

# **The Role of the United Nations in Promoting Peace and Security in the Middle East**

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## **1. Abstract**

This article at examine and analyze the multifaceted role of the United Nations in promoting peace and security in the violated Middle East region. Using qualitative approach the research assesses the involvement of the organization through a review of UN resolution , peace keeping mandates, diplomatic initiative and humanitarian operations o assess the organization's engagement. Key finding indicates that it's efforts are frequently constrained by Geopolitical rivalries, the complex nature of regional conflict and the limitation in member state compliance. The article highlights the impact of various UN instruments, like early talks to stop fights sending peacekeepers and helping to rebuilt after conflict these actions helps keep peace protect people and solve problem peacefully even through the UN face many problem it's still keep working hard to bring peace and need to work together to solve difficult regional conflicts.

## **2. Introduction**

The Middle East is an area of great historical value that is situated where Europe, Asia, and Africa meet, and is of great geo-political significance on the globe. It includes about 17 countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, along with a few North African countries, and spans Western Asia as well . The region is diverse topographically, encapsulating mountain ranges, mountains, and even desert, river valleys and key water bodies like the Persian Gulf, Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea.

It is renowned for being the cradle of civilization, which is where empires began to emerge, marking vital milestones in human history. Given that civilization began here, the Middle East is the birthplace of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity which makes it core to world culture . In recent times the Middle East is known for its political landscape which is termed as entangled, due to the conflicts and alliances forged throughout history, profoundly influencing global security and international relations, thus deeming it globally important .

The region also possesses a rich economical essence due to its vast reserves oil which is of immense importance when it comes to the world's energy output. Thus, from a geopolitical standpoint, the Middle East is crucial for understanding global history as a whole along with culture due to its historical rich diversity.

The Middle East has remained a hotbed of geopolitical conflict for a very long time due to its multifaceted historical, cultural, religious, and political intricacies. If one is to understand the current issues facing this part of the world, one must understand its history first. Civilization emerged and developed in the region referred to as Mesopotamia, which has served as a melting pot of various cultures and religions for many years. At the same time however, it has served as a theater of warring empires, colonial opportunists and competing regional hegemonic interests, alongside ingrained and unaddressed grievances.

The history of the region is marked in particular by the impact of European colonialism and imperialism. The arbitrary borders constructed by colonialists completely omitted ethnic, religious and tribal identities and created huge population divides. In 1961 Britain and France made the Sykes-Picot agreement, where they divided the Middle East into areas they controlled this change lead to problems like trick rule, anti colonial protest and the rise of Nationalist movement is one of the longest running problem in the Middle East. In 1948 after Israel become an independent country many Palestinian were force to leave their home these started a violent conflict Our Land that still continues today.

The Middle East carries with it a unique volatility that stems due to a variety of differing reason as political, social, economic, and outside forces bound together. Centrally, nearly all the countries in this region are managed by deeply rooted authoritarian governments that have came to power through repression and corruption. This enables little participation in democratic activities and promotes popular discontent along with revolts like the Arab Spring. Muslim sects which include Sunnis and Shiites and Arabs, Kurds, and Persians form deep divisions and further exacerbate the situation. They have also resulted in proxy wars particularly with the Saudi's and Iranian's fighting amongst themselves pouring oil into the fires of the Yemen and Syrian wars. The region does not lack oil which makes the country very rich, but high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality prevails especially among the youth. This has dire consequence on the social stability of this middle east region. The

already fragile states that exist in the area face further instability due to foreign intervention by Western and local powers which extend the disputes in Iraq, Libya and Syria. The fundamental cause for the region's violence stems from the challenges created after the breakdown of foundational rule in some states which leave ever-present power voids that are taken advantage of by extremist outfit. The environmental focus of the region does not lack issues either as is the case in Syria which faced debilitating drought prior to the civil war. In addition, there are some longstanding disputes coupled with the one involving the Israeli Palestine region that contribute to the volatility of the area.

The United Nations established in 1947 , an international organizations with 153 members core principles is to promote peace and security around the world and maintain peaceful relations between member states.

