

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** plays a pivotal role in international peacekeeping and conflict resolution. As one of the most prominent organs of the United Nations, the UNSC is tasked with maintaining global peace and security through mechanisms such as resolutions, interventions, and mediations¹. Despite its essential role, questions surrounding its effectiveness have persisted, particularly in the context of prolonged conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. This conflict is widely regarded as one of the most enduring and complex challenges to global stability, making it a crucial test of the UNSC's ability to resolve international crises².

The **UNSC's involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict** began shortly after the creation of Israel in 1948. Rooted in disputes over territory, religion, and political sovereignty, the conflict quickly garnered global attention³. Over the decades, the Council has passed numerous resolutions designed to de-escalate tensions and promote a peaceful two-state solution, which envisions Israel and a sovereign Palestinian state coexisting peacefully⁴. Resolutions like **UNSC 242 (1967)** and **UNSC 2334 (2016)** exemplify these efforts. Resolution 242 emphasized Israel's withdrawal from territories occupied during the Six-Day War and called for respect for all states' sovereignty, while Resolution 2334 condemned Israeli settlements as violations of international law and impediments to peace⁵. However, the lack of enforcement and implementation of these resolutions has led to growing skepticism about the Council's relevance in addressing deeply entrenched disputes⁶.

A primary obstacle to the UNSC's effectiveness in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the political dynamics among its **five permanent members (P5)**: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States⁷. These nations wield veto power, often leading to gridlocks when national interests or alliances are at stake. The United States has consistently used its veto to block resolutions perceived as critical of Israel⁸. This unwavering support for Israel, rooted in geopolitical, strategic, and historical alliances, has led to accusations of bias within the Council, undermining its credibility as an impartial mediator⁹. Such partisanship not only exacerbates the crisis but also highlights the limitations of the UNSC in managing conflicts where powerful members are directly involved.

Another significant challenge is the **inherent complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict**. At its core are territorial disputes, including contentious claims over Jerusalem, a city of profound religious and historical significance to both Israelis and Palestinians¹⁰. Competing national and religious identities further deepen the divide, making the conflict multidimensional and resistant to straightforward solutions¹¹. While the UNSC has endorsed the two-state solution as the most viable path to peace, disagreements among its members and the parties involved have hindered progress. Key issues such as the demarcation of borders, security arrangements, and the rights of Palestinian refugees remain unresolved¹².

The presence of non-state actors like Hamas further complicates the situation¹³. Hamas, which governs the Gaza Strip, rejects Israel's right to exist and has been involved in armed confrontations, adding a layer of hostility and insecurity that undermines peace efforts. These

complexities demand a nuanced and coordinated approach, but the UNSC has struggled to present a unified front due to internal divisions and external pressures.

Despite these obstacles, the **UNSC's role remains indispensable** in framing international peace efforts and providing a legal and diplomatic foundation for negotiations¹⁴. Even when unenforced, its resolutions establish norms and guidelines that shape the discourse around conflict resolution. UNSC resolutions have been integral to initiatives such as the **Oslo Accords** and other peace talks, lending legitimacy to these processes¹⁵. However, the gap between the UNSC's ambitious mandate and its actual impact highlights the need for reforms. These could include changes to its decision-making processes, mechanisms to prevent the abuse of veto power, and enhanced enforcement capabilities to ensure that resolutions are implemented effectively¹⁶.

Summarily, while the UNSC has played a central role in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its efforts have been constrained by political biases, structural limitations, and the intrinsic complexity of the dispute¹⁷. The Council's resolutions and interventions, though vital, often fall short of achieving lasting peace due to a lack of implementation and enforcement. To enhance its effectiveness, the UNSC must address internal divisions, prioritize impartiality, and develop robust mechanisms to bridge the gap between its aspirations and practical outcomes¹⁸. Only through such measures can it hope to fulfill its mandate of maintaining global peace and security in one of the world's most challenging conflicts.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The primary issue this study seeks to address is the evident disconnect between the UNSC's mandate and its practical effectiveness in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the Council has been actively involved in addressing this dispute through resolutions and peacekeeping efforts, the conflict persists, with significant human, social, and economic consequences¹⁹. This raises critical questions about the UNSC's ability to fulfill its role in maintaining global peace and security.

The geopolitical interests of the permanent members have significantly influenced the UNSC's interventions in the conflict. The U.S.'s strategic alliance with Israel has often resulted in the vetoing of resolutions that call for actions against Israeli settlement activities or military operations²⁰. This has not only hindered the Council's ability to act decisively but has also fostered perceptions of bias, diminishing its credibility in the eyes of the international community.

Additionally, the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms has further limited the UNSC's impact. Resolutions such as UNSC 242 and UNSC 338, which emphasize the need for withdrawal from occupied territories and negotiations for a peaceful settlement, remain largely unimplemented²¹. The inability to translate these resolutions into actionable outcomes highlights the structural and operational weaknesses of the UNSC in addressing protracted conflicts.

The involvement of multiple actors, including regional powers and non-state entities, adds another layer of complexity. Arab states like Egypt and Jordan, which have engaged in peace treaties with Israel, often have differing approaches from those of countries like Iran, which supports groups such as Hamas²². These divergent interests among regional actors, coupled with the UNSC's inability to reconcile them, have further stalled peace efforts.

Moreover, the humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories, exacerbated by blockades, settlement expansions, and recurring violence, poses significant challenges to the UNSC's peacekeeping mission. The deteriorating living conditions in Gaza and the West Bank underscore the urgent need for effective interventions²³. Yet, the Council's inability to address these issues comprehensively has contributed to skepticism about its role in fostering sustainable peace.

This study will explore these challenges in-depth, focusing on the UNSC's involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to evaluate its effectiveness, limitations, and potential avenues for reform. This research aims to provide insights into the structural and operational changes required to enhance its role in conflict resolution and peacekeeping by examining the disconnect between the UNSC's mandate and its outcomes.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to evaluate the challenges and effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council in resolving conflicts and maintaining peace, with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The specific objectives are to:

- i. identify on the issues relating to the P5 veto power in the conflict (basically talking about the power politics the five permanent members play when it comes to their alliances)
- ii. assess the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council's actions in conflict resolution and peacekeeping in this conflict.
- iii. assess the impact of resolutions issued by the United Nations Security Council related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and assess their impact.
- iv. identify the major challenges the UNSC faces in implementing effective peacekeeping measures in this ongoing conflict.

1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- I. How does the veto power of the P5 influence the United Nations Security Council's response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly in relation to power politics and international alliances?
- II. How effective is the United Nations Security Council in responding to conflict resolution and peacekeeping in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- III. What impact have the resolutions by the UNSC had on peacekeeping in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- IV. What are the major challenges faced by the UNSC in implementing effective peacekeeping operations in this conflict?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study holds significance on multiple levels. First, it contributes to academic literature by providing a detailed analysis of the UNSC's role in one of the most enduring conflicts of the

modern era, offering insights into the effectiveness and limitations of the Council's peacekeeping and conflict resolution efforts. This research also enhances understanding of the complexities that arise when global organizations intervene in regional disputes with historical and political roots by focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Additionally, this study has practical implications for policymakers, diplomats, and international organizations, as it seeks to uncover the factors limiting the UNSC's effectiveness. Understanding these limitations could inform potential reforms within the UNSC or inspire new approaches to conflict resolution that better align with the unique challenges of protracted conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

For stakeholders, including governments, non-governmental organizations, and citizens affected by the conflict, this research provides a comprehensive overview of the UNSC's actions, highlighting areas where international intervention has succeeded and where it has fallen short. Ultimately, this study contributes to ongoing dialogues on global governance, peacekeeping, and conflict resolution, encouraging a reassessment of strategies to achieve sustainable peace.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study will focus specifically on the United Nations Security Council's involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from its early stages to recent developments. While recognizing the contributions of other UN bodies, such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and various humanitarian agencies, the study will concentrate on the UNSC's role, given its primary responsibility for international peace and security.

The research will explore both historical and contemporary dimensions of the UNSC's interventions, analyzing specific resolutions and peacekeeping measures and assessing their

effectiveness. Geographically, the study will center on Israel and the Palestinian territories but will consider relevant influences from key regional and international actors whose involvement impacts the UNSC's peacekeeping efforts.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

This study on the conflict resolution and peacekeeping interventions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is subject to several limitations. Firstly, the analysis relies heavily on secondary sources such as UN resolutions, academic literature, and policy reports, which may present varying perspectives and degrees of bias. Secondly, the politically sensitive nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict means that access to up-to-date, verifiable field data—especially from affected areas—is limited, making it difficult to assess the full impact of UNSC interventions on the ground.

Additionally, the study does not capture the full complexity of internal political dynamics within Israel, Palestine, or among UNSC permanent members, which significantly influence decision-making and policy implementation. Lastly, the evolving nature of the conflict may render some of the findings time-bound, as new developments could shift the strategic interests and approaches of international actors, including the UN.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

- Conflict Resolution: Efforts, interventions, or processes aimed at resolving or reducing the underlying causes of a conflict and achieving peace.
- Peacekeeping: Actions taken by international organizations, particularly the UN, to maintain peace and security, often involving the deployment of forces to conflict zones.

- UN Security Council (UNSC): The main UN body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, empowered to issue binding resolutions and impose sanctions.
- Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A protracted territorial, political, and ideological conflict between the State of Israel and the Palestinian people, primarily over land in the Middle East.
- Resolution: A formal statement or decision adopted by the UNSC aimed at addressing specific aspects of international conflicts and promoting peace.

End notes

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Concept of Conflict

The concept of conflict is complex and has been defined and interpreted through various disciplinary lenses, including sociology, political science, and international relations. Each perspective offers distinct insights into the origins, nature, and dynamics of conflict, reflecting the complexity of human interactions and societal structures. At its core, conflict can be understood as a disagreement or struggle between parties over perceived or actual incompatible goals, values, or resources¹. However, this simplistic definition fails to capture the nuances and depth of conflict as a phenomenon that transcends individual disputes to encompass broader societal and international dynamics.

From a sociological perspective, conflict is often viewed as an inevitable aspect of human interaction, arising from structural inequalities and competing interests within societies. Sociologists like Karl Marx emphasized class conflict as a driving force of historical change, attributing societal tensions to the inherent contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in capitalist systems. This view suggests that conflict is not merely a disruption of order but a necessary and transformative process. While Marx's theory provides a compelling explanation for socioeconomic disparities, Critique studies argue that it oversimplifies the diverse causes of conflict by focusing narrowly on economic factors. Moreover, it fails to account for non-

material dimensions of conflict, such as identity, culture, and ideology, which often play significant roles in modern disputes.

Political science approaches conflict through the lens of power dynamics, governance, and state behavior. Political theorists often define conflict as a struggle for power and authority, whether within states or between them. This perspective underscores the role of political systems and institutions in mitigating or exacerbating conflicts. Authoritarian regimes may suppress overt conflict through coercion, but this often leads to latent tensions that erupt when the regime weakens². Conversely, democratic systems, while providing channels for peaceful conflict resolution, are not immune to polarization and divisiveness. It is argued that it tends to prioritize state-centric views, neglecting the agency of non-state actors and grassroots movements in shaping conflicts.

In the field of international relations, the concept of conflict is analyzed through various theoretical frameworks, each offering unique interpretations of its causes and implications. Realism, one of the dominant theories, posits that conflict is an inevitable outcome of the anarchic nature of the international system, where states, as rational actors, prioritize their survival and interests in a zero-sum environment. Realists argue that competition for power and resources drives conflicts, particularly when states perceive threats to their security or dominance. While realism provides a pragmatic lens for understanding conflicts between states, it has been criticized for its pessimistic outlook and inability to address the potential for cooperation and mutual gain in international relations.

Liberalism, in contrast, emphasizes the role of institutions, interdependence, and norms in reducing the likelihood of conflict. Liberals argue that international organizations, economic integration, and democratic governance create conditions for peace by fostering cooperation and mutual accountability among states³. While this theory highlights the importance of diplomacy and rule-based systems, Critique studies contend that it underestimates the persistence of power politics and the impact of non-state actors in shaping global conflicts. Moreover, liberalism's optimism about the transformative power of institutions often falters in the face of intractable conflicts rooted in historical grievances and asymmetrical power dynamics.

Constructivism offers yet another perspective, focusing on the role of ideas, identities, and social constructs in shaping conflicts. Constructivists argue that conflicts are not solely the result of material interests but are also driven by perceptions, beliefs, and norms that define how actors view themselves and others. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be analyzed through the lens of competing national identities and narratives, highlighting the role of historical memory and cultural significance in fueling tensions⁴. While constructivism provides valuable insights into the non-material dimensions of conflict, it has been criticized for its abstract nature and lack of concrete policy prescriptions.

These theoretical perspectives illustrate the diverse ways in which conflict can be understood and analyzed. However, each approach has its limitations, reflecting the complexity and multi-dimensionality of conflict as a phenomenon. Realism's emphasis on power struggles may overlook the potential for normative and cooperative solutions, while liberalism's focus on institutional

frameworks risks ignoring the entrenched inequalities that hinder their effectiveness. Constructivism, although illuminating the subjective aspects of conflict, often struggles to translate its insights into actionable strategies for conflict resolution.

Ultimately, the definitions and theoretical perspectives on conflict underscore its pervasive and evolving nature. Whether viewed through the lens of structural inequalities, political power dynamics, or competing identities, conflict remains a central feature of human societies and international relations.

2.1.1.2 Types and Dynamics of Conflicts

The types and dynamics of conflicts vary significantly, reflecting the diverse contexts in which they arise and the factors that drive their escalation. Broadly categorized into interpersonal, intergroup, and international conflicts, each type offers unique insights into the mechanisms of disagreement and dispute resolution. Understanding these categories requires a critical examination of their underlying causes, including cultural, economic, and political factors, which interact in complex ways to shape the trajectory of conflicts. However, such categorization, while useful for analytical purposes, often oversimplifies the fluid and overlapping nature of conflicts, which may transition or manifest simultaneously across these levels⁵.

Interpersonal conflict occurs between individuals and often arises from personal grievances, misunderstandings, emotional tensions, or competing interests. At its root, it is shaped by the complexity of human emotions, poor communication, and differences in expectations, values, or needs. These conflicts are common in everyday relationships—between family members,

colleagues, friends, or even strangers—and while they are typically viewed as less severe or threatening than larger-scale social or political disputes, they can still carry deep emotional weight and long-lasting consequences. When left unaddressed, interpersonal conflicts can escalate, intensify, and create divisions that affect not only the individuals directly involved but also the wider social circles around them. For instance, a small disagreement in a workplace can evolve into a toxic environment that affects team productivity, staff morale, and mental well-being. Similarly, unresolved tension within families can damage lifelong relationships, create emotional trauma, and disrupt the social stability of the household. While various methods have been developed to manage these disputes—such as active listening, mediation, conflict coaching, or counseling—the effectiveness of these tools often depends on the willingness of the parties involved and the presence of a neutral, supportive environment. However, critics argue that placing too much focus on interpersonal techniques can overlook the deeper, structural forces that often fuel these tensions⁶. Conflicts between individuals do not happen in a vacuum. In many cases, they are symptoms of broader social or economic inequalities, cultural traditions that reinforce power dynamics, or institutional failures that create pressure and competition.

