹⁶⁴

Further, as is generally the case with UN activities, a lack of adequate funding and resources for peacekeeping missions once they are established can lead to a protracted demise of a mission. This is not a new problem to peacekeeping missions, yet unfortunately continues to plague missions to this day. Since 2005, the peacekeeping budget has more than doubled, yet missions still struggle to access the resources they need.¹⁶⁵ This problem became readily apparent in the 1990s, when the Security Council deployed missions to the Former Yugoslav Republic and Rwanda without taking into account the total costs of these operations, given that they were some of the first operations sent to active conflict zones. In reports from

¹⁵⁵ “Pre-Deployment Training,” United Nations Peacekeeping Resources Hub.

¹⁵⁶ “Pre-Deployment Training,” United Nations Peacekeeping Resources Hub.

¹⁵⁷ “Pre-Deployment Training,” United Nations Peacekeeping Resources Hub.

¹⁵⁸ “Functional Training,” United Nations Peacekeeping Resources Hub. <https://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community/functional> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹⁵⁹ “Functional Training,” United Nations Peacekeeping Resources Hub.

¹⁶⁰ “Functional Training,” United Nations Peacekeeping Resources Hub.

¹⁶¹ Dennis Jett, “Why UN Peacekeeping Missions Fail,” The Globe Post. August 1, 2019. <https://theglobepost.com/2019/08/01/un-peacekeeping/> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹⁶² Dennis Jett, “Why UN Peacekeeping Missions Fail,” The Globe Post. August 1, 2019. <https://theglobepost.com/2019/08/01/un-peacekeeping/> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹⁶³ Dennis Jett, “Why UN Peacekeeping Missions Fail,” The Globe Post.

¹⁶⁴ Dennis Jett, “Why UN Peacekeeping Missions Fail,” The Globe Post.

¹⁶⁵ Chris McGreal, “What’s the point of peacekeepers when they don’t keep the peace?,” The Guardian. September 17, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/17/un-united-nations-peacekeepers-rwanda-bosnia> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

the Security Council in 1995, it was acknowledged that the mission in the Former Yugoslav Republic had become too far reaching and peacekeepers did not have the resources they needed to adequately do their duties.¹⁶⁶ However, the then Secretary-General made the determination that because it would appear worse to retreat, peacekeepers would stay.¹⁶⁷ This led to inaction on behalf of peacekeepers and distrust not only between peacekeepers and the populations they served, but also between the peacekeepers themselves and the UN. In July of 1995, when Serbian forces invaded a “UN safe area” at Srenbenica in Bosnia, peacekeepers on site did not stop the ensuing atrocities due to a lack of power to act without orders and confusion regarding what exactly they were permitted to do.¹⁶⁸ As a result, over 8,000 men and children were massacred at Srenbenica.¹⁶⁹

Additionally, a significant challenge faced by the UN in training peacekeepers is derived from political and territorial disputes on the national stage. First, developed states such as the United States of America have, in the last decade, sought to play more of a direct role in the training and management of peacekeepers.¹⁷⁰ When United States of America President Barack Obama decided to host a summit with the aim of attaining commitments from Member States across the globe of better trained peacekeepers, equipment, and intelligence resources, Member States such as India, which has provided the highest number of peacekeeping troops, were outraged.¹⁷¹

And second, there are often disputes between the Member State that deployed the troops and UN officials as to who the troops report to and what they are authorized to do.¹⁷² Sometimes the confusion comes down to the local level, with two different peacekeeping troops being deployed to the same area interpreting the mandate differently. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2012, Indian peacekeeping forces were deployed in the town of Goma.¹⁷³ Upon advancement of rebels into the town, the Indian commander ignored orders from UN officials to defend the town from the rebels and instead followed orders from the Indian Defense Ministry not to resist.¹⁷⁴ The rebel forces were able to seize Goma, terrorizing, raping, and killing those who inhabited it, while UN peacekeeping forces stood by and some even surrendered.¹⁷⁵

Conclusion

Peacekeeping operations have transformed significantly since the first peacekeeping mission was deployed in 1948, and the situations in which peacekeepers are deployed are now more complex than ever. While the peacekeeping operations and governance bodies have tried in recent years to re-evaluate peacekeeping mandates and the training provided to peacekeepers, the reforms have not moved fast enough to prepare peacekeepers with the highest chance of success in fulfilling their mission. This, compounded with issues of limited funding and depleted resources has led to drawn out missions around the world and more failure

¹⁶⁶ UNGA Report A/54/549

¹⁶⁷ UNGA Report A/54/549

¹⁶⁸ UNGA Report A/54/549

¹⁶⁹ UNGA Report A/54/549

¹⁷⁰ Chris McGreal, “What’s the point of peacekeepers when they don’t keep the peace?,” *The Guardian*. September 17, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/17/un-united-nations-peacekeepers-rwanda-bosnia> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

¹⁷¹ Chris McGreal, “What’s the point of peacekeepers when they don’t keep the peace?,” *The Guardian*.