The UN has been involved in the Middle East since the beginning. In 1947 the UN General Assembly passed a resolution to divide Palestine into two parts one for Arab and one for Jews this lead to the creation of Israel and started many years of conflict in the region. The first action showed how the UN tried to shape politics in the area and help for the Palestinian issue which is still a big problem today. After the 6 day war in 1967 the UN Security Council passed resolution 242.called for Israel to give back the land it took and for all countries in the region to live in peace it also supported the idea of creating to separate states for Israel and Palestine.

This research tries to answer important questions that how the UN help to solve conflict and bring lasting piece in the Middle East which tools and method they use and what big problems does the UN face in reaching it goals and what can be done to make the UN stronger in the future?

### **3. Literature Review**

Xi Nan's study the UNTSO highlighting it function in monitoring ceasefire and negotiation among the conflicts parties . It also tells that the challenges faced by UN such as limited authority, resource and the historical complex conflicts . He also highlights the adoption like multi cooperation to resolve conflicts and also to make the UN effective.

Azure Strategy (25) in this article argue for the significant reforms within the UN to enhance peacekeeping operations in the middle east. This article talk about the veto states in UN roles and the reforms in UN to better understand the landscapes in middle east region.

Shorouk Express (2025): The Role of the United Nations in Conflict Resolution in the Arabic World in this article examines the role of UN in mediation and diplomatic efforts in Arabs and Highlight the challenges such as political, geopolitical, and insufficient cooperation from member states also suggesting the local dynamics and cooperation with civil society for the UN success.

The United Nations and the Middle East: In this article the United Nations has played a important role in the middle east since 1947, notably through its 1947 partition plan that aim to resolve the arab and Israeli conflict by establishing a separate land for Jewish and arab states. The plan face the rejection from Arabs and cause the war between arab and Israel's later UN established force called UNEF. Despite these conflicts the role of UN is hindered by geopolitical complexities and new conflicts.

Libya civil war: World leaders committed to peace UN chief says in this article Antonio Guterres has said that major powers are fully committed to a peaceful resolution in Libya after a submit in Berlin world leaders have pledged not to interfere in Libya's on going complete civil complete and has vowed to uphold a UN arm's embargo the conflict pits powerful General khalifa Haftar against the UN baked government of national Accord. But all both Libyan wearing side were present they did not meet.

#### 4. Frameworks Theoretical

Understanding the UN role in the middle east established the international relations theories in the middle east . **Liberal theory** provides a framework that international organizations like the UN can promote the cooperation, reduce anarchy, and help in conflict dissolving it provide a framework for dialogues, share norms ,economic cooperation's, and collective security mechanisms. According to this theory the UN work as a negotiations tool in middle east to promoting peace , security and deploying impartial forces.

By contrast to **Realism**, it asserts that the potential effectiveness of the UN is related to powerful member states and Great Power politics. Within the Middle East, is a complex region where the outside countries had a great interest these powers influence directly or indirectly for influence when the UN tries to maintain peace and security in middle east these powerful states or P5 states work as hurdle or obstacles sometime to gain their interest in middle east.

The constructivist thinking the UN is not powerful just because it use force. It is powerful because it makes actions seem fair, help in sharing stories and gets countries to share responsibility. It set rules for peoples to protect the civilians. It show that how the UN affects and how countries behave

These theoretical lenses provide a framework for analyzing why the UN acts, how it is constrained, and how its influence is perceived in the complex geopolitical landscape of the Middle East.

## **5. Historical Overview of UN Engagement in the Middle East**

The UN's history in the Middle East began almost immediately after its founding. The Palestine Question was one of the very first major issues on the UN's agenda, leading to the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) in 1947, which proposed the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. This was followed by the establishment of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in 1948, the first-ever UN peacekeeping operation, tasked with monitoring armistices between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Major regional crises subsequently drew further UN involvement. In 1956 during the Suez crisis the UN sent its first peace keeping force to help reduce fighting in 1967 after the six day war, the UN made resolution 242 in which divided the land between Arabs and Israel it is still very important resolution because it tries to bring peace. More fight in 1973 lead to the creation of UN disengagement observer force in the Golan Heights and the UNEF 2 to watch over ceasefire.

During Lebanon war in (1975-1990) the UN set up the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in 1978. In the Iran- Iraq War UN help to talk and led resolution 598. In the Gulf

War (1990-1991) the UN allowed force to stop Iraq from staying in Kuwait later worked on sanctions, removing weapons and giving aid to Iraq people.