Workplace conflicts between staff and management may reflect unequal treatment, lack of recognition, or rigid hierarchies, rather than just personal misunderstandings. Likewise, family disputes may be intensified by gender roles, generational expectations, or economic stress. Addressing interpersonal conflict purely through behavioural change or emotional management, while important, may therefore fall short if the underlying causes are systemic and go

unchallenged. It is also worth noting that certain cultural or societal norms can limit how people express themselves or resolve conflicts, often pushing people to suppress emotions or accept unfair treatment to maintain harmony or respect authority. This can lead to resentment, emotional distress, and passive-aggressive behaviour, which eventually explode into open conflict. Therefore, it is essential to understand interpersonal conflicts not simply as isolated clashes between individuals, but as reflections of the larger social environment in which people live. By doing so, conflict resolution efforts can move beyond surface-level fixes and instead work toward creating more equitable, communicative, and emotionally safe spaces. Real resolution, in this sense, involves both personal transformation and broader societal change—acknowledging that individual disputes are often mirrors of the world around us and can only be truly resolved when the root causes, both emotional and structural, are addressed with honesty and care.

Intergroup conflict refers to disputes between different social, ethnic, religious, or cultural groups within a society and is often driven by competition for power, status, resources, and recognition. Unlike interpersonal conflict, which focuses on individuals, intergroup conflict is rooted in collective identity and shared narratives, making it more complex, intense, and often more difficult to resolve. These conflicts are usually shaped by long histories of perceived injustice, inequality, or marginalization, where one group sees itself as being disadvantaged or oppressed by another⁷. In societies with deep economic divisions, certain ethnic or religious groups may feel excluded from political influence or economic opportunity, which creates resentment and fuels antagonism. When access to education, employment, or land is perceived as being controlled by a dominant

group, it intensifies feelings of exclusion and victimhood in others. Additionally, cultural differences such as language, religion, or traditions may act as further dividing lines, especially when one group's way of life is seen as being favoured by state institutions while others are sidelined or repressed. These tensions can lead to stereotypes, mistrust, and collective blame, which reinforce hostile attitudes and reduce the chances of meaningful dialogue or cooperation. However, some scholars have criticized traditional theories of intergroup conflict for focusing too heavily on identity as a fixed concept, arguing that this essentializes groups as if they are permanently opposed or culturally incompatible.

In reality, identities are often fluid, shaped by context, politics, and social interactions. Overemphasizing identity in conflict analysis can lead to rigid thinking that overlooks how economic policies, institutional failures, or political manipulation can provoke group-based tensions. It also risks portraying groups as naturally prone to conflict when, in fact, many intergroup disputes are triggered or sustained by power struggles, historical manipulation, or deliberate efforts by elites to maintain control by dividing people. Another challenge in resolving intergroup conflict is that peace processes often concentrate on surface-level settlements—such as signing treaties, forming coalitions, or organizing public reconciliations—without truly tackling the deep structural causes like poverty, discrimination, or unequal access to justice. These agreements may create temporary calm but do little to address the grievances that caused the conflict in the first place. When communities continue to live under the same conditions of inequality or exclusion, the risk of renewed violence or hostility remains high. Critics argue that

conflict resolution must go beyond creating peace on paper; it must involve a genuine transformation of social relations, including fair resource distribution, recognition of past harms, inclusive governance, and long-term investment in trust-building. Without these deeper efforts, intergroup conflict is likely to re-emerge, often more bitter and more entrenched than before. Therefore, understanding intergroup conflict requires both a close look at how people define their group identities and a deeper investigation into the broader systems of power and inequality that shape those identities and pit them against each other. Only by addressing both identity and structural injustice can societies begin to move toward lasting peace.

International conflict is the most complex and far-reaching form of conflict because it involves not just individuals or groups within one society, but entire nations, states, or key international actors whose actions can influence global peace, security, and development. These types of conflicts can result in widespread destruction, humanitarian crises, economic instability, and long-term political consequences that stretch beyond national borders. International conflicts are often driven by a mixture of political, economic, military, and ideological factors that combine to create tension between states⁸. In many cases, states act based on national interests, aiming to protect their sovereignty, expand influence, or maintain control over territories and resources. Disputes over land borders, rivers, islands, or seas have historically led to armed confrontations between states, especially when these territories carry strategic or economic value, such as oil fields or trade routes. The pursuit of such interests usually reflects the competitive and anarchic structure of the international system, where there is no overarching authority to enforce global rules effectively.

In this system, power becomes the main tool for advancing or defending state interests, which can fuel rivalries and increase the likelihood of armed conflict.

What further complicates international conflict today is the increasing involvement of non-state actors in shaping and escalating disputes. Unlike traditional wars that were fought between armies of sovereign states, modern international conflicts often feature armed groups, terrorist networks, and multinational corporations that influence the course of events across borders. For example, powerful multinational companies may support or resist government policies based on their business interests, sometimes influencing international relations through lobbying or economic pressure. Similarly, terrorist groups or ideological movements can provoke or prolong international disputes by carrying out transnational attacks or spreading political agendas that challenge existing power structures. These actors make it harder for states to control or predict conflict dynamics, as their motivations, loyalties, and methods are often different from those of nation-states. The growing presence of these non-state actors also raises questions about accountability and the ability of international institutions to manage such complex forms of conflict.

Economic competition is another major cause of international conflict, especially when it involves vital resources such as oil, water, rare minerals, or trade routes. When countries feel that their access to these resources is threatened by the actions or policies of others, they may resort to aggressive diplomacy or even military action to secure their interests. This form of conflict can also be triggered by economic sanctions, trade wars, or currency disputes, which although not

always violent, can cause significant harm to populations and destabilize regions. These economic tensions are often linked to political ambitions, as countries try to strengthen their global position by weakening rivals or forming exclusive alliances. The balance of economic power thus becomes a critical factor in international politics, shaping alliances, rivalries, and policy decisions that can either ease or inflame conflict.

Cultural and ideological differences also play a significant role in shaping international conflicts. Throughout history, many wars have been justified on the basis of defending a particular religion, ideology, or way of life. During the Cold War, for example, the ideological battle between capitalism and communism led to numerous proxy wars, where global powers like the United States and the Soviet Union supported opposing sides in conflicts across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Today, ideological divides still exist, whether in the form of religious extremism, nationalist movements, or competing models of governance such as authoritarianism versus liberal democracy. These ideological differences can create mistrust and hostility between states, particularly when one country seeks to spread its values or political model to others. The danger lies in the tendency to demonize the "other," framing them as a threat to one's way of life or national identity, which can justify the use of force or intervention under the guise of moral duty or security needs.

While states often claim to act in the name of peace, security, or justice, critics argue that the real motivations behind international conflicts are rarely so noble. Rather, state leaders and institutions frequently prioritize their national interests over global cooperation or humanitarian concerns. This

is especially visible in how conflicts are framed in international forums or the media, where powerful countries often shape narratives to justify their actions while downplaying the suffering or rights of less powerful populations. The interests of ordinary people, especially those caught in the middle of conflict zones, are often ignored or treated as secondary. For instance, military interventions that are supposed to promote peace can end up causing displacement, human rights abuses, or long-term economic damage. The voices of those directly affected—refugees, women, children, and marginalized communities—are rarely given space in peace negotiations or decision-making processes. This one-sided approach to conflict not only deepens injustice but also makes long-term peace less likely, as the root causes of tension remain unaddressed.

International institutions such as the United Nations are supposed to play a key role in preventing and resolving international conflicts. However, their effectiveness is frequently questioned, especially when powerful member states use their influence to block or shape decisions in ways that suit their interests. For example, the veto power held by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council allows them to halt any resolution that goes against their national agenda, regardless of how urgent or popular the proposal may be among the wider international community. This selective use of veto power undermines the legitimacy and authority of the UN, making it appear biased or ineffective in handling some of the world's most pressing conflicts. In many cases, resolutions that could prevent further violence or hold aggressors accountable are watered down or completely blocked due to political disagreements among the powerful states. As a result, the UN is often criticized for failing to live up to its mission of promoting peace and protecting human rights.

There are also concerns about how international conflict resolution is carried out. Peace agreements are sometimes imposed without fully considering the local context or the needs of all stakeholders. External powers may push for quick settlements that favour political stability over justice, often allowing warlords or human rights violators to retain power in exchange for peace. This approach may end conflicts in the short term, but it can create new problems in the long run, such as weak governance, continued corruption, or the resurgence of violence. Moreover, international peacekeeping missions, though well-intentioned, sometimes lack the resources, training, or political backing needed to enforce peace effectively. In some cases, peacekeepers have even been accused of misconduct or bias, which further damages the credibility of international efforts.

International conflict is not only the most destructive form of conflict but also the most difficult to manage due to its wide-ranging causes and actors. Whether driven by geopolitical ambition, economic rivalry, cultural differences, or ideological clashes, these conflicts often reflect deep structural inequalities and a lack of genuine commitment to cooperative global governance. While international institutions exist to mediate and resolve such disputes, their ability to do so is limited by the power dynamics and competing interests of their member states. The dominance of state agendas, the influence of non-state actors, and the selective application of justice all combine to make international conflict a persistent and dangerous threat to global peace. If meaningful progress is to be made in preventing and resolving these conflicts, there needs to be a shift away from self-interest and towards inclusive, fair, and genuinely accountable mechanisms of global cooperation.

The dynamics of conflict, whether interpersonal, intergroup, or international, are influenced by the interplay of cultural, economic, and political factors. Cultural factors, such as identity, beliefs, and norms, often serve as both sources of conflict and potential bridges for resolution. However, cultural explanations can sometimes oversimplify the complexity of conflicts by reducing them to clashes of values or traditions, ignoring the material and political dimensions. Economic factors, including resource scarcity, income inequality, and competition for markets, are frequently cited as primary drivers of conflict. While these factors offer tangible explanations for disputes, they can also obscure the role of less visible forces, such as institutional biases or systemic inequities, that perpetuate conflict. Political factors, encompassing governance, policy decisions, and power struggles, are central to understanding the escalation and resolution of conflicts⁹. Yet, political analyses often face criticism for prioritizing elite perspectives and neglecting grassroots dynamics, which are equally critical in shaping conflict outcomes.

Summarily, categorizing conflicts into interpersonal, intergroup, and international levels provides a useful framework for understanding their nature and dynamics. However, this approach must be complemented by a recognition of the interconnectedness and fluidity of conflicts, which often transcend these boundaries.

2.1.2 Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is one of the most essential responsibilities of any international system that claims to promote peace, cooperation, and the protection of human dignity. In theory, it is a process that allows individuals, communities, and nations to settle disputes through peaceful means, rather

than through violence or coercion. In practice, however, conflict resolution is shaped by politics, power imbalances, national interests, and institutional weaknesses. The global community continues to face repeated failures in this regard, not because the idea of resolving conflicts peacefully is flawed, but because the structures and motivations behind it are often not committed to genuine resolution. When we talk about conflict resolution, especially within the framework of the United Nations, we are not just speaking about diplomacy—we are addressing the political will, the moral obligations, and the structural capacity to prevent, de-escalate, and settle conflicts in a just and lasting manner.

The concept of conflict resolution has long been presented as the civilized alternative to war. But this ideal loses its meaning when political agendas interfere with its application. The failure is not in the methods available—such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, or peacekeeping—but in how these methods are selectively used, delayed, or outright sabotaged depending on who is involved in the conflict. For powerful states and their allies, resolution often means silencing the weaker party, imposing favourable terms, or avoiding accountability. Meanwhile, for weaker or marginalized states, even seeking resolution becomes a battle for recognition, fairness, and basic human rights. This uneven playing field completely distorts what conflict resolution is meant to achieve.

A true resolution should be fair, inclusive, and aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict. But what we have instead is a system where symptoms are managed while the causes are ignored or reinforced. This is particularly true in protracted conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian

situation, where repeated international efforts have failed not because the conflict is beyond resolution, but because key players benefit from the ongoing instability. Conflict becomes profitable—politically, economically, or ideologically—and resolution is sidelined as a vague aspiration rather than an urgent priority. The continued failure of conflict resolution in such contexts is not accidental. It is structured, deliberate, and protected by institutions that refuse to change their approach.

Moreover, many of the world's most devastating conflicts are driven by historical injustice, colonial legacies, territorial disputes, and systemic inequality. A conflict cannot be resolved if these deeper realities are not confronted. Yet the international system often avoids these conversations. Instead of engaging with difficult truths, resolutions focus on short-term ceasefires or humanitarian access, while leaving long-term grievances untouched. This breeds mistrust among the affected populations, who see peace initiatives as superficial and insincere. A conflict that is paused but not solved will always erupt again. In that sense, many international resolutions are more like band-aids on open wounds—visible, perhaps useful in the moment, but incapable of healing the actual injury.

Another major problem is the role of power dynamics in shaping the outcome of conflict resolution efforts. The parties with more global influence tend to dictate the terms of the process. This means that the narratives, interests, and demands of powerful actors are prioritized over those of victims or less influential states. This distortion leads to what can be called “coerced peace” or “victor’s peace,” where the stronger party imposes conditions and the weaker party is forced to comply,

regardless of whether justice or reconciliation is truly achieved. Such settlements do not bring peace; they only enforce silence and resentment. Over time, this erodes the credibility of the entire international conflict resolution system.

Even within peacekeeping missions, we see a contradiction between mandate and reality. Peacekeepers are often sent into active conflict zones with unclear objectives, limited resources, and highly restrictive rules of engagement. When these missions fail—as they have in Rwanda, Bosnia, and elsewhere—the blame is placed on local dynamics, while ignoring the structural flaws in international decision-making. Peacekeeping, when not tied to a genuine political strategy for resolution, becomes nothing more than an international theatre, where presence is mistaken for progress and statistics for success. Real peace cannot be enforced; it must be built. And building peace means empowering local actors, addressing injustice, and ensuring accountability—all of which are often missing from current conflict resolution approaches.

The concept of neutrality, often praised in conflict resolution, also requires a deeper critique. Neutrality in theory implies fairness and non-bias. But in practice, it can mean silence in the face of oppression or a refusal to call out aggression. When international actors claim neutrality while ignoring human rights violations, illegal occupations, or disproportionate violence, they are not being neutral—they are being complicit. Conflict resolution that avoids taking moral positions is not peacebuilding, but peace-washing. It allows injustice to be preserved under the guise of diplomacy. True resolution demands moral courage, not passive neutrality.

Moreover, the political institutions responsible for global conflict resolution—especially the United Nations Security Council—are themselves plagued by bias, outdated structures, and elite control. The very body that is supposed to be the guardian of global peace is paralyzed by veto power and political alliances. This makes the idea of international justice deeply fragile. If the institution mandated to resolve conflicts cannot function independently or fairly, then where can people turn? This institutional failure fuels cynicism and delegitimizes international engagement. People begin to question whether the global system serves peace or simply maintains order for the powerful.

