



# **DAISMUN Fall 2024**

**Human Right Council**

*Ensuring accessible humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip*

## **Chair Report**



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**FORUM:** Human Rights Council (HRC)

**ISSUE OF:** Ensuring accessible humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip

**STUDENT OFFICER:** Amy Li

**POSITION:** Deputy President

## Introduction to Committee:

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The Human Rights Council is the major intergovernmental body within the United Nations that was established in 2006 by the General Assembly. The Council consists of 47 Member States, responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights around the world. Specifically, the Human Rights Council addresses the situations of human rights violations, discusses resolutions to solve issues, and provides recommendations on how to further establish human rights globally. In addition, the Council, after consultation and agreement with member states, assists in strengthening the capacity of member states in the field of human rights, provides a platform for the discussion of human rights issues through technical assistance, and promotes educational activities regarding human rights.

## Introduction to Topic:

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The context of Gaza today is characterized by multiple crises, including ongoing conflict, a persistent blockade, widespread poverty, and severely crippled infrastructure. The local population struggles to access necessities, such as adequate food, clean drinking water, electricity, and healthcare, exacerbated by a blockade that has devastated the economy and left many reliant on humanitarian aid. This situation necessitates effective and sustainable solutions to address urgent survival needs and enhance the living conditions of Gaza's residents.

## History of Topic:

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**1948 Arab-Israeli War**—This war marked the beginning of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Following the United Nations' 1947 plan to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, tensions between Jews and Arabs escalated into a full-scale war. The conflict ended in 1949 with armistice agreements, but it led to the establishment of Israel and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, fueling ongoing territorial and political disputes.

**2006 Palestinian Legislative Elections and Hamas Victory**—In the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections, Hamas, an Islamist political and militant group, won a significant majority, defeating the incumbent Fatah party. This victory created deep divisions between the two factions, with Fatah controlling the West Bank and Hamas gaining control of Gaza. The election results were a turning point, leading to increased tensions with Israel and international actors.



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**2007 Gaza Blockade**—Following Hamas's takeover of Gaza in June 2007, Israel and Egypt imposed a blockade, citing security concerns over Hamas's militant activities. The blockade restricted the movement of goods and people in and out of Gaza, leading to severe shortages of essential supplies, economic deterioration, and widespread humanitarian issues. The blockade has faced international criticism for its impact on civilians, being seen by some as collective punishment.

**2008-2009 Operation Cast Lead** — Operation Cast Lead, also known as the Gaza War, occurred between December 2008 and January 2009 following a breakdown in ceasefire agreements between Hamas and Israel. The conflict was marked by heavy aerial bombardments and ground incursions by Israeli forces aimed at stopping rocket fire from Gaza into Israeli territory. Over 1,000 Palestinians were killed, including many civilians, and widespread damage to Gaza's infrastructure made the delivery of humanitarian aid nearly impossible. This operation intensified the international community's focus on the Gaza humanitarian crisis.

**2007 June Ongoing Human Rights Violations** — The blockade, coupled with repeated military conflicts, has led to numerous allegations of human rights violations in Gaza. Organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have documented instances of restricted access to medical care, education, and necessities for Gaza's residents. The United Nations has also repeatedly called for the blockade to be lifted, citing its impact on civilians and the overall living conditions in Gaza. However, despite these efforts, the situation remains critical, with many residents reliant on humanitarian aid for survival.

**2014 Operation Protective Edge** — In July 2014, Israel launched Operation Protective Edge in response to increased rocket attacks from Gaza. The conflict lasted for 50 days, resulting in over 2,200 Palestinian deaths and extensive destruction in Gaza, including homes, schools, and hospitals. The operation further exacerbated the already dire humanitarian situation, with Gaza's infrastructure suffering immense damage. Despite international calls for peace and an end to the blockade, little progress has been made, and the humanitarian crisis persists.

**2021 Israel-Gaza Conflict** — In May 2021, hostilities flared up again between Israel and Hamas, triggered by tensions in East Jerusalem, including the eviction of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah. Over the course of 11 days, more than 250 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed. The conflict saw heavy Israeli airstrikes on Gaza and rocket fire from Hamas. International mediation, primarily by Egypt, led to a ceasefire, but the underlying causes of the conflict, including the blockade and occupation, remained unresolved.

**2023 Israeli-Palestinian Clashes** — In 2023, tensions surged once more as violence escalated between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants. A series of military raids and rocket exchanges



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occurred in the West Bank and Gaza, leading to numerous casualties on both sides. International bodies, including the UN, expressed deep concerns over the continuing violence and the humanitarian impact on civilians, but no lasting solution was reached.