This history show the active role of UN in the Middle East, and reacting to new problems and changing its work to deal new conflicts

## **6. Key UN Instruments for Peace and Security**

The UN established a diverse array of instruments to promote peace and security, each designed for different phases and types of conflict:

**Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation:** The preventive and mediation is a efforts which try to stop fight before they become worse. If fight starts they help stop it fro spreading. This is this is done through talk mediation or legal methods like courts. UN Secretary General using there influence and sending special envoy to help. These envoys work in private behind the scene and help to build trust between fighting sides and their supporters . UN envoy have tried to help with peace in Syria and Yemen .they also help with Taif agreement ended Lebanese Civil War.

**Peacekeeping Operations:** peacekeeping operations are UN missions that help keep peace in areas affected by conflicts. The following rules that follow during the operations like all parties agree to the Mission the UN must stay neutral and the forces only use for self defense. Peacekeepers help by making sure peace agreement are followed, watching over ceasefires, protecting civilians and supports the fair elections. There have been some well-known peacekeeping missions that done this work are:

**UNTSO (1948-Present):** Longest mission, Monitoring armistice agreements in the Levant,

**UNDOF (1974-Present):** Supervising the disengagement of Israeli and Syrian forces in the Golan Heights, maintaining a buffer zone.

**UNIFIL (1978-Present):** Operating in Southern Lebanon, primarily tasked with ensuring the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security, and assisting the Lebanese government in asserting its authority. Its mandate was significantly expanded after the 2006 conflict.

**MINURSO** (1991-Present): Though geographically peripheral to the core Middle East, it monitors the ceasefire and organizes a referendum for self-determination in Western Sahara, a territory with strong historical and political links to the wider Arab world. These missions have often been successful in maintaining calm and preventing escalations, though they are limited by their mandates and the political will of the parties involved.

**Peacebuilding:** Peace building is about helping countries recover after a war or conflict and make sure peace remains for long time. It works by fixing the main problem that caused the conflict and try to stop it from happening again. This includes improving government, fixing law and institution, supporting the economic, protecting human rights and helping people forgive and move forward. In Iraq the UN assistance mission for Iraq was set up in 2003 to help with political talks, elections, human rights and similar. These things also happen in other middle east countries for a peaceful environment.

**Humanitarian Assistance and Protection of Civilians:** In the Middle East where many conflicts are happening UN agencies are very important for helping people in danger, providing aid. Like OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF and the World Food Program provide food, shelter, medical care and other support to millions who have lost their homes or face hunger. The wars in Syria and Yemen are two of the biggest crises and the UN team are working hard there even though they face big problems like lack of money to reach areas in dangerous conditions. The UN also focuses on protecting civilians during war that means making sure all sides in a war follow international rules to keep innocent people safe.

## **7. Critiques and Challenges of UN Effectiveness**

Despite its extensive engagement and array of instruments, the UN's effectiveness in the Middle East is subject to significant critiques and faces persistent challenges:

**Council Veto Power:** In the Syrian conflict, Russia and China often use their veto power to stop or weaken the action of the UN. They block the UN responses.

**Lack of Member State Compliance and Political Will:** Many countries do not always follow UN decisions. Even when UN is agree but the countries don't support ,money, or help. This become worse when countries in the region prioritize own interest.

**Regional Dynamics Complex:** The middle East has many deep problems like fight between Sunni and Shiite group, war between Iran and Arabia and the n9n state actors like ISIS cause more violence.

**Resource Constraints:** The UN also has a money problem limited resources also a challenges in effective action speed. It's peacekeeping and aid work often don't get enough funds or people to do everything that is needed.

This challenges and limitations slowdown the speed and effectiveness of UN in struggling to maintain peacebuilding in middle east.

## **8. Results and Discussion**

The UN involvement in the middle east has been a mixed bag of relative successes and ongoing challenges. This is because many conflict in the region are incredibly tough to resolve, and thee are built in limitations to what international diplomacy can achieve. This sections also take a closer look at what the UN has done and see how effective it's been and broader implications in promoting peace in this region.

## **9. Analysis of Specific Case Studies/Conflicts**

Beyond UNIFIL the UN has also played a important role in the Lebanon post civil war recovery and political stability. UN special coordinator for Lebanon have supported political dialogue, National reconciliation and electoral processes. Following the 2006 conflict UNIFIL mandate was expanded to include assisting the Lebanese Armed forces highlighting a shift toward more robust peacekeeping and capacity building .