Conflict resolution also requires cultural sensitivity, historical awareness, and local ownership. Too often, foreign mediators or international organizations impose frameworks and timelines that do not reflect the realities on the ground. This top-down approach often fails because it ignores the voices, values, and needs of the communities most affected by the conflict. Local actors are sidelined, while foreign experts dictate terms. This is not a resolution—it is occupation by diplomacy. For peace to last, it must come from the inside out, not the outside in. But the global system remains largely incapable of listening to, let alone empowering, the people who actually live in the shadow of conflict.

In situations of deep division, conflict resolution must also be seen as a long-term process. The idea that peace can be achieved through a single agreement, resolution, or negotiation is naïve. Real resolution involves healing, reconciliation, justice, and sustained dialogue. It requires addressing trauma, rebuilding institutions, and creating mechanisms for accountability and inclusion. Yet most peace processes are rushed, underfunded, or designed to deliver quick political wins rather than lasting transformation. The result is fragile peace, vulnerable to

collapse at the first sign of tension. Conflict resolution must be understood not as an event, but as a continuous commitment.

Another often overlooked factor is the psychological dimension of conflict. Deep-rooted conflicts create fear, hatred, and suspicion among communities. These emotions cannot be legislated away by political agreements. Conflict resolution must therefore include emotional and social repair—trust-building, truth-telling, and justice mechanisms that allow people to see each other as human again. Without this emotional repair, even the most technically sound peace agreement will fail. Yet international efforts rarely invest in this aspect of resolution. They prioritize formal processes over informal realities, missing the human side of peace.

In light of all this, one must ask: is the global system truly committed to resolving conflicts, or merely managing them? The answer, more often than not, is the latter. Conflict management is cheaper, easier, and less politically costly. It allows powerful states to maintain their influence while appearing to care about peace. But it comes at a high cost for those who live in conflict zones. These communities deserve more than management—they deserve resolution, justice, and dignity.

Conflict resolution is not just about ending violence. It is about creating conditions where peace can be sustained, where justice can be served, and where all parties feel heard, respected, and secure. The failure of current systems to deliver this vision is not due to lack of knowledge or tools, but due to a lack of genuine political will and ethical leadership. Unless the international community rethinks its priorities, addresses its structural biases, and centres the voices of those most affected, conflict resolution will remain an illusion, promised in speeches, denied in

practice. The world does not lack the means to resolve conflict; it lacks the honesty and courage to do it right.

2.1.2.1 Approaches to Conflict Resolution

Approaches to conflict resolution have evolved significantly, reflecting the complex and diverse nature of disputes across interpersonal, intergroup, and international levels. At the core of these approaches lies the pursuit of a sustainable solution that addresses the root causes of conflict while mitigating immediate tensions. Among the most widely recognized methods are negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and adjudication, each with its strengths, weaknesses, and contexts of application¹⁰. However, the dichotomy between peaceful methods and coercive strategies raises significant debates about their effectiveness, ethical implications, and long-term outcomes, revealing both the promise and limitations of existing frameworks.

Negotiation is often hailed as the most direct and consensual approach to conflict resolution, involving parties coming together to discuss and resolve their differences without external intervention. It is argued that it empowers stakeholders to craft solutions tailored to their specific needs and interests, fostering a sense of ownership and mutual understanding. This process is particularly effective in scenarios where trust exists between parties and the power dynamics are relatively balanced. However, critique studies contend that negotiation can be inherently flawed when power asymmetries are stark, as weaker parties may feel coerced into accepting unfavourable terms simply to avoid escalation¹¹. Moreover, the absence of a neutral facilitator can lead to deadlocks, particularly when emotions run high or when one party adopts a rigid, zero-sum stance. While negotiation emphasizes dialogue and compromise, its success ultimately depends on the willingness and capacity of parties to engage in good faith, a condition often lacking in deeply polarized conflicts.

Mediation introduces a neutral third party to facilitate dialogue and assist conflicting parties in reaching a mutually acceptable solution. This approach is particularly valuable in bridging communication gaps and reframing disputes in ways that highlight shared interests rather than divisive issues. Advocates of mediation argue that it offers a less formal and more flexible alternative to arbitration or adjudication, often leading to quicker and less costly resolutions. Furthermore, the involvement of a mediator can help level the playing field by ensuring that weaker parties have their voices heard. However, mediation is not without its limitations. It is highlighted that the success of this approach hinges heavily on the mediator's impartiality and skill, which are not always guaranteed¹². Additionally, mediation lacks the binding authority of other methods, meaning that agreements reached through this process may be unenforceable if one party later reneges. While mediation underscores the value of collaborative problem-solving, it often struggles to address deep-seated structural inequalities or power imbalances that underpin many conflicts.

Arbitration offers a more formalized approach, wherein conflicting parties agree to present their case to an impartial arbitrator or panel, whose decision is typically binding. This method is praised for its ability to provide definitive resolutions, particularly in commercial or legal disputes where clarity and finality are paramount. Arbitration allows parties to avoid the protracted delays and public scrutiny often associated with court proceedings, making it an attractive option for those seeking efficiency and confidentiality. However, arbitration has its critics, particularly regarding the potential for bias in the selection of arbitrators, who may favour one party based on personal or professional affiliations¹³. Additionally, the binding nature of arbitration decisions can leave aggrieved parties feeling that their grievances were not fully addressed, especially when they perceive the process as overly rigid or technocratic. While

arbitration offers structure and authority, its effectiveness is often undermined by concerns over fairness, transparency, and inclusivity.

Adjudication, as the most formal approach to conflict resolution, involves presenting disputes to a judicial body or court for a legally binding decision. This method is lauded for its emphasis on legal principles and precedent, ensuring that resolutions are grounded in established norms and frameworks. Adjudication is particularly effective in cases involving complex legal questions or when parties seek enforceable outcomes. However, its reliance on formal legal systems can also be a significant drawback, as the process is often lengthy, costly, and inaccessible to marginalized groups¹⁴. It is also argued that adjudication's adversarial nature can exacerbate animosities rather than fostering reconciliation, particularly in interpersonal or community-level disputes. Furthermore, legal systems themselves are not immune to bias or political influence, raising questions about the impartiality and equity of adjudicated outcomes. While adjudication underscores the importance of rule-based conflict resolution, it often falls short in addressing the relational and emotional dimensions of disputes.

The debate between peaceful and coercive strategies in conflict resolution further complicates the landscape. Peaceful methods, such as those discussed above, emphasize dialogue, consent, and mutual respect, aiming to achieve sustainable outcomes that satisfy all parties. However, critique studies argue that these approaches can be overly idealistic, particularly in cases where one party acts in bad faith or refuses to negotiate. Coercive strategies, including sanctions, military intervention, or the imposition of settlements, are often presented as necessary alternatives in such scenarios. Coercion advocate studies argue that it can deter aggression, restore order, and enforce compliance with international norms¹⁵. However, the use of coercion is fraught with ethical dilemmas and practical challenges, as it often exacerbates tensions,

undermines trust, and perpetuates cycles of violence. Furthermore, coercive measures are frequently criticized for reflecting the interests of powerful actors rather than the needs of affected communities, raising questions about their legitimacy and long-term effectiveness.

Summarily, approaches to conflict resolution reflect a diverse array of strategies, each with its strengths, weaknesses, and contexts of application. While negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and adjudication offer valuable tools for resolving disputes, their effectiveness is often contingent on the dynamics of the conflict, the willingness of parties to engage, and the broader structural context.

2.1.2.2 Challenges to Effective Conflict Resolution

Effective conflict resolution remains an elusive goal in many situations, as various challenges undermine efforts to foster sustainable peace. Among these barriers, power asymmetry, lack of trust among conflicting parties, and external influences are particularly pronounced. These factors, often intertwined, create an environment where solutions are either delayed, inadequate, or unsustainable. Despite advances in conflict resolution methodologies, the complexity of these challenges calls for a critical examination of their nature and impact, using historical examples to illustrate the difficulties they pose.

Power asymmetry is one of the most significant challenges to effective conflict resolution, often skewing negotiations and creating a perception of unfairness. In many cases, the stronger party in a conflict uses its position to dictate terms, leaving the weaker party with little leverage or choice. This dynamic is evident in conflicts involving colonial powers and subjugated nations, where colonial authorities historically imposed terms that prioritized their interests while neglecting the aspirations and grievances of the colonized. Such imbalances often lead to outcomes that fail to

address the root causes of disputes, perpetuating cycles of resentment and unrest¹⁶. While some argue that power asymmetry can be mitigated through the involvement of neutral mediators or international organizations, critique studies contend that these entities themselves are often influenced by powerful states, thereby perpetuating inequities rather than resolving them. The inability to create a level playing field in negotiations undermines trust in the resolution process, further entrenching divisions.

The lack of trust among conflicting parties exacerbates the difficulties of conflict resolution, as mistrust erodes the foundation of constructive dialogue. When parties view each other as adversaries with irreconcilable goals, they are less likely to engage in meaningful negotiations or honour agreements. Historical examples, such as the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict, demonstrate how deep-seated mistrust can derail peace efforts despite numerous attempts at mediation. The inability to establish trust not only prolongs conflicts but also contributes to the recurrence of violence, as parties remain skeptical of each other's intentions¹⁷. It is argued that traditional conflict resolution approaches often fail to prioritize trust-building measures, focusing instead on superficial agreements that lack buy-in from stakeholders. While proponents of trust-building initiatives advocate for sustained efforts to address perceptions and grievances, these approaches require significant time and resources, which are often in short supply during volatile crises.

External influences further complicate conflict resolution by introducing additional interests and agendas that may not align with the needs of the conflicting parties. In many international conflicts, external factors, such as powerful states, regional organizations, or multinational corporations, seek to shape outcomes to serve their strategic, economic, or ideological objectives. During the Cold War, superpowers often supported opposing sides in regional conflicts, using

them as proxies to advance their global agendas. This external interference not only escalated conflicts but also undermined the autonomy of local stakeholders in determining their futures¹⁸. The involvement of external actors often shifts the focus away from the underlying issues at the heart of the conflict, as contended by several studies, leading to solutions that are more reflective of global power dynamics than local realities. Proponents of international involvement, however, argue that external actors can provide resources, expertise, and pressure needed to facilitate resolutions, though this perspective remains contentious given the historical evidence of such interventions' mixed outcomes.

Cultural and ideological differences between conflicting parties also pose significant barriers to effective conflict resolution. Disputes rooted in divergent values, beliefs, and worldviews are particularly challenging to resolve, as they often involve non-negotiable issues tied to identity and existence. Religious conflicts, such as those involving sectarian divisions, highlight the difficulty of finding common ground when parties perceive their beliefs to be under threat. While some argue that cultural sensitivity and understanding can help bridge these divides, others contend that such efforts are insufficient in addressing the deeper structural and historical factors that fuel these conflicts¹⁹. The tension between universalist approaches to conflict resolution, which emphasize shared human values, and particularist approaches, which prioritize the specific cultural and historical contexts of disputes, reflects a broader debate about the limitations of existing frameworks in dealing with culturally complex conflicts.

The role of ineffective governance and weak institutional capacity also undermines conflict resolution efforts, particularly in fragile states. Governments in these contexts often lack the legitimacy, resources, or expertise to manage disputes effectively, leading to prolonged instability and violence. In post-conflict societies where governance structures are still

developing, the absence of robust institutions to enforce agreements can result in a relapse into conflict. It is argued that international interventions aimed at state-building often prioritize quick fixes over long-term solutions, focusing on establishing formal institutions without addressing the deeper societal issues that hinder effective governance. Studies in support of incremental approaches to governance reform, however, argue that sustainable peace requires patience and a focus on building trust and capacity over time, a view that underscores the complexity of resolving conflicts in weak states.

Lastly, the persistence of economic disparities and competition for resources continues to fuel and prolong conflicts, undermining resolution efforts. Economic inequalities often create grievances that drive conflict, while competition over natural resources, such as oil, water, or minerals, exacerbates tensions. Conflicts in resource-rich regions often see competing claims between local communities, states, and multinational corporations, with little regard for equitable distribution or environmental sustainability. Studies that criticize traditional conflict resolution approaches argue that they often neglect the economic dimensions of disputes, focusing instead on political or territorial issues. This oversight results in resolutions that fail to address the economic drivers of conflict, leaving affected populations disillusioned and prone to renewed hostilities²⁰. While economic development and equitable resource management are often proposed as solutions, implementing these measures requires significant investment, coordination, and political will, which are frequently lacking in conflict-affected regions.

Summarily, the challenges to effective conflict resolution are multifaceted and deeply entrenched, reflecting the complexities of power dynamics, mistrust, external influences, cultural differences, weak governance, and economic disparities. While various approaches and frameworks have

been developed to address these barriers, their effectiveness remains contingent on the willingness and capacity of stakeholders to engage in meaningful and sustained efforts.

2.1.3 Peacekeeping

2.1.3.1 Understanding Peacekeeping Missions

Peacekeeping, as a concept and practice, represents one of the most visible tools of the international community in managing conflicts and fostering stability in volatile regions. Defined broadly, peacekeeping involves deploying international forces to maintain ceasefires, protect civilians, and provide humanitarian assistance in areas of conflict. These missions, often conducted under the auspices of the United Nations or regional organizations, are lauded for their intent to prevent violence, foster dialogue, and create conditions for sustainable peace²¹. However, despite the noble ideals underpinning peacekeeping, the reality is far more complex and fraught with contradictions. The implementation of peacekeeping missions often reveals inherent weaknesses, operational limitations, and ethical dilemmas, sparking debates about their efficacy and appropriateness in addressing modern conflicts.

At its core, peacekeeping embodies the principle of international cooperation, bringing together personnel from various countries to address conflicts that transcend national borders. Peacekeepers are tasked with a range of responsibilities, including enforcing ceasefires, disarming combatants, facilitating peace agreements, and providing protection for vulnerable populations. On paper, these roles align with the broader goals of international peace and security, presenting peacekeeping as a vital mechanism for mitigating violence and stabilizing conflict zones. It is argued that peacekeeping missions serve as a critical buffer between warring factions, reducing the likelihood of hostilities resuming. The presence of international forces is

often perceived as a deterrent against aggression, offering a neutral platform for dialogue and negotiation. However, critique studies question whether such missions genuinely achieve their intended outcomes, pointing to numerous cases where peacekeepers have struggled to contain violence or enforce mandates effectively.

One of the most significant criticisms of peacekeeping missions lies in their limited ability to address the root causes of conflicts. By design, peacekeeping often focuses on maintaining a fragile status quo rather than resolving the underlying issues that fuel violence. While peacekeepers may successfully monitor ceasefires or create safe zones, these measures are inherently temporary and insufficient in addressing deeper grievances related to governance, inequality, or historical injustices. It is argued that this reactive approach fails to create sustainable peace, merely postponing further violence rather than preventing it. Studies that support peacekeeping counter that these missions are not intended to solve conflicts entirely but rather to provide breathing space for political solutions to emerge²². However, this perspective raises questions about the extent to which peacekeeping can be deemed successful if it does not lead to a long-term resolution.