**2024 Renewed Ceasefire Negotiations** — In early 2024, renewed international efforts for peace talks took place, spearheaded by Egypt, the UN, and other regional powers. While the ceasefire negotiations led to a temporary reduction in violence, the humanitarian situation in Gaza remained critical, with the blockade still in place and infrastructure in ruins. Ongoing disputes over land, sovereignty, and security continued to hinder a long-term peace settlement.

## Key Terms:

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**Humanitarian assistance** —Emergency supplies and services provided to people affected by crises, including food, medical care, shelter, and other vital resources necessary for survival.

**Blockade**—A comprehensive embargo or restriction on the movement of goods, services, and people into or out of a specific area, often enforced during conflict.

**Human Rights Violations**—Actions or policies that infringe on the basic rights and freedoms to which all people are entitled, including the right to life, health, education, and freedom of movement, often seen in conflict zones like Gaza.

**Ceasefire**—An agreement between conflicting parties to temporarily or permanently halt hostilities, often to allow for humanitarian aid to reach affected populations and to create space for peace negotiations.

## Major Parties Involved:

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### 1. Supranational Organizations

**World Food Program (WFP)** — The World Food Program (WFP), a specialized agency of the United Nations, plays a critical role in addressing food insecurity in conflict zones such as the Gaza Strip. The WFP provides emergency food assistance to vulnerable populations, ensuring that those affected by the ongoing blockade and conflict have access to basic nutrition. Their efforts are vital in alleviating hunger and malnutrition, which are exacerbated by the restricted flow of goods into the region.

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** — UNICEF, the United Nations agency dedicated to providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide, focuses on offering



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emergency assistance in the Gaza Strip. Their work includes ensuring access to clean water, education, and healthcare for children and families affected by the conflict. UNICEF's efforts are essential in safeguarding the rights and well-being of children living under the blockade and in areas with limited access to humanitarian resources.

## 2. National Governments and Government Agencies

**The Israeli Government** — The Israeli government plays a critical role in the Gaza conflict by enforcing the blockade, which regulates the flow of goods, services, and people into and out of the Gaza Strip. This blockade significantly affects the daily lives of Gaza's residents, leading to shortages of essential supplies such as food, fuel, and medical care. Israel justifies the blockade on security grounds, arguing it is necessary to prevent attacks and the smuggling of weapons by Hamas. The government's policies directly shape the humanitarian situation, limiting access to resources and impacting overall living conditions in Gaza.

**The Palestinian Authority** — The Palestinian Authority (PA), based in the West Bank, represents the political interests of Palestinians, including those in Gaza. Although the PA has limited control over Gaza due to Hamas's governance, it plays a crucial role in diplomatic efforts and peace negotiations. The ongoing tensions between the PA and Hamas complicate the humanitarian landscape, as differing political agendas influence the distribution of aid and access to services. Understanding the PA's position and policies is essential for addressing the blockade and facilitating effective aid delivery to Gaza, as it impacts collaboration with international organizations and the management of humanitarian resources.

## 3. Independent Entities and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)

**Red Cross** — The Red Cross plays a vital role in providing humanitarian relief in Gaza, delivering essential services such as medical aid, food distribution, and support for displaced families. Despite the limitations imposed by the blockade, the organization works to address the immediate needs of those affected by the conflict, striving to alleviate suffering and improve living conditions for Gaza's residents.

**Amnesty International** — Amnesty International focuses on advocacy and raising awareness about human rights violations in Gaza. The organization calls on the international community to take action and address these violations, emphasizing the need for accountability and support for the rights of civilians. By maintaining global attention on the situation, Amnesty International helps ensure that the plight of Gaza's residents remains a priority for world leaders and humanitarian actors.



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## Problems Raised:

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**Impeded Humanitarian Access** — The blockade of Gaza has severely restricted the ability of humanitarian organizations to deliver essential aid to the population. This has made it extremely difficult for residents to access basic daily necessities like food, clean water, and medical supplies, resulting in widespread shortages and a deepening health crisis.

**Destruction of Critical Infrastructure** — The continuous conflict has caused extensive damage to Gaza's infrastructure, including homes, schools, hospitals, and utility systems. This destruction has further worsened the economic situation, leading to higher unemployment, widespread poverty, and a deteriorating standard of living for the population.

## Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue:

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The United Nations and other international organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), and the World Food Programme (WFP), have repeatedly called for the lifting of the blockade. These organizations have urged both Israel and Egypt to allow the delivery of essential goods and medical supplies into Gaza. Diplomatic efforts, including peace initiatives by the European Union and mediation by Egypt and Qatar, have focused on securing ceasefire agreements to facilitate the smooth delivery of humanitarian aid.