Effectiveness:UNIFIL has largely succeeded in maintaining calm along the blue line and preventing acceleration between Lebanon and Israel despite periodic tension. UNSCOL has provide critical political support and a neutral platform for dialogue. The UN overall engagement in Lebanon is cited as an example of successful long term stability maintenance.



## **10. Effectiveness of UN Instruments in the Middle East**

Overall, the UN is most effective in managing the symptoms of conflict (humanitarian crises, maintaining ceasefires) and providing a universal platform for dialogue. It is significantly less effective in imposing solutions or resolving conflicts where major powers or local actors resist political compromise, often due to perceived vital national interests or an unwillingness to concede military gains.

## **11. Opportunities for the UN**

Despite the challenges UN have following opportunities to enhance its effectiveness.

**Strengthening Regional Partnerships:** Collaborating more closely with regional organizations like the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation can leverage local knowledge and influence.

**Focus on Root Causes:** Addressing the underlying the main issues like social economic political and governance issue that fuel conflict and strengthen the Cooperation and work for long term peace building.

**Innovative Mediation Strategies:** using flexible and inclusive way to solve conflict by including more people like women and young people can help create long lasting peace.

**Reform of the Security Council:** Changing the rules of the UN security council in the future especially the veto power it help the UN act faster and more strongly in Crisis.

**Leveraging Technology:** Using new technology for watching situation, collecting information and communicating can make UN work faster and better.

## **12. Relevant Facts and Figures**

The UN has many peace keeping mission in the Middle East for example UNTSO since 1948 has around 150 observers, UNDOF in 1974 has about thousands of staff , UNIFIL since 1978 has around 10000 ,and MINURSO since 1991 has about 400 people. Their yearly budget range from 30 dollar millions to 500 millions. The United Nation also provide large amount of aid like in Syria where our 13 million people need help and millions or Refugees. In

Yaman over 21 million need aid there are over 4.5 million displaced people the. United nation often ask for billion in aid but receive much less.

The United Nations has passed important resolutions like Resolution 181 to partition Palestine Resolution 242 for Israel withdraw and resolution 338 For ceasefire other Resolution address Lebanon and Syria's conflicts. In the Middle East hosts million of refugees from wars in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Palestine, needing ongoing help from these agencies. The UN also support peacebuilding and development through projects in countries like Iraq and Lebanon.

Despite the huge efforts the UN is struggling with limited resources.

### **13.Final Recommendations**

The United Nations has played an important role in trying to bring peace and stability to the Middle East since it was created. Following recommendations are crucial for the UN's effectiveness in promoting peace and security in middle East..

**Strengthen Diplomacy and Mediation Capacities:** the United Nation should improve its ability to stop conflicts early. This means using better warning system sending experienced mediators quickly and using private talk to help solve problem. The UN should also support talk between the countries in the region to build trust and solve problem before they grow into bigger conflict.

**Address Security Council Reform:** The UN must keep pushing for changing in security council, to limit the veto power during the serious issues. It help the UN in taking stronger actions in conflicts like in Syria.

**Enhance Peacekeeping Mandates and Resources:** Enhance the peacekeeping missions sets clear and realistic goals, with enough money and supplies to do their job well. More focus on protecting civilians and ready to handle the unusual and changing threats.

**Integrate Peacebuilding with Peacemaking and Humanitarian Aid:** after a conflict ends, it is important to work on long term peace by fixing the main problems that cause the conflict. This includes fair government, justice, reconciliation and helping the economy

recover to success the UN its partner need to work together for many years with steady funding.

**Foster Stronger Regional Partnerships:** The UN should deepen its collaboration with regional organizations such as the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, using knowledge and influence to reach shared goals. It is important to add the local group such as civil society, women's society, and youth society in peace efforts.

## 14. Conclusion

The United Nations has played a very important role in trying to bring peace to the Middle East. It has helped stop wars given aid to millions and offered a platform for talk. But the UN faced many challenges like conflicts between the powerful countries, regional rivalries and limited resources. Problem such as veto power in the security council often stop stronger actions. Even with this issues UN remains essential providing hope and help to the people in Crisis. To succeed in the future it must keep improving its peace efforts and address the root causes of conflicts for long lasting peace in the region.

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