Another contentious aspect of peacekeeping missions is their reliance on contributions from member states, which often results in inconsistent resources, training, and commitment. Peacekeeping forces are typically composed of personnel from multiple countries, each bringing its own standards, expertise, and motivations. While this diversity reflects the collective responsibility of the international community, it also creates significant challenges in coordination, communication, and effectiveness. Disparities in training and equipment among contributing nations can undermine the overall efficiency of peacekeeping operations²³. Moreover, the willingness of member states to commit troops and resources is often influenced

by political and strategic considerations, leading to uneven engagement in different conflicts. This inconsistency not only hampers the operational capacity of peacekeeping missions but also raises ethical questions about the prioritization of certain conflicts over others based on geopolitical interests rather than humanitarian needs.

The role of peacekeepers in protecting civilians and facilitating humanitarian assistance further highlights the complexities and dilemmas inherent in peacekeeping missions. While peacekeepers are often deployed with the explicit mandate to safeguard vulnerable populations, their ability to fulfill this role is frequently constrained by inadequate resources, unclear mandates, and the reluctance of member states to authorize robust interventions. High-profile failures, such as the inability of peacekeepers to prevent atrocities in Rwanda and Srebrenica, underscore the limitations of the current peacekeeping framework. These incidents have sparked intense criticism and calls for reform, with critical studies arguing that the reluctance to empower peacekeepers with the necessary authority and resources reflects a fundamental flaw in the system²⁴. At the same time, proponents of peacekeeping emphasize the importance of adhering to principles of impartiality and non-interference, cautioning against overly aggressive interventions that could compromise the perceived neutrality of peacekeeping forces.

Ethical concerns surrounding peacekeeping missions further complicate their role and legitimacy. Reports of misconduct by peacekeepers, including instances of abuse and exploitation, have cast a shadow over the credibility of peacekeeping operations. These violations not only harm the very populations that peacekeepers are meant to protect but also erode trust in the international community's ability to manage conflicts effectively and ethically. It is argued that such incidents reflect systemic issues within peacekeeping operations, including inadequate oversight, accountability mechanisms, and training. While efforts have been made to address these

challenges, such as implementing stricter codes of conduct and disciplinary measures, the persistence of these issues highlights the ongoing struggle to reconcile the ideals of peacekeeping with the realities of its implementation.

The evolution of modern conflicts also poses significant challenges for traditional peacekeeping approaches, raising questions about their relevance in addressing contemporary security threats. Conflicts today are often characterized by non-state actors, asymmetric warfare, and transnational dynamics, which complicate the deployment and effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. Traditional peacekeeping, which relies on clear distinctions between warring parties and established frontlines, is ill-equipped to navigate the complexities of insurgencies, terrorism, and organized crime²⁵. It is argued that peacekeeping operations must adapt to these changing realities by incorporating more flexible and innovative approaches. However, such adaptations require significant political will, resources, and a willingness to rethink established norms, all of which remain elusive in the current international climate.

Summarily, peacekeeping missions represent a critical yet deeply flawed tool in the international community's efforts to manage conflicts and promote stability. While the principles underlying peacekeeping are commendable, their implementation often falls short of achieving meaningful and sustainable outcomes. The challenges of addressing root causes, coordinating diverse contributions, protecting civilians, and navigating ethical dilemmas underscore the limitations of the current peacekeeping framework.

2.1.3.2 Challenges Faced by Peacekeeping Operations

Peacekeeping operations, while essential for maintaining international stability, face a plethora of challenges that undermine their effectiveness and raise questions about their viability as tools

for conflict resolution. These challenges span operational, logistical, and political dimensions, each complicating the implementation of missions and diminishing their capacity to deliver sustainable peace. Despite the noble intentions underpinning peacekeeping efforts, the reality of their execution often reveals deep-seated flaws, prompting debates about whether the international community is adequately equipped to address modern conflicts through this mechanism. By examining these challenges, it becomes evident that peacekeeping operations are hindered not only by the constraints of their mandates but also by broader systemic issues that demand urgent reform.

A fundamental obstacle faced by peacekeeping operations is the chronic lack of resources, which hampers their ability to fulfill their mandates effectively. Peacekeeping missions are often deployed to some of the most volatile and impoverished regions in the world, requiring extensive financial, logistical, and human resources to operate. However, missions frequently suffer from inadequate funding, insufficient equipment, and a shortage of trained personnel. These deficiencies are exacerbated by the reluctance of member states to contribute the necessary resources, either due to financial constraints or political disinterest²⁶. This lack of commitment undermines the operational capacity of missions, leaving them ill-prepared to address the complexities of the conflicts they are tasked with managing. It is argued that the disparity between the ambitious goals of peacekeeping mandates and the resources allocated to achieve them reflects a systemic failure of the international community to prioritize peace and security. Supporters, on the other hand, contend that resource constraints are an inevitable reality of international cooperation, requiring missions to innovate and adapt within their means. Yet, the consequences of these constraints are clear: poorly equipped peacekeepers struggle to maintain

order, protect civilians, and deliver humanitarian aid, often resulting in the exacerbation of the very conflicts they aim to resolve.

The limitations of peacekeeping mandates further compound the challenges faced by these operations. Peacekeeping mandates are typically negotiated and approved by the United Nations Security Council, reflecting the political interests and compromises of its member states. As a result, many mandates are deliberately vague or overly restrictive, preventing peacekeepers from taking decisive action in volatile situations. Mandates that emphasize impartiality and non-use of force often leave peacekeepers unable to respond effectively to violence, even when civilians are at risk. This restrictive approach is intended to preserve the neutrality of peacekeeping missions, but it also creates a paradox: peacekeepers are deployed to conflict zones precisely because of the need for intervention, yet they are often denied the authority to act decisively²⁷. This contradiction has led to several high-profile failures, where peacekeepers were unable to prevent atrocities despite being present on the ground. It is argued that this reflects a fundamental flaw in the peacekeeping model, which prioritizes the optics of neutrality over the practical necessity of intervention. It is cautioned that granting peacekeepers broader authority risks escalating conflicts and compromising their perceived impartiality, which is crucial for fostering dialogue and trust among warring parties.

Political interference represents another significant challenge for peacekeeping operations, undermining their credibility and effectiveness. Peacekeeping missions are inherently political, operating within the framework of international relations and subject to the influence of powerful member states²⁸. The decisions to deploy, fund, or terminate missions are often shaped by the strategic interests of key actors, particularly the permanent members of the Security Council. This politicization can lead to inconsistencies in the application of peacekeeping principles, with

some conflicts receiving disproportionate attention while others are ignored or inadequately addressed. Furthermore, political interference can manifest in the form of pressure on peacekeepers to prioritize certain objectives over others, such as safeguarding the interests of influential states rather than protecting vulnerable populations. This undermines the legitimacy of peacekeeping missions and fosters resentment among local populations, who may perceive peacekeepers as biased or complicit in the conflict. It is argued that this politicization reflects the inherent limitations of an international system based on state sovereignty and power politics. Advocates of peacekeeping counter that these challenges are inevitable in a multilateral framework and emphasize the importance of finding common ground to advance shared objectives.

Operational and logistical challenges also pose significant barriers to the success of peacekeeping missions, particularly in conflict zones with harsh environments and limited infrastructure. Peacekeepers often operate in remote areas with inadequate roads, communication networks, and medical facilities, complicating the delivery of supplies and the mobility of personnel²⁹. These logistical difficulties are exacerbated by the diversity of troop-contributing countries, each with varying levels of training, equipment, and operational standards. This diversity, while reflecting the inclusive nature of peacekeeping, creates significant challenges in coordination and interoperability. The lack of a unified command structure further complicates these efforts, leading to inefficiencies and delays in responding to crises. It is argued that these operational shortcomings highlight the need for greater standardization and investment in the capacity-building of peacekeeping forces. However, such reforms require political will and sustained funding, both of which are often lacking in the current international climate.

Lastly, the evolving nature of modern conflicts poses a unique challenge to traditional peacekeeping operations. Contemporary conflicts are increasingly characterized by non-state actors, asymmetric warfare, and transnational threats, such as terrorism and organized crime. These dynamics are fundamentally different from the interstate conflicts for which peacekeeping was originally designed, requiring new approaches and strategies³⁰. Traditional peacekeeping, which relies on clear frontlines and identifiable parties to a conflict, is ill-suited to address the complexities of insurgencies, civilian militias, and fragmented armed groups. This mismatch has led to criticisms that peacekeeping missions are outdated and ill-equipped to handle the realities of modern warfare. Advocates of peacekeeping argue that the model can and should adapt to these new challenges, incorporating lessons learned from past missions and leveraging advancements in technology and intelligence. However, such adaptations require significant reforms and a willingness to rethink established norms, which remain elusive in the face of entrenched political and institutional resistance.

Summarily, the challenges faced by peacekeeping operations are multifaceted and deeply entrenched, reflecting broader systemic issues within the international community. From resource constraints and limited mandates to political interference and operational difficulties, these obstacles highlight the limitations of the current peacekeeping framework in addressing the complexities of modern conflicts.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Realist Theory in International Relations

Realist theory in international relations offers a compelling lens through which to examine the role of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict³¹. Rooted

in the premise that states are the primary actors in an anarchic international system, realism emphasizes the pursuit of power, national interest, and security as the driving forces of state behaviour. These core principles resonate deeply with the dynamics of the UNSC, where the interplay of state sovereignty and great power rivalry shapes decision-making processes and outcomes. While realist theory provides critical insights into the functioning of the UNSC, it also exposes the limitations of multilateral institutions in addressing deeply entrenched conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

At the heart of realism is the notion of state sovereignty, which underscores the primacy of the nation-state as the ultimate arbiter of its policies and interests. The UNSC, despite being a multilateral body, operates within this paradigm, as its effectiveness hinges on the cooperation of sovereign member states, particularly its five permanent members (P5)—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States³². Each of these powers wields veto authority, granting them unparalleled influence over the Council's resolutions and actions. Realist theory contends that this structural feature inherently skews the UNSC's operations toward the national interests of its most powerful members. In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the persistent use of the veto, particularly by the United States to shield Israel from critical resolutions, exemplifies how state-centric priorities often supersede collective efforts for peace and justice. Supporters of realism argue that this is an inevitable outcome in a world where power politics dominate, and the UNSC merely reflects the realities of an unequal international order.

Realism's focus on power dynamics also sheds light on the rivalry and competition among the P5, which significantly impacts the UNSC's decision-making and ability to act decisively³³. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while primarily a regional issue, has often been a proxy battleground

for broader geopolitical tensions among major powers. The Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union influenced the Council's stance on the conflict, with each side supporting opposing factions to advance their strategic interests. Even in the post-Cold War era, similar patterns persist, as Russia and China increasingly challenge the dominance of Western powers within the UNSC. Realist theorists argue that such competition is a natural byproduct of the anarchic international system, where great powers prioritize their relative gains over absolute solutions. This perspective highlights the inherent difficulty of achieving consensus within the UNSC, particularly on politically sensitive issues like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where the stakes for great powers are often tied to broader regional and global considerations.

Despite its limitations, realism offers valuable insights into the opportunities and constraints faced by the UNSC in its attempts to mediate conflicts. The theory's emphasis on national interest can, in some cases, align with the pursuit of peace, as states may recognize the stability and security benefits of resolving protracted disputes³⁴. The UNSC's efforts to facilitate ceasefires and humanitarian assistance in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be interpreted through a realist lens as serving the collective interest of reducing regional instability that could spill over into broader geopolitical tensions. However, these efforts are often criticized for being reactive rather than proactive, with realist skeptics arguing that the Council's interventions are more about managing conflicts than resolving them comprehensively.

Realism also highlights the challenges of multilateralism in a power-centric international system. While the UNSC is designed to function as a collective security mechanism, its realist underpinnings often lead to a mismatch between its ideals and its practices³⁵. The veto power, while ensuring that major powers remain engaged in the Council, simultaneously enables them to block measures that contradict their interests. This duality underscores the tension between the

UNSC's theoretical mandate to maintain international peace and its practical constraints as a body dominated by state-centric power dynamics. Realist theorists defend this arrangement as a pragmatic reflection of the global balance of power, arguing that the UNSC's legitimacy and authority derive from its ability to accommodate the interests of the most powerful states. This is, however, viewed as a fundamental weakness, as it undermines the Council's ability to function as an impartial arbiter in conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

Summarily, realist theory provides a robust framework for analyzing the UNSC's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, emphasizing the centrality of state sovereignty, power politics, and national interest. While these principles help explain the Council's structure and behaviour, they also reveal its limitations as a multilateral institution tasked with resolving complex and politically charged conflicts. The dominance of great power rivalry within the UNSC underscores the challenges of achieving consensus and implementing effective interventions, particularly when the interests of the P5 are at stake. Although realism accepts these dynamics as inevitable in an anarchic international system, it is argued that they undermine the UNSC's credibility and effectiveness, calling for reforms to align its practices more closely with its mandate for collective security and impartial conflict resolution.

2.2.2 Liberal and Constructivist Perspectives

The liberal and constructivist perspectives offer contrasting yet complementary lenses for understanding international relations, particularly the dynamics of conflict and peace processes. Liberal theory, grounded in the principles of international cooperation, institutionalism, and interdependence, emphasizes the potential for states and non-state actors to collaborate in mitigating conflicts and fostering peace³⁶. This perspective views institutions like the United Nations and its Security Council (UNSC) as crucial mechanisms for resolving disputes and

promoting stability. Liberals argue that shared economic interests, diplomatic engagements, and institutional frameworks create opportunities for lasting peace by reducing the incentives for violent conflict. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, liberal theorists highlight the importance of multilateral negotiations, third-party mediation, and international agreements, such as the Oslo Accords, as steps toward resolving the protracted crisis.

However, critical studies of liberalism point to its overreliance on the rationality of actors and the assumption that shared interests will naturally lead to cooperation. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict illustrates the limits of this optimism, as deeply entrenched historical grievances, asymmetrical power relations, and conflicting national narratives often undermine cooperative efforts. Additionally, the liberal emphasis on institutional solutions is challenged by the ineffectiveness of bodies like the UNSC when member states prioritize their geopolitical interests over collective peace. While the UNSC embodies liberal ideals of multilateral governance, its structural inequalities and the veto power of permanent members reveal the shortcomings of liberal institutionalism in addressing complex conflicts where power imbalances persist.

In contrast, constructivist theory shifts the focus from material interests to the role of ideas, norms, identities, and social structures in shaping international relations³⁷. Constructivists argue that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be fully understood through the prism of state-centric interests alone; instead, it is deeply rooted in competing identities, historical narratives, and societal norms. The constructivist lens highlights how religious and cultural significance, coupled with nationalist ideologies, fuel the intractability of the conflict. From this perspective, peace processes must address not only tangible issues like borders and security but also

intangible factors such as mutual recognition, the deconstruction of adversarial identities, and the cultivation of a shared vision for coexistence.

While constructivism provides valuable insights into the underlying causes and potential solutions for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is often criticized for its abstract and normative approach, which may lack practical applicability. Critique studies argue that focusing on identity and norms, though important, risks sidelining the immediate material and political realities that drive the conflict³⁸. Furthermore, the process of transforming entrenched identities and norms requires long-term efforts that may be incompatible with the urgent need for conflict resolution in volatile situations. Nonetheless, constructivist theorists contend that without addressing these deeper issues, peace efforts are unlikely to achieve sustainable outcomes, as superficial agreements often fail to resolve the underlying tensions.