¹⁷² Chris McGreal, “What’s the point of peacekeepers when they don’t keep the peace?,” *The Guardian*.

¹⁷³ Chris McGreal, “What’s the point of peacekeepers when they don’t keep the peace?,” *The Guardian*.

¹⁷⁴ Chris McGreal, “What’s the point of peacekeepers when they don’t keep the peace?,” *The Guardian*.

¹⁷⁵ Chris McGreal, “What’s the point of peacekeepers when they don’t keep the peace?,” *The Guardian*.

than success. Upon its inception, peacekeeping was intended to simply keep the peace. Now, the UN sends peacekeepers into some of the most dangerous parts of the world, asking them to create the peace. Yet without proper training and resources, there is little more that we can expect peacekeeper forces to do beyond hope for a resolution that doesn't involve further death and destruction.

Committee Directive

While it is not the duty of SPECPOL to evaluate funding resources for the UN and peacekeeping operations, SPECPOL can evaluate ongoing peacekeeping operations and what the UN can do to better prepare peacekeepers to increase their chances of success. There has been significant reform of peacekeeping operations and training practices over the last two decades, but have they been enough? Are there other Member States having more success training peacekeepers than others? What practices that are working? What practices could be re-evaluated? Are there proper systems in place to define who peacekeepers should listen to and when? What does your respective Member State do to train peacekeepers and provide missions with support? These are all questions that delegates should consider as they begin to research this topic and launch into discussion about how to improve peacekeeper training.

Annotated Bibliography

I. Expanding Access to Relief Programs for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

The UNRWA, “UNRWA Education Reform Strategy 2011 – 2015,” March 2011. <https://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2012042913344.pdf> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

This report outlines the need for reform of the education structure offered by the UNRWA, as well as evaluates the needs of the students the UNRWA serves given the unique social, political, and cultural situations they find themselves in. This document includes comprehensive research of the strengths and weaknesses of the education program, as well as ideas for the best way forward. It may serve as a resource when evaluating how to improve and expand access to these programs.

The UNRWA, “Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Framework,” August 14, 2017. <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/about-unrwa/mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-framework> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

Throughout the last 70 years, but especially in the last decade, the UNRWA has been faced with increased psychosocial ramifications of ongoing conflict in the Near East. The Mental Health and Psychosocial Framework was designed to help prepare the Agency and its employees to better be able to address these needs. Further, it is intended to help expand the availability of this resource through its field operations.

The UNRWA, “Disability Inclusion Annual Report 2020,” 2020. https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/unrwa_disability_inclusion_report_2020_final.pdf (Accessed January 13, 2021).

A significant part of the services that the UNRWA provides is ensuring that all Palestinian refugees have access to the resources they need to both survive and thrive. The Disability Inclusion Report evaluates the work of the UNRWA related to those with disabilities and identifies gaps in the services provided.

II. Retraining Peacekeepers to Better Adapt to Their Expanded Mandates

UN General Assembly and Security Council, A/70/357–S/2015/682. (Accessed January 13, 2021).

This joint report by the General Assembly and the Security Council addresses “the future of United Nations peace operations.” Commissioned by then Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, the report is intended to identify gaps and areas for improvement in the UN peacekeeping structure. The report also identifies many missteps throughout the history of UN peacekeeping operations that should be fixed.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan, “Letters to the General Assembly Plenary and the Security Council,” August 21, 2000. https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/55/305 (Accessed January 13, 2021).

In identical letters to the President’s of the UN General Assembly and Security Council, then Secretary-General Kofi Annan reflects on the results of a report he commissioned following the failures of many of the peacekeeping operations in the 1990s. The report, which is also included, details recommendations for areas of improvement in peacekeeping operations to prevent such significant failures from happening again.

“Peacekeeping Effectiveness and Pre-Deployment Training: Innovations from Kenya,” Igarape Institute. March 27, 2018. <https://igarape.org.br/en/peacekeeping-effectiveness-and-pre-deployment-training/> (Accessed January 13, 2021).

This article highlights some of the successes of peacekeeping reform, focusing on the new reforms and methods implemented by Kenya. The Kenyan government took the UN reforms into their own

hands, bringing new and innovative ways of education and training to the forefront of the African Union. Similar methods may be productive in improving the overall strategy of UN peacekeeping.