Despite these efforts, progress has been limited, as recurrent violence disrupts aid deliveries, and the blockade remains largely in place. Further international cooperation, more robust diplomatic pressure, and innovative solutions—such as safe humanitarian corridors, increased financial support for reconstruction, and negotiations on de-escalation strategies—are still needed to alleviate the humanitarian crisis.

## Timeline:

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Date	Event
January 2006	Hamas wins elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council, triggering a political schism between Gaza and the West Bank. The West Bank is a landlocked territory between Israel and Jordan, captured by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. It is home to a large Palestinian population and is governed by the Palestinian Authority (PA) with limited self-rule, while Israel maintains control over security and movement. The area features Palestinian



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	towns and Israeli settlements, contributing to ongoing tensions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
June 2007	Hamas takes full control of the Gaza Strip, and Israel and Egypt begin imposing a strict blockade of Gaza, restricting the entry of supplies and humanitarian aid.
December 2008 – January 2009	The war in Gaza (Operation Cast Lead) breaks out, resulting in large numbers of civilian casualties and extensive infrastructure damage, and a serious escalation of the humanitarian crisis.
May 2010	The Gaza flotilla incident occurred on May 31, 2010, when a flotilla of ships carrying humanitarian aid was intercepted by the Israeli military in international waters. The confrontation on the Mavi Marmara resulted in the deaths of nine Turkish activists and sparked international outrage. This incident intensified criticism of Israel's blockade of Gaza, prompting some limited easing of restrictions. Despite these changes, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza remains severe, with ongoing shortages of essential supplies.
November 2012	The conflict escalated in November 2012 with "Operation Pillar of Defense," launched by Israel in response to rocket fire from Gaza. The operation involved airstrikes targeting Hamas, resulting in significant civilian casualties and extensive damage to infrastructure. This further deteriorated the humanitarian situation in Gaza, leading to critical shortages of essential supplies and increased displacement of residents, highlighting the urgent need for aid and a resolution to the conflict.
July-August 2014	The Gaza war (Operation Protective Edge) between Israel and Hamas breaks out, with the United Nations and the international community repeatedly calling for a ceasefire and emphasizing the need for emergency humanitarian assistance.
March 2018	The "March of Return" began in March 2018 as protests along the Gaza-Israel border, organized by Palestinian groups to advocate for the right of refugees to return and to protest the blockade. The demonstrations often escalated into violence, leading to hundreds of deaths and thousands of injuries, which further worsened the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and increased tensions in the region.



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December 2018	The United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/ES-10/20 in December 2018, urging an end to the blockade of Gaza and calling for the unhindered flow of humanitarian aid. This resolution highlighted the need for immediate action to address the humanitarian crisis in the region.
2023	In early 2023, clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants intensified, resulting in heightened tension in the Gaza Strip. Airstrikes and rocket fire led to further destruction of critical infrastructure, deepening the humanitarian crisis. As a result, shortages of essential supplies such as food, clean water, and medical supplies worsened. Humanitarian organizations like the UN and the International Red Cross called for an immediate cessation of hostilities to allow aid to reach civilians, but these efforts were largely hampered by the ongoing violence.
2023	In mid-2023, following months of conflict, the United Nations, alongside Egypt and Qatar, facilitated renewed negotiations aimed at brokering a ceasefire. The goal was to create stable conditions for humanitarian aid to flow into Gaza. While a temporary truce was achieved, violence resumed shortly after, and the blockade continued to limit the entry of vital supplies, leaving much of the population in crisis.
2024	In early 2024, international organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), raised alarms over the deteriorating health and nutrition conditions in Gaza. Diplomatic efforts increased to push for the permanent lifting of the blockade, with calls from the European Union and the UN Secretary-General for a humanitarian corridor. Despite these efforts, significant challenges remained, and international leaders continued to seek innovative solutions to ensure consistent aid delivery and alleviate the suffering of Gaza's residents.

## Possible Solutions:

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**Ceasefire agreement under international supervision** — Previous ceasefire attempts have often been undermined by a lack of enforcement and limited commitment from involved parties. This proposed agreement would differ by involving a broader range of international mediators, including the United Nations, Egypt, and Jordan, to create a more robust monitoring mechanism.





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This multi-faceted approach aims to ensure sustained commitment and accountability, providing aid organizations and medical personnel with uninterrupted access.

**Humanitarian Protected Areas (HPZs)** — Establishing HPZs is distinct from past efforts as it focuses on creating designated safe zones specifically for civilians to receive assistance. To ensure these areas are respected, a coalition of United Nations peacekeeping forces or regional actors would be tasked with monitoring and enforcing the protection of these zones. This would involve clearly defined protocols and active oversight to safeguard infrastructure like hospitals and schools from attacks, bolstering compliance with international law.

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