When juxtaposed, the liberal and constructivist perspectives highlight both the possibilities and the challenges of addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While liberalism underscores the importance of institutions and cooperative frameworks, constructivism draws attention to the social and ideological dimensions that shape the conflict's trajectory.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

2.3.1 History of the United Nations

The establishment of the United Nations (UN) in 1945 marked a pivotal moment in international relations, born out of the ashes of World War II. The UN was conceived with noble intentions: to prevent future wars, promote human rights, and foster international cooperation. Its creation stemmed from a collective recognition of the failures of the League of Nations, which, despite its initial promise, proved incapable of preventing the outbreak of World War II due to structural

weaknesses and an inability to enforce its resolutions³⁹. However, while the founding of the UN represented hope for a more stable and cooperative world order, its formation and subsequent actions have also been the subject of significant debate and criticism.

The UN's objectives, as enshrined in its Charter, include maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, achieving international cooperation in solving global problems, and promoting respect for human rights. These objectives were undeniably ambitious and reflected the global community's aspiration to establish a framework for collective security and cooperation⁴⁰. The principle of collective security, in particular, was a direct response to the failures of unilateralism and power politics that had characterized pre-World War II international relations. The UN's focus on human rights was also groundbreaking, as it introduced the idea of universal rights transcending national borders, a concept that has since become a cornerstone of international law.

However, the formation of the UN also exposed tensions and contradictions among the victorious Allied powers. While these powers were united in their desire to prevent another global conflict, they were also deeply concerned with safeguarding their national interests. This led to the establishment of the Security Council, with five permanent members (the United States, the Soviet Union, China, the United Kingdom, and France) holding veto power⁴¹. While the veto was intended to ensure that major powers remained committed to the UN and avoided unilateral actions, it has often been criticized as a tool of geopolitical dominance that undermines the principle of equality among member states. The veto system has allowed powerful nations to block actions contrary to their interests, often at the expense of global peace and justice.

The UN's emphasis on promoting human rights and fostering international cooperation was visionary, yet it was also limited by the political realities of its time. While the Charter espoused principles of equality and self-determination, the organization was formed in a world still dominated by colonial empires. Many of its founding members were colonial powers that were unwilling to relinquish control over their territories⁴². This hypocrisy has drawn criticism, as the UN's lofty ideals often clash with the actions and policies of its most influential members. While the UN promoted decolonization in the decades following its formation, it often faced resistance from its own members, which delayed the realization of independence for many nations.

Another point of contention is the UN's ability to maintain international peace and security. While the UN has succeeded in preventing another world war, its record in addressing regional conflicts and genocides is mixed. It is argued that the organization has been slow to respond to crises, hindered by bureaucratic inefficiencies and the competing interests of member states⁴³. The UN's failure to prevent genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia during the 1990s is often cited as evidence of its limitations. These failures highlight a gap between the UN's stated objectives and its practical capabilities, raising questions about its relevance and effectiveness in a rapidly changing world.

Studies in support of the UN argue that despite its shortcomings, it remains the most comprehensive and inclusive platform for international dialogue and cooperation. They highlight its achievements in areas such as health, education, and development, often led by specialized agencies like UNICEF and the WHO⁴⁴. The UN has also played a crucial role in setting international norms, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has shaped legal and ethical standards worldwide⁴⁵. However, detractors point out that these successes are often

overshadowed by the organization's inability to enforce its resolutions and the selective implementation of its principles, particularly in the realm of peace and security.

Moreover, the UN's dependence on member states for funding and military resources has led to accusations of bias and ineffectiveness. Wealthy and powerful countries wield disproportionate influence over the organization, while smaller nations often find their voices marginalized. This dynamic perpetuates global inequalities and undermines the UN's credibility as a neutral arbiter. Additionally, the lack of enforcement mechanisms has limited the UN's ability to hold member states accountable for violations of its principles, further eroding trust in its capacity to deliver justice.

The history of the United Nations is a testament to humanity's enduring hope for a more peaceful and cooperative world. Its formation in 1945 represented a bold experiment in collective security and international governance, and it has undoubtedly made significant contributions to global peace and development⁴⁶. However, the UN's achievements must be viewed alongside its failures and limitations. The contradictions inherent in its structure, the selective application of its principles, and its susceptibility to the interests of powerful nations have often undermined its mission. As the world faces new and complex challenges, the UN's ability to adapt and address these issues will determine whether it remains a relevant force for good or becomes an outdated relic of a bygone era.

2.3.2 United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

2.3.2.1 Structure and Mandate of the UNSC

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) occupies a central position within the framework of the United Nations, tasked with maintaining international peace and security. As one of the

UN's six main organs, it wields significant authority in matters of war and peace. The Council's structure, however, has long been a topic of both admiration and contention. It comprises 15 members: five permanent members (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China) and ten non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms⁴⁷. This structure was designed to balance the need for representation with the necessity of efficiency in decision-making, yet it has also entrenched power dynamics that have often hindered its effectiveness.

The permanent members, often referred to as the P5, hold veto power, granting them the ability to block any substantive resolution, regardless of majority support. This veto mechanism was included to ensure the participation and cooperation of major powers in the post-World War II order, as their withdrawal could destabilize the UN itself. While this rationale was pragmatic in 1945, it has since evolved into a contentious issue. It is argued that the veto system perpetuates inequality and allows the P5 to prioritize their geopolitical interests over global peace and justice. Resolutions on conflicts involving P5 members or their allies, such as in Syria or Ukraine, have often been vetoed, paralyzing the Council's ability to act. This undermines the Council's legitimacy and raises questions about its relevance in addressing modern conflicts.

Conversely, studies assert that it prevents hasty or unilateral actions that could escalate conflicts. The requirement for consensus among the P5 forces dialogue and consideration of diverse perspectives, potentially avoiding rushed decisions. However, this ideal often clashes with reality, as the veto has frequently been used to protect the strategic interests of individual members rather than to foster global peace⁴⁸. This has led to accusations that the UNSC serves as a tool for power politics rather than a genuine mechanism for collective security.

The non-permanent members, meanwhile, represent the broader international community and are elected to ensure regional representation. While this provides an avenue for smaller nations to contribute to global decision-making, their influence is significantly limited compared to the P5. The two-year term for non-permanent members is often criticized for being too short to effect meaningful change, as it restricts their ability to build expertise and establish long-term strategies. Moreover, the election process for these seats is highly competitive and often politicized, raising concerns about whether the most capable nations are always chosen.

The UNSC's primary mandate to maintain international peace and security includes a broad range of responsibilities, from authorizing military interventions to imposing sanctions and facilitating peace negotiations. Its successes, such as interventions in Kuwait during the Gulf War and peacekeeping missions in conflict zones like Liberia, demonstrate its potential to act decisively when member states cooperate⁴⁹. However, these successes are overshadowed by its failures to prevent or resolve significant crises, such as the Rwandan Genocide and the Syrian Civil War. These failures often stem from the Council's inability to act promptly or cohesively, hindered by political disagreements among the P5 and inadequate resources to implement its decisions.

Moreover, the UNSC's approach to conflict resolution has been criticized for its lack of consistency and impartiality. Interventions are often seen as selective, driven by the interests of powerful nations rather than humanitarian needs. Swift action in Libya contrasted starkly with inaction in crises like Yemen, highlighting a double standard in its operations. This selectivity undermines the principle of universality that the UN was founded upon and erodes trust in its capacity to act as an impartial arbiter.

Calls for reform of the UNSC have grown louder in recent decades, with demands for a more equitable and representative structure. Proposals include expanding the Council to include more permanent members from underrepresented regions, such as Africa and Latin America, and revising or limiting the veto power to prevent its misuse. While these reforms could address some criticisms, they also face significant resistance from the P5, who are unlikely to relinquish their privileged status willingly⁵⁰. This resistance underscores the inherent tension between the ideals of equality and the realities of power politics that define the UNSC's operations.

Summarily, the structure and mandate of the UNSC reflect both its strengths and its limitations. While it has the potential to act decisively in maintaining international peace and security, its effectiveness is often compromised by the political interests of its members and structural imbalances. The Council's current composition and decision-making processes, particularly the veto power, perpetuate a system of inequality that undermines its legitimacy.

2.3.2.2 Historical Origin and Purpose of the Veto Power

The veto power held by the five permanent members (P5) of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)—the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China—is one of the most defining and controversial features of the international system formed in the aftermath of World War II. Understanding its historical origin and original purpose is central to grasping how the structure and authority of the United Nations (UN) were shaped by the political realities of that time. This power was not created by accident; it was a deliberate and strategic inclusion, designed not only to preserve peace but, more importantly, to protect the interests and influence of the world's most powerful states in a newly restructured global order.

The veto emerged out of hard political negotiation during the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks Conference and later solidified in the final drafting of the UN Charter at the San Francisco Conference in 1945. The Second World War had demonstrated the catastrophic results of unchecked aggression and weak international cooperation. The League of Nations, the UN's predecessor, had failed miserably due to its lack of enforcement capacity and the absence of the United States, which refused to join. That failure loomed large in the minds of post-war leaders. They knew that unless the most powerful states of the time had both the incentive and the means to support and remain committed to a new international body, it would collapse like its predecessor. Thus, the veto power was proposed as a political guarantee—something that would ensure the permanent engagement and participation of the major Allied powers.

In theory, the veto was seen as a practical mechanism to avoid direct military confrontation among the victors of World War II. The logic was straightforward: if the major powers could block any resolution they found threatening or counter to their interests, they would be less likely to withdraw from the organization or act unilaterally. In that sense, the veto was born out of fear—fear of another global war, fear of fractured alliances, and fear of institutional irrelevance. The belief was that allowing any of the P5 to prevent collective action they disagreed with would make it more likely that the organization could survive, even if that survival meant paralysis in moments of crisis.

However, this arrangement was not without immediate contradiction. It exposed a built-in inequality within the UN Charter—a recognition that some states would be more powerful than others, not just in reality but in the legal structure of international governance. While the UN was built on principles of sovereign equality and collective security, the veto stood as a permanent

reminder that the system was not, and was never intended to be, fully democratic. The veto did not emerge from ideals of justice but from power politics. It was a pragmatic solution to an unavoidable problem: how to make the most powerful countries part of a system that might one day restrain them.

Critically, this raises deep moral and political concerns. The veto was meant to be a safeguard, yet it also gave license for obstruction. It enabled one state to paralyze collective will, even in situations involving mass atrocities, human rights violations, or threats to international peace. The very logic that was used to prevent great-power conflict created space for impunity when those same powers—or their allies—were involved in conflict. For example, if one of the P5 had strategic interests in a country or region, their use of the veto could block UN intervention or sanctions, even when there was overwhelming support from the rest of the Council.

This flaw is not hypothetical—it has material consequences. The selective application of international law, enabled by the veto, has led to accusations of hypocrisy and undermines the credibility of the UN itself. A system meant to uphold peace and justice is repeatedly hamstrung by the political agendas of the powerful. In the Cold War era, the U.S. and the Soviet Union frequently used the veto to protect their geopolitical spheres of influence. In more recent years, vetoes have blocked resolutions on crises in Syria, Palestine, and Ukraine. The pattern is consistent: where power and interest intersect, the veto acts not as a stabilizing tool but as a shield for impunity.

The original justification for the veto—that it prevents great-power war—is increasingly being challenged. While it may have reduced the likelihood of open war among the P5 themselves, it has done little to prevent proxy wars, regional conflicts, or human suffering. In fact, the veto has

often deepened conflict by preventing early or decisive UN action. This is particularly evident in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where repeated U.S. vetoes have blocked resolutions aimed at addressing illegal settlements, ceasefire demands, or humanitarian access. The veto has thus shifted from a tool of conflict prevention to one of political defence—a mechanism used not to build consensus but to protect strategic alliances.

Another criticism lies in the permanence of the veto. Unlike many other international mechanisms, the veto power is untouchable within the UN Charter. Amending it would require the agreement of the very states that benefit from it. This creates a self-perpetuating structure: the P5 not only have power but also the means to block any reform that might reduce their influence. In this way, the original reasoning behind the veto—ensuring participation—has evolved into a structural imbalance that serves the interests of the few at the expense of the many. It reinforces a two-tiered world order where power determines not just influence but justice.

That said, defenders of the veto argue that its existence reflects political reality. The world is not equal, and any system that pretends otherwise is doomed to fail. According to this view, the veto ensures stability by recognizing and institutionalizing the power of the major players. Without the veto, it is argued, powerful states might simply bypass the UN altogether, act unilaterally, and worsen global instability. From this perspective, the veto is not ideal, but necessary. It is the price of keeping great powers at the negotiating table.

Yet, this defence increasingly rings hollow in a world facing urgent global challenges—conflicts, climate change, pandemics—that require cooperative action. The veto, instead of fostering unity, has often served to deepen division. The original fears that birthed the veto are now being realized in reverse: instead of avoiding paralysis, the veto creates it; instead of promoting peace,

it hinders it. While it may have helped secure the participation of powerful states in 1945, it has become a stumbling block to meaningful action in the twenty-first century.

Ultimately, the historical origin and intended function of the veto were grounded in realism. But realism without accountability breeds injustice. The veto was supposed to prevent war, not enable inaction in the face of suffering. It was meant to keep peace among the strong, not to silence the voices of the weak. As long as the veto remains a political tool rather than a principled mechanism, it will continue to provoke criticism, erode trust, and challenge the legitimacy of the international system it was meant to protect.

2.3.2.3 Decision-Making and Effectiveness of the UNSC

The decision-making process of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is integral to its ability to fulfill its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. However, this process has been both lauded for its structure and criticized for its susceptibility to the political interests of its permanent members. The core of the UNSC's decision-making mechanism lies in its voting system, where a resolution requires at least nine votes out of fifteen, with the condition that none of the five permanent members (P5) exercises their veto power⁵¹. While this framework was intended to ensure consensus and prevent unilateral dominance, it has often led to gridlock, particularly in politically sensitive conflicts where the P5's strategic interests are at odds.

The veto power held by the P5—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—has been a double-edged sword in the Council's decision-making process. On one hand, it compels negotiation and dialogue among the major powers, ensuring that resolutions are not passed lightly and without adequate consideration. On the other hand, it has become a tool for

the P5 to advance their geopolitical agendas, often at the expense of collective action. Resolutions addressing crises in Syria, Ukraine, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have frequently been vetoed by P5 members to shield allies or protect their strategic interests. This has not only stalled decisive action but also undermined the credibility of the UNSC as a neutral and effective arbiter of peace.

Moreover, the influence of the P5 extends beyond veto power to the shaping of agendas and the framing of resolutions. These nations often dominate discussions and push for resolutions that align with their foreign policy objectives, sidelining the concerns of non-permanent members and the broader international community. This has led to accusations of selectivity and double standards in the Council's operations⁵². Swift and robust interventions in some conflicts, such as Libya in 2011, are contrasted with prolonged inaction in others, like the ongoing crises in Yemen and Myanmar. Such inconsistencies erode the UNSC's moral authority and raise questions about its commitment to impartiality and justice.

The effectiveness of the UNSC is also hindered by the divergent priorities and rivalries among the P5. The lack of unity among these powers often results in watered-down resolutions that fail to address the root causes of conflicts or provide meaningful solutions. In many cases, the compromises made to secure the agreement of all P5 members dilute the impact of the Council's actions, rendering them symbolic rather than substantive. This dynamic was evident in the response to the Syrian Civil War, where resolutions aimed at humanitarian aid were passed, but broader measures to end the conflict were consistently blocked due to competing interests among the P5.

However, it would be overly simplistic to attribute the UNSC's challenges solely to the P5's political interests. The Council's decision-making process is also constrained by broader

systemic issues, including the lack of enforcement mechanisms and reliance on member states for resources and implementation. Even when resolutions are adopted, their effectiveness is often contingent on the willingness of member states to comply and contribute, which is not always guaranteed⁵³. This reliance underscores the inherent limitations of the UNSC as a supranational body operating within a state-centric international system.

It is argued that the decision-making process of the UNSC is in urgent need of reform to enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy. Proposals such as expanding the Council's membership to include emerging powers, limiting the use of the veto, or introducing a majority-vote system for certain types of resolutions have gained traction. However, these reforms face significant resistance from the P5, who are unlikely to relinquish their privileged status voluntarily. This resistance highlights the tension between the principles of equality and the realities of power politics that define the UNSC's operations.

Supporters of the current structure contend that the veto system, while flawed, is necessary to maintain the engagement of major powers and prevent unilateral actions that could destabilize the international order. They argue that the Council's effectiveness should not be measured solely by its ability to act decisively but also by its role in fostering dialogue and preventing the escalation of conflicts⁵⁴. While this perspective has merit, it does not address the frustration and disillusionment of smaller nations and marginalized groups that often bear the brunt of inaction or selective interventions.

Summarily, the decision-making process of the UNSC is a microcosm of the broader challenges facing the United Nations as an institution. While it provides a platform for major powers to collaborate and reach consensus, it is also heavily influenced by the political interests and

rivalries of its permanent members. This dynamic has both enabled and constrained the UNSC's effectiveness in addressing global conflicts, particularly those that are politically sensitive.

2.3.2.4 Criticisms and Global Controversies Around the Veto System

The veto power granted to the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council is one of the most controversial and widely criticized features of the post-World War II international order. Introduced as a mechanism to ensure that the major powers remained engaged in global governance, it has instead evolved into a tool of political manipulation, selective justice, and global inequality. The veto system today no longer represents a collective commitment to peace but rather an entrenchment of power among a small group of states that operate with near impunity. This concentration of authority has led to widespread frustration and disillusionment within the international community and has ignited repeated calls for reform.

At the center of this criticism is the blatant contradiction between the veto system and the principle of sovereign equality among nations. The Charter of the United Nations opens with an affirmation of the equal rights of all member states. Yet, in practice, the veto creates a two-tier system: five states have the power to shape, block, or manipulate decisions, while the rest remain largely powerless. This fundamental inequality has rendered the Security Council an elite club, detached from the democratic ideals that the UN claims to promote. Smaller and less powerful nations, many of which bear the brunt of global conflicts and humanitarian crises, often find themselves silenced, outvoted, or disregarded when their interests clash with those of the P5.

One of the most common and justified accusations against the veto is its enabling of selective justice. The P5, particularly the United States, Russia, and China, have consistently used the veto to shield themselves or their allies from scrutiny, investigation, and accountability. Whether it is

American vetoes protecting Israel from condemnation, Russian vetoes shielding the Syrian regime, or Chinese vetoes preventing sanctions on regimes aligned with their interests, the message is the same: justice is not applied universally, but according to political convenience. This practice deeply damages the legitimacy of the Security Council as a body that should enforce international law impartially.

Moreover, the use of veto power in the context of humanitarian emergencies reveals the deep moral failure of the system. There have been numerous cases where resolutions aimed at halting mass atrocities, providing humanitarian aid, or establishing ceasefires were vetoed, not because the resolutions were flawed, but because they threatened the geopolitical interests of one or more permanent members. In these cases, human lives become bargaining chips in the great power game. The Syrian conflict, for instance, has seen over a dozen vetoes by Russia and China, often in the face of overwhelming evidence of war crimes and civilian suffering. Each veto delayed aid, blocked justice, and allowed the conflict to spiral further. This is not diplomacy; it is a deliberate obstruction of humanitarian relief, facilitated by a flawed system that permits the powerful to act without consequence.

What makes the situation more distressing is that there is no real mechanism for accountability. The veto is absolute—it cannot be challenged or overruled. This unchecked power allows the P5 to act without fear of censure. Even when their actions directly contradict the will of the majority of UN member states, the veto guarantees that their position prevails. This breeds resentment among developing countries, who see their voices routinely ignored and their efforts to shape global peace frustrated. The feeling is not just one of marginalization, but of systemic injustice, where rules apply differently depending on your place in the international hierarchy.

The result is a profound erosion of trust in the United Nations. The UNSC, which should stand as a symbol of collective security and international cooperation, is increasingly viewed as a theatre of political gamesmanship. Countries and civil societies now question whether the Council is fit for purpose in a 21st-century world that demands more inclusive and accountable institutions. Many point to the growing gap between what the UN promises and what it delivers. The Council's inability to act decisively in cases of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and illegal occupation has made its resolutions appear toothless and its debates irrelevant. It is difficult to claim moral authority when that authority is continuously bent to serve the interests of a few.

The veto system is also structurally out of step with today's geopolitical realities. The world of 1945, when the veto was created, no longer exists. Back then, the P5 reflected the dominant military powers emerging from World War II. But the global order has shifted. Countries like India, Brazil, Germany, South Africa, and Japan now play significant roles in international affairs but remain excluded from the permanent table. Meanwhile, the existing P5 maintain their privileged position not through current legitimacy, but through historical accident. This outdated arrangement fuels further criticism: how can an institution tasked with addressing modern global crises be led by a structure frozen in time?

In response to these criticisms, various proposals have emerged over the years calling for reform. Some suggest expanding the Council to include new permanent members from underrepresented regions. Others propose limiting the use of the veto in cases involving mass atrocities, war crimes, or crimes against humanity. There have been calls for a "responsibility not to veto" when innocent lives are at stake, especially in situations where the Council's inaction would lead to mass suffering. However, none of these reform efforts have succeeded. Why? Because any

change to the veto system requires the approval of the P5 themselves. And unsurprisingly, those who hold power are rarely eager to give it up.

This resistance to reform exposes the self-serving nature of the P5. Despite public declarations about peace, cooperation, and human rights, the reality is that each permanent member seeks to preserve its dominance. The veto is less a tool for global governance and more a guarantee of strategic influence. This kind of protectionist thinking ensures that the Security Council remains paralyzed in the face of reform. It also ensures that future generations will inherit a broken system that cannot evolve with the needs of the world.

Even within the P5, there is growing discomfort. Public opinion, especially in democratic states like the U.S., the UK, and France, increasingly supports reform. Citizens are aware that their governments are blocking actions that could save lives. Civil society organizations, NGOs, and even some former diplomats have openly criticized the abuse of the veto. Yet, despite this internal pressure, official state policy remains unchanged, indicating a disconnect between public values and governmental action. The hypocrisy is glaring: Western powers often lecture other countries about democracy and accountability, while refusing to submit their own power within the UNSC to similar scrutiny.

The implications are serious. If the Security Council continues to operate under this broken model, more states will begin to bypass the UN altogether. We are already seeing signs of this, with regional organizations and coalitions taking independent action. This decentralization of global security decisions may increase instability, as there is no single body to coordinate or legitimize efforts. More dangerously, it risks creating parallel systems of influence where

powerful countries form competing alliances, much like during the Cold War. In such a world, the idea of collective security becomes a distant dream.

In the long term, the survival of the United Nations depends on its ability to adapt. That means confronting the veto problem head-on. The longer the international community ignores this issue, the more credibility the UN will lose. Reform will not be easy; it will require compromise, courage, and a fundamental shift in how the P5 view their role in the world. But without it, the UN will drift further into irrelevance, a relic of a bygone era that failed to rise to the challenges of our time.

Summarily, the criticisms and global controversies surrounding the veto system are not superficial complaints—they reflect deep structural flaws that undermine the very mission of the United Nations. The veto perpetuates inequality, blocks justice, enables violence, and paralyzes collective action. It is a tool that has outlived its original purpose and now stands in the way of progress. Unless the global community finds the political will to change this system, the promise of the United Nations will remain unfulfilled: a world divided not by conflict, but by power and privilege.

2.3.2.5 The Role of P5 National Interests and Global Alliances

The foundational promise of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was to ensure collective security and act as a neutral arbiter in times of crisis. Yet, the existence and use of the veto power, granted exclusively to the five permanent members (P5: United States, United Kingdom, Russia, China, and France), has frequently undermined this mandate. Rather than promoting impartiality and global peace, the veto has often been wielded as a political

instrument to secure national interests and sustain strategic alliances. Nowhere is this contradiction more visible than in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where the repeated use of vetoes has stalled meaningful progress and delegitimized the Council's role as a fair peacekeeping body.

At the heart of this misuse lies the reality that the P5 do not operate as neutral entities. Instead, they are states with political, economic, military, and ideological stakes in various global regions. These stakes often cloud their decisions within the Council, particularly when resolutions threaten the status quo of their allies. The United States, for example, has a well-documented strategic and ideological alliance with Israel. This relationship, rooted in shared democratic values, regional military cooperation, and domestic political interests, has made the U.S. the most frequent user of the veto in matters relating to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. These vetoes have blocked resolutions that seek to hold Israel accountable for its occupation of Palestinian territories, settlement expansions, and military actions in Gaza.

Each of these vetoes represents not just a defense of Israel, but a broader assertion of American influence in the Middle East. This dominance is maintained through a deliberate policy that ensures Israel remains a key strategic partner in a volatile region. The veto, then, becomes a diplomatic tool that upholds an alliance at the expense of human rights, international law, and long-term peace prospects. Such repeated actions create a perception that the United States is not merely biased but is actively complicit in prolonging the conflict. This perception undermines trust in the Council and further alienates Palestinian voices, who already perceive the international system as heavily tilted in Israel's favour.

Russia, too, has used its veto power in ways that echo a similar strategy, albeit in different conflicts. In the Syrian civil war, for example, Russia has repeatedly blocked resolutions that condemn the Assad regime, an ally of Moscow. While the context differs from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the underlying logic remains the same: use the veto to protect a state that guarantees strategic leverage. Russia's actions in Syria illustrate that the veto is not about blocking bad policy per se, but about sustaining spheres of influence. This approach signals that moral reasoning and international norms are often secondary to geopolitical considerations.

What makes the situation particularly problematic in the Israeli-Palestinian context is the prolonged and cyclical nature of the conflict. Resolutions have been brought forward numerous times, many of them focused on condemning Israeli settlement expansions, human rights violations, and breaches of international humanitarian law. Yet the pattern of vetoes, mostly from the United States, ensures that such resolutions do not pass, even when there is overwhelming support from other Council members and the wider international community. This disconnect between majority consensus and final outcome exposes the undemocratic nature of the UNSC's structure. It also reveals a profound institutional weakness: that five nations can override the collective will of the international body based on narrow national calculations.

France and the United Kingdom, while less frequent users of the veto in the Israeli-Palestinian case, are not innocent actors. Both countries have historical ties to the region, stemming from colonial mandates, and their positions are often shaped by broader Western diplomatic interests. These nations may not always exercise their veto, but their silence or abstentions often signal passive support for the dominant P5 narrative, especially when led by the United States. Silence,

in these scenarios, is complicity. It allows vetoes to go unchallenged and reinforces a precedent where great powers shield their allies regardless of the global consequences.

The impact of such vetoes extends beyond political diplomacy; it shapes lives on the ground. Every time a resolution is blocked, it delays accountability, encourages impunity, and contributes to a sense of hopelessness among Palestinians who look to the UN for justice. These vetoes also embolden Israeli leadership to continue controversial policies, secure in the knowledge that they are diplomatically shielded. In this way, the veto power not only affects international decision-making but also becomes a tool that influences domestic policy within the conflict zone.

There is also the question of whether this pattern of veto use sets a dangerous global precedent. If the UNSC allows permanent members to consistently prioritize their allies, what incentive is there for non-P5 states to respect international law? The UNSC is supposed to function as a moral and legal compass. But when its most powerful members act with impunity, it delegitimizes the institution as a whole. Emerging powers and middle-tier states see this behaviour and may feel justified in bypassing the UN altogether, leading to increased unilateralism, regional conflicts, and instability. Thus, the misuse of the veto not only distorts justice in specific conflicts like Israel-Palestine, but also corrodes the foundational principles of the post-war international system.

Critics argue that the P5 veto system is outdated—a relic of a post-WWII order that no longer reflects contemporary global realities. Developing countries, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, have long pushed for UNSC reform, demanding greater representation and an end to the concentration of power. These calls have grown louder in light of the Council's repeated failures, especially in the Middle East. Yet, these reform efforts are consistently blocked,

unsurprisingly, by the very members who benefit from the status quo. It is an ironic loop: the power to change the system rests with those who are least inclined to change it.

What adds to the problem is that the veto not only blocks military intervention or peacekeeping missions. It also halts symbolic gestures—resolutions that may not have direct legal force but carry significant moral weight. For instance, resolutions that condemn civilian casualties, call for ceasefires, or demand access for humanitarian aid are often vetoed on the grounds of political alignment. This weaponization of diplomacy erodes the UN's ability to act even in the most basic humanitarian sense. In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where civilian suffering is immense and recurring, the inability to issue even non-binding statements of concern speaks volumes about the depth of the crisis within the UNSC.

Furthermore, the use of the veto by the P5 reinforces global hierarchies that many see as unjust. It perpetuates a system where the powerful are never held to account, and the weak are left to suffer without recourse. This breeds resentment, fuels radicalization, and chips away at the legitimacy of international norms. For Palestinians, the UN's repeated failure to act decisively has contributed to disillusionment, not just with the peace process, but with the entire global order. For Israelis, the assurance of a powerful backer creates an environment where compromise becomes less urgent. In both cases, peace is deferred, and justice remains elusive.

To be clear, the issue is not that the veto exists; it is how it is used. In theory, the veto could serve as a safeguard against reckless or politically motivated resolutions. But in practice, it is often deployed to suppress accountability and shield strategic interests. This is not a flaw of policy; it is a flaw of principle. When principles are compromised by interests, institutions begin

to rot from within. The UNSC is approaching that point of decay, and the misuse of the veto is a central cause.

Summarily, the role of P5 national interests and global alliances in shaping veto use is not just a matter of diplomatic preference—it is a fundamental betrayal of the UNSC’s founding purpose. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict stands as a glaring example of how the veto has been transformed from a tool of restraint into a weapon of obstruction. The result is a Security Council that no longer secures peace, but protects privilege. If this trend continues, the credibility of the UNSC will erode beyond repair, and the world will be forced to seek justice elsewhere, outside the very institution designed to uphold it.

2.3.3 The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

2.3.3.1 Historical Background and Key Events

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, deeply rooted in historical, political, and cultural complexities, has endured for over a century, evolving into one of the most protracted and polarizing disputes in modern history. Its origins trace back to the early 20th century, during a period marked by competing nationalistic aspirations, colonial interventions, and geopolitical maneuvering. The conflict's foundation lies in the contradictory promises and policies that defined British rule in Palestine, most notably the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which expressed British support for a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine⁵⁵. While celebrated by Zionist movements as a significant step toward achieving Jewish statehood, this declaration disregarded the aspirations of the Arab population, who formed the overwhelming majority in the region at the time. It is argued that this policy planted the seeds of discord by prioritizing one group's national

aspirations over another's, laying the groundwork for the tensions that would later erupt into open conflict.

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, following the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947, represents a pivotal and highly contentious moment in the history of the conflict. The Partition Plan, which proposed separate Jewish and Arab states with Jerusalem as an international city, was accepted by the Jewish leadership but rejected by Arab states and Palestinian representatives. The ensuing declaration of Israeli independence triggered the first Arab-Israeli war, a violent and transformative conflict that led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, an event known as the Nakba, or "catastrophe," in Arab narratives. Studies in support of Israel's creation argue that it represented the fulfillment of a long-overdue aspiration for Jewish self-determination and security following centuries of persecution, culminating in the Holocaust. However, critique studies contend that the manner of its establishment disregarded the rights of the Palestinian people, leading to enduring grievances and a legacy of dispossession that remains unresolved.

The Six-Day War of 1967 marks another critical juncture in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, fundamentally altering the geopolitical landscape of the region and intensifying the dispute over land. In a swift and decisive military campaign, Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights, dramatically expanding its territory and gaining control over areas with significant Palestinian populations⁵⁶. Supporters of Israel view this war as a necessary and justified response to existential threats posed by neighboring Arab states, emphasizing its preemptive nature in the face of imminent attack. Conversely, it is argued that the occupation of these territories has perpetuated a cycle of violence, entrenching an unequal power dynamic that hinders prospects for a negotiated peace. The subsequent establishment of

Israeli settlements in the occupied territories has further complicated the conflict, sparking international condemnation and accusations of violating international law. This expansionist policy, seen by many as a deliberate effort to alter the demographic and territorial status quo, underscores the deeply contentious nature of land as a central issue in the conflict.

The Yom Kippur War of 1973 further underscores the intractable nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its broader regional implications⁵⁷. This war, initiated by Egypt and Syria to reclaim territories lost in 1967, demonstrated both the limits of military solutions and the deep-seated animosities that define the region. While Israel ultimately prevailed, the war exposed vulnerabilities in its security apparatus, leading to a re-evaluation of its strategic priorities. For Palestinians, however, the war highlighted their marginalization within the broader Arab-Israeli dynamic, as their aspirations for statehood were often subordinated to the geopolitical interests of neighbouring states. It is argued that this neglect of Palestinian agency has perpetuated a pattern of external actors exploiting the conflict for their own ends, further complicating efforts to address its root causes.

The historical narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is also marked by numerous failed peace initiatives, each reflecting the complexities and contradictions inherent in attempts to resolve such a deeply entrenched dispute. From the Oslo Accords of the 1990s to more recent proposals, these efforts have often been undermined by mutual distrust, asymmetrical power dynamics, and external influences. Proponents of negotiated solutions argue that such initiatives represent the only viable path to a lasting peace, emphasizing the need for compromise and mutual recognition. However, it is contended that the structural inequalities between Israel and the Palestinians render these efforts inherently flawed, with one party negotiating from a position of strength while the other remains weakened and divided. This imbalance, coupled with the

persistence of hardline ideologies on both sides, has stymied progress and perpetuated a cycle of failed diplomacy.

Summarily, the historical background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reveals a complex tapestry of competing narratives, unresolved grievances, and missed opportunities. From the Balfour Declaration to the creation of Israel and the wars that followed, each event has left an indelible mark on the conflict, shaping its trajectory and the perceptions of the parties involved.

2.3.3.2 Contemporary Issues and Ongoing Challenges

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains fraught with contemporary issues that perpetuate tensions, foster instability, and exacerbate humanitarian crises. Among the most pressing concerns are territorial disputes, which lie at the heart of the conflict and serve as a continual source of contention between the parties. The borders delineated by the 1949 Armistice Agreements, commonly referred to as the Green Line, are a focal point of disagreement, as Palestinians seek to establish a state based on the pre-1967 boundaries, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Israel, however, maintains a more fluid interpretation of these boundaries, asserting security needs and historical claims to justify its presence in contested territories⁵⁸. It is argued that Israel's policies effectively undermine the viability of a two-state solution by fragmenting Palestinian lands, creating geographical and political barriers that make statehood increasingly untenable. Proponents of Israel's stance, however, counter that territorial concessions in the past have failed to secure peace, underscoring the complexity of achieving a resolution.

The expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem further exacerbates the territorial disputes, with critique studies highlighting this practice as a major impediment to peace. Settlements are widely regarded as illegal under international law, a point contested by

Israel, which argues that the territories lack clear sovereign ownership due to their disputed status⁵⁹. The continuous construction and expansion of settlements disrupt the contiguity of Palestinian territories, limiting their potential for economic and infrastructural development. Studies in support of the settlement movement often invoke historical and religious claims, emphasizing the Jewish people's connection to the land. However, some studies view this expansion as a deliberate and strategic effort to alter demographic realities, making a Palestinian state less feasible and entrenching Israeli control. The settlement issue also provokes international criticism, with many nations condemning the lack of political will to halt expansion as a demonstration of Israel's disregard for international consensus and peace initiatives.

The blockade of Gaza represents another significant challenge in the contemporary landscape of the conflict. Since 2007, when Hamas assumed control of Gaza, Israel, with the cooperation of Egypt, has maintained a blockade, citing security concerns and the need to limit the influence and capabilities of Hamas, which it designates as a terrorist organization. While the blockade is justified by its proponents as necessary to prevent the smuggling of weapons and to curtail militant activities, critique studies argue that its implementation has led to severe humanitarian consequences. The blockade restricts the movement of goods, services, and people, effectively isolating Gaza from the outside world. This has resulted in widespread poverty, unemployment, and a deteriorating quality of life for its nearly two million residents. Human rights organizations have criticized the blockade as collective punishment, disproportionately affecting civilians and fueling resentment and extremism. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza underscores the broader inequities of the conflict, highlighting the imbalance of power and the disproportionate impact of policies on Palestinian populations.

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories, exacerbated by the blockade and broader systemic issues, raises profound ethical and political questions⁶⁰. The lack of access to essential services, including healthcare, education, and clean water, paints a grim picture of daily life for many Palestinians. While Israel and its supporters argue that the situation is exacerbated by Palestinian leadership, particularly Hamas, which prioritizes military objectives over civilian welfare, critique studies assert that Israel, as the occupying power, bears significant responsibility under international law to ensure the well-being of the Palestinian population. Furthermore, the humanitarian crisis is often viewed as a symptom of the broader structural inequalities embedded in the occupation, including restrictions on movement, economic development, and political expression. This persistent crisis not only undermines the social fabric of Palestinian society but also perpetuates cycles of violence, resentment, and instability, making the prospect of a negotiated peace increasingly remote.

Another contemporary issue lies in the political fragmentation of the Palestinian leadership, which hampers efforts to present a unified front in negotiations. The division between the Palestinian Authority, which governs parts of the West Bank, and Hamas, which controls Gaza, highlights the internal challenges faced by the Palestinian people. It is argued that this division weakens the Palestinian position in peace talks, enabling Israel to exploit the lack of cohesion to advance its own interests⁶¹. On the other hand, some contend that Israel's policies contribute to this fragmentation, undermining efforts to achieve unity by favouring one faction over another. This political divide not only complicates efforts to achieve a two-state solution but also highlights the broader challenges of governance and representation within Palestinian society.

Summarily, contemporary issues such as territorial disputes, settlement expansion, the blockade of Gaza, and the humanitarian crisis represent significant challenges in the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict. These issues are deeply interconnected, each exacerbating the other and complicating efforts to achieve a resolution. While Israel justifies many of its policies on security grounds, it is argued that these measures often deepen inequalities and perpetuate the conflict. Similarly, while Palestinian leadership bears responsibility for internal divisions and governance challenges, the broader structural realities of occupation and international dynamics continue to shape the contours of the conflict.

2.3.4 Interventions by the UN Security Council

2.3.4.1 Key UNSC Resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has been a central actor in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, primarily through its adoption of various resolutions aimed at fostering peace, promoting stability, and providing frameworks for conflict resolution. Among the most significant resolutions is Resolution 242, adopted in 1967 following the Six-Day War. This resolution emphasized the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" and called for Israel's withdrawal from territories occupied during the conflict in exchange for the recognition of its sovereignty and security guarantees⁶². While Resolution 242 has often been lauded as a foundational document for peace efforts, its ambiguous language, particularly the lack of specificity regarding the extent of the withdrawal, has allowed both Israelis and Palestinians to interpret its provisions differently, leading to significant contention. It is argued that the resolution's vagueness has contributed to its limited impact, as successive Israeli governments have selectively applied its principles, while Palestinians view its implementation as inadequate for addressing their broader grievances.

Resolution 338, passed in the wake of the Yom Kippur War in 1973, further reinforced the principles of Resolution 242 by calling for a ceasefire and immediate negotiations aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace. This resolution marked an important step in recognizing the need for direct dialogue between the conflicting parties. However, its effectiveness has been questioned, as negotiations initiated under its framework often faltered due to mutual mistrust and external influences. Some argue that the UNSC's inability to enforce compliance with Resolution 338 has undermined its credibility as a mediator, as repeated ceasefire violations and stalled peace talks reveal the challenges of translating resolutions into concrete outcomes. Additionally, detractors highlight that the resolution did not sufficiently address key issues such as the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, or the expansion of Israeli settlements, leaving critical aspects of the conflict unresolved.

Beyond these landmark resolutions, the UNSC has adopted numerous other measures aimed at mitigating the conflict and addressing its humanitarian dimensions. Resolutions condemning acts of violence against civilians and calling for the protection of human rights in the occupied territories have sought to alleviate the suffering of affected populations⁶³. Yet, the impact of these resolutions is often constrained by geopolitical realities, including the influence of powerful member states with vested interests in the conflict. The United States, a permanent member of the UNSC, has frequently used its veto power to block resolutions perceived as overly critical of Israel, effectively stalling initiatives that might otherwise hold parties accountable. While proponents of such vetoes argue that they prevent one-sided resolutions, critique studies contend that this dynamic undermines the UNSC's impartiality and reinforces perceptions of bias, further eroding trust among stakeholders.

Moreover, the UNSC's resolutions have faced criticism for their limited enforceability. Unlike decisions made under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which allow for coercive measures, most resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict fall under Chapter VI, which relies on the voluntary cooperation of the parties involved. This reliance on goodwill has often proven insufficient, as both Israelis and Palestinians have selectively adhered to UNSC resolutions based on their respective strategic interests. Israel's continued settlement expansion and the Palestinian leadership's internal divisions and alleged incitement to violence highlight the challenges of achieving compliance in the absence of robust enforcement mechanisms. Critique studies argue that the UNSC's inability to impose meaningful consequences for non-compliance reflects a broader weakness in its approach, undermining its capacity to effectively mediate the conflict.

Additionally, some observers contend that the UNSC's focus on resolutions has often prioritized process over substance, emphasizing symbolic gestures over actionable solutions. While the adoption of resolutions serves as a testament to the international community's concern for the conflict, their implementation often lags, creating a disconnect between rhetoric and reality⁶⁴. This criticism is particularly salient in the context of resolutions addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where calls for easing blockades and facilitating aid delivery have frequently been overshadowed by political considerations and security concerns. The failure to translate these resolutions into tangible improvements on the ground underscores the limitations of the UNSC's interventions, prompting questions about its relevance in addressing the evolving dynamics of the conflict.

Studies in support of the UNSC's resolutions, however, argue that they provide a crucial framework for diplomacy and set normative benchmarks for conflict resolution. By articulating principles such as land-for-peace and the necessity of mutual recognition, these resolutions

establish a foundation for negotiations and signal the international community's commitment to resolving the conflict⁶⁵. Furthermore, the UNSC's interventions have played a role in mobilizing broader multilateral efforts, including initiatives by the Quartet on the Middle East and other regional actors. Supporters assert that while resolutions alone cannot resolve the conflict, they serve as essential tools for fostering dialogue and maintaining international engagement, thereby preventing the escalation of violence.

Summarily, the UNSC's resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict highlight both the potential and limitations of its role as a mediator and enforcer of international peace and security. While landmark resolutions such as 242 and 338 have laid the groundwork for peace efforts, their ambiguous language, lack of enforceability, and susceptibility to political influences have constrained their impact.

2.3.4.2 Veto Use in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The veto power held by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)—the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China—has long been at the heart of controversy regarding the legitimacy and fairness of the Council's decisions. Nowhere is this more visible than in the protracted and deeply divisive Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Over the decades, the use and misuse of this veto have had significant consequences on the path toward peace, the enforcement of international law, and the credibility of the United Nations as a neutral peacekeeping body.

The role of the veto in this context is not just a matter of procedural mechanics. It has become a clear reflection of how international politics, especially those driven by powerful state interests, override human rights concerns and undermine conflict resolution efforts. The United States, in

particular, has exercised its veto power numerous times to block resolutions perceived to be against Israel, regardless of whether those resolutions had broad international support or were aimed at de-escalating violence. This pattern of behaviour has raised important questions about the integrity of the UNSC and whether it can be considered an impartial body when one of its members consistently shields an ally from accountability.

Historically, the United States has been the most frequent user of the veto in matters related to Israel and Palestine. These vetoes often block resolutions that condemn Israeli settlement activities, military operations, or actions considered violations of international humanitarian law. While the U.S. often claims that such resolutions are one-sided or do not sufficiently call out Palestinian aggression, critics argue that these justifications ignore the overwhelming civilian toll on the Palestinian side and prevent the UNSC from acting decisively to end the conflict. Each veto not only blocks action but also sends a message that violations can continue with impunity if they serve the strategic interests of powerful nations.

This consistent protection of Israel at the UNSC has deepened the perception of double standards in global governance. Many countries in the Global South, as well as civil society actors and international human rights organizations, have expressed concern that the UNSC is unable to function equitably when its decisions are filtered through the lens of alliance politics. The power politics at play are not subtle. The U.S. veto is often seen as a political favour granted to a close ally in return for strategic regional support, including intelligence sharing, arms cooperation, and influence in Middle Eastern diplomacy. This alliance, while geopolitically convenient, severely compromises the Council's ability to present itself as a neutral force for peace.

One of the most controversial vetoes was that of Resolution 2334, passed in 2016, which condemned Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem as illegal under international law. While the resolution passed due to the U.S. abstaining rather than vetoing—a rare moment of restraint—the fact that similar resolutions in the past had been blocked repeatedly by the U.S. demonstrates how inconsistent veto behaviour has shaped UNSC engagement with the conflict. The earlier vetoes created an environment where settlement expansion continued unchecked, and when 2334 was finally allowed to pass, it was already too late to roll back many of the facts established on the ground.

This veto behaviour has not only obstructed resolutions but also discouraged further diplomatic initiatives. Many member states no longer see the UNSC as a viable venue for fair discussion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The repeated blocking of resolutions by one powerful member delegitimizes the entire process, making it harder to build consensus or push for peace-oriented reforms. This erosion of faith in the UNSC's ability to act as a genuine arbiter of justice has damaged its standing in the international system. The veto becomes not just a tool of decision-making, but a weapon that undermines international law.

Moreover, the U.S. vetoes have indirectly contributed to the radicalization of discourse around the conflict. When peaceful and legal avenues are consistently shut down, and when international institutions are seen to favour one side over the other, it creates a breeding ground for hopelessness, extremism, and further violence. Palestinian leaders, as well as the public, lose faith in diplomacy and may turn to more desperate means of resistance. This is not to justify violence but to highlight how systemic injustice and institutional failure drive people to act out of frustration and despair.

Another consequence of repeated vetoes is the freezing of accountability processes. For example, when the UNSC is blocked from even issuing statements condemning attacks on civilians or the use of disproportionate force, there is little room for establishing a record of wrongdoing that could lead to international legal action. The veto, in essence, becomes a shield against scrutiny, preventing independent investigations, sanctions, or any real pressure to change policy. This damages not just peacekeeping efforts in this conflict, but the credibility of the entire international legal framework.

It is also worth mentioning that the vetoes have not served Israel as well as it may seem. While they offer short-term protection, they isolate Israel from the international community and entrench its position in a long-term conflict without a political resolution in sight. They encourage a reliance on force and military superiority rather than diplomacy and compromise. By repeatedly vetoing balanced proposals, the U.S. has made it easier for Israeli governments to avoid difficult but necessary political decisions, such as withdrawing from occupied territories or negotiating the status of Jerusalem.

Furthermore, this unchecked use of the veto contributes to broader disillusionment with multilateralism. It feeds into the narrative that global institutions are not truly global, but rather dominated by a few powerful states acting in their own interest. This is especially dangerous in a world increasingly marked by polarization, where trust in cooperative global governance is already fragile. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with all its complexity and pain, could have served as a showcase for UN leadership and consensus-based peace efforts. Instead, it has become a symbol of dysfunction and power imbalance.

Some defenders of the veto argue that it protects sovereignty and prevents the imposition of majoritarian decisions on powerful states. But in this conflict, the veto has not preserved peace or protected sovereignty in any meaningful sense. It has enabled violence, prolonged occupation, and sidelined diplomatic efforts that could have built a foundation for long-term stability. The use of veto power in this context illustrates not a balance of world order but a distortion of justice by those with the capacity to silence others.

The misuse of vetoes also stunts the development of innovative peacekeeping approaches. When the Council cannot even agree to fact-finding missions or humanitarian ceasefires because of a veto threat, it is paralyzed from the start. This paralysis creates a vacuum often filled by unilateral actions or regional interventions, which rarely come with the legitimacy or resources that an UN-led effort would command. The failure to act in unity leaves communities vulnerable, deepens humanitarian crises, and turns diplomacy into a hollow exercise.

Summarily, the role of the veto in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly as used by the United States, highlights the severe limitations of the UNSC's current structure. Rather than fostering peace, the veto has been employed to entrench division and block accountability. It has made it nearly impossible for the Council to function as intended in one of the world's most urgent and emotionally charged conflicts. The veto, originally designed to prevent great-power wars and promote stability, has instead become a tool of manipulation, shielding allies, avoiding hard truths, and delaying justice. Until this structural flaw is addressed, the Security Council will continue to be seen not as a guardian of peace, but as an arena where powerful nations play politics while ordinary people pay the price.

2.3.4.3 Effectiveness and Limitations of UNSC Interventions

The effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has long been a subject of intense debate, with arguments highlighting both its achievements and its glaring limitations. As the principal organ tasked with maintaining international peace and security, the UNSC has engaged in various interventions, including resolutions, diplomatic efforts, and support for humanitarian operations⁶⁶. While these interventions have underscored the international community's commitment to resolving the protracted conflict, they have also revealed the inherent weaknesses and structural challenges that undermine the Council's effectiveness. The pervasive influence of political biases, the contentious exercise of veto power, and the complex role of regional and international actors are central to understanding the mixed legacy of the UNSC in this enduring crisis.

One of the most significant criticisms leveled against the UNSC is its susceptibility to political biases, particularly those stemming from the interests of its permanent members⁶⁷. The Council's structure, which grants veto power to its five permanent members—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—has often been a double-edged sword. While designed to ensure that the interests of major powers align with collective security, the veto has frequently been wielded to block resolutions deemed unfavorable to a member's strategic allies or ideological preferences. In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the United States has repeatedly used its veto power to shield Israel from resolutions that criticize its policies or actions, including those concerning settlement expansion, human rights violations, and the use of disproportionate force. Proponents of such vetoes argue that they prevent one-sided and politically motivated resolutions that fail to address the complexities of the conflict. However, critique studies contend that this practice undermines the Council's impartiality, erodes its

credibility, and perpetuates a perception of favoritism, which alienates the Palestinian side and hampers the prospects for equitable conflict resolution.

In addition to political biases, the decision-making process within the UNSC is often constrained by competing geopolitical interests, which can stymie meaningful action⁶⁸. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not merely a bilateral issue but a regional and international concern, involving multiple stakeholders with divergent priorities. The roles of regional actors such as Egypt, Jordan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, as well as international powers like the European Union and Russia, introduce layers of complexity that the UNSC must navigate. While the Council has occasionally succeeded in galvanizing international cooperation, such as during the brokering of ceasefires, it has also been hampered by the inability to reconcile these competing interests. While some member states advocate for a two-state solution as the basis for peace, others prioritize security concerns, economic ties, or ideological alignments, leading to fragmented and inconsistent policy approaches. This lack of consensus has often translated into diluted resolutions that fail to address the root causes of the conflict or provide enforceable mechanisms for implementation.

The UNSC's interventions have also been criticized for their limited enforceability, particularly in politically sensitive conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian dispute⁶⁹. Most UNSC resolutions on this issue are adopted under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, which relies on the voluntary cooperation of parties rather than the coercive measures permitted under Chapter VII. While this approach reflects the principle of state sovereignty and the preference for peaceful dispute resolution, it also limits the Council's capacity to compel compliance. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, both sides have selectively adhered to UNSC resolutions, citing conflicting interpretations or prioritizing national interests over international mandates. Israel's continued

expansion of settlements in the West Bank, despite numerous UNSC resolutions deeming them illegal under international law, exemplifies the challenges of enforcement. Similarly, internal divisions within the Palestinian leadership, coupled with external pressures, have hindered their ability to fully engage with UNSC-backed initiatives. These dynamics highlight the gap between the Council's aspirational goals and the realities of implementation on the ground.

Despite these limitations, the UNSC's interventions have not been without merit. Its resolutions have played a crucial role in setting normative benchmarks for the conflict, such as emphasizing the principles of land-for-peace, the inadmissibility of acquiring territory by force, and the need for mutual recognition. These principles have shaped diplomatic efforts, including the Oslo Accords and subsequent peace processes, even if the outcomes have been uneven. Moreover, the Council's involvement has helped maintain international attention on the conflict, preventing it from being sidelined amid other global crises. Humanitarian resolutions, for instance, have facilitated the delivery of aid to Palestinian territories, albeit often under challenging conditions. Supporters argue that while the UNSC's actions may fall short of achieving comprehensive peace, they serve as essential building blocks for incremental progress and underscore the international community's moral and political responsibility to address the conflict.

Nevertheless, the challenges facing the UNSC are compounded by the evolving dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which demand a more adaptive and proactive approach⁷⁰. The rise of asymmetric warfare, the proliferation of non-state actors, and the deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza necessitate innovative strategies that go beyond traditional peacekeeping and resolution frameworks. Critique studies argue that the UNSC's reliance on conventional diplomatic tools, coupled with its reluctance to challenge the entrenched positions of powerful member states, has rendered it increasingly ineffective in addressing these complexities. While the Council has

condemned acts of violence and called for the protection of civilians, its inability to prevent recurring cycles of conflict or hold accountable those responsible for violations of international law underscores its diminishing influence.

Summarily, the effectiveness of the UNSC's interventions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a contentious and multifaceted issue. While the Council has made valuable contributions by articulating principles, fostering dialogue, and mobilizing international attention, its efforts are undermined by political biases, structural limitations, and the complex interplay of regional and international actors. The recurring use of the veto, the lack of enforceable mechanisms, and the fragmented nature of decision-making have constrained the UNSC's ability to fulfill its mandate.

2.3.5 Studies on UNSC Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution

Empirical studies on the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) effectiveness in conflict resolution have yielded diverse insights, reflecting both its potential to mediate disputes and the significant challenges it faces in practice. One area of consensus among researchers is the pivotal role of the UNSC in legitimizing international interventions. Its unique authority to impose sanctions, authorize peacekeeping missions, and enforce resolutions provides it with significant leverage in shaping global responses to conflicts. In cases such as the Gulf War and the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, the UNSC has demonstrated its capacity to galvanize international cooperation and achieve tangible outcomes⁷¹. These successes underscore the Council's potential as a platform for collective action, highlighting the importance of its institutional framework in managing international peace and security.

However, empirical evidence also reveals consistent patterns of ineffectiveness, particularly in politically sensitive conflicts where great power interests are at stake. Studies frequently point to the structural issues within the UNSC, such as the veto power wielded by its five permanent

members—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—as a primary source of gridlock. This mechanism, while designed to balance power among major nations, often leads to paralysis in decision-making, especially when the interests of permanent members conflict. Interventions in Syria, Yemen, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been hampered by the vetoes of one or more permanent members, reflecting how national agendas frequently override collective objectives. Such geopolitical maneuvering not only undermines the legitimacy of the UNSC but also raises questions about its impartiality and moral authority in conflict resolution.

Biases in intervention patterns also emerge prominently in empirical research. Scholars have noted that the UNSC's engagement tends to be selective, often influenced by the economic or strategic significance of the region in question. Conflicts in regions deemed less geopolitically important or lacking strong advocacy from powerful states frequently receive inadequate attention or intervention. This discrepancy has led to accusations of double standards, eroding trust in the UNSC among nations in the Global South. Moreover, the overrepresentation of Western powers among the permanent members perpetuates an imbalance in perspectives, further contributing to perceptions of bias.

The UNSC's challenges extend to the implementation of its resolutions. Studies indicate that even when resolutions are passed, their enforcement often depends on the cooperation of member states and regional actors, many of whom may lack the capacity or willingness to comply. This dynamic has been observed in several African and Middle Eastern conflicts, where weak enforcement mechanisms and limited follow-through have rendered resolutions ineffective. Furthermore, peacekeeping missions authorized by the UNSC often suffer from inadequate

funding, logistical inefficiencies, and insufficient coordination, reducing their impact on long-term conflict resolution.

Despite these challenges, some empirical studies highlight innovative practices that could enhance the UNSC's effectiveness. Efforts to engage regional organizations in conflict mediation have shown promise in addressing the limitations of a centralized approach⁷². Additionally, initiatives to reform the UNSC's structure, such as expanding membership or limiting veto use, have been proposed as potential solutions to its entrenched inefficiencies. While the feasibility of these reforms remains contested, they reflect a growing recognition of the need to adapt the UNSC to contemporary global realities. Together, these empirical findings paint a nuanced picture of the UNSC, balancing its undeniable achievements with the systemic issues that continue to hinder its role in conflict resolution.

2.3.5.1 Studies on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Empirical studies on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reveal complex dynamics shaped by territorial disputes, humanitarian concerns, and the involvement of external actors, each playing a pivotal role in perpetuating or attempting to resolve the conflict. Research examining settlement disputes highlights how the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank has not only exacerbated tensions but also disrupted peace negotiations. Some studies argue that these settlements represent a strategic effort to assert sovereignty over contested lands, effectively precluding the possibility of a viable Palestinian state⁷³. Conversely, other research suggests that these settlements are also deeply influenced by domestic political pressures within Israel, particularly from nationalist factions, thereby complicating efforts to reverse or halt settlement

expansion. These dynamics underscore how domestic political agendas often intersect with broader international disputes, creating a feedback loop of escalating tensions.

On the humanitarian front, empirical analyses consistently point to the severe conditions in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank as a significant impediment to peace. Studies focusing on Gaza's blockade illustrate how restrictions on goods, movement, and resources have led to economic stagnation and a worsening humanitarian crisis, fueling resentment and extremism⁷⁴. This blockade is viewed by some researchers as a necessary security measure to curb militant activities, while others critique it as a form of collective punishment that disproportionately affects civilians. Similarly, studies on the West Bank reveal how infrastructure disparities, restricted access to resources, and frequent clashes with Israeli security forces have entrenched cycles of poverty and violence, further diminishing prospects for peaceful coexistence. These findings emphasize how socio-economic inequalities are deeply intertwined with the conflict's persistence.

The role of external actors has also been a focal point of empirical investigation. Several studies have examined the influence of the United States as a key ally of Israel, highlighting how U.S. diplomatic and military support often tilts negotiations in Israel's favor⁷⁴. Critique studies argue that this bias undermines the credibility of U.S.-brokered peace initiatives, such as the Oslo Accords, by alienating Palestinian stakeholders and fostering mistrust. Conversely, other research highlights the role of regional actors, such as Iran and Arab League nations, in shaping the conflict's trajectory. While some studies praise their advocacy for Palestinian rights, others criticize their involvement as exacerbating regional instability and polarizing negotiations further.

Finally, empirical research often debates the effectiveness of international institutions like the United Nations in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁷⁵. While some studies commend the

UN's efforts to uphold international law through resolutions condemning settlement activities, others highlight its limitations due to the geopolitical influence of powerful member states within the Security Council. The divergent findings underscore the complexities of multilateral interventions in such a deeply rooted and polarized conflict. Together, these empirical insights illustrate the multi-faceted and entrenched nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with each dimension feeding into the broader cycle of tension and instability.

2.4 Summary of Gaps in Literature

The literature on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the role of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in conflict resolution and peacekeeping provides significant insights, yet several critical gaps remain unaddressed. These gaps are evident in both the theoretical and empirical dimensions of existing studies, which fail to comprehensively capture the complexities of the conflict or the effectiveness of UNSC interventions. These deficiencies hinder a full understanding of the interplay between international institutions, state actors, and the broader dynamics of protracted conflicts like this one.

One notable gap is the insufficient application of existing international relations theories to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly concerning the role of the UNSC. While theories such as realism and liberalism offer valuable frameworks, their explanatory power is often constrained by the unique socio-political and historical complexities of this conflict. Realism's focus on power politics and national interests does not adequately address the non-state actors' influence or the socio-cultural and ideological dimensions fuelling the conflict. Similarly, liberal theories emphasizing international cooperation struggle to account for the persistent failures of multilateral institutions like the UNSC in facilitating meaningful peace agreements. These theoretical gaps point to the need for more nuanced and integrative approaches that consider both

traditional state-centric dynamics and the evolving roles of non-state entities, identity politics, and regional influences.

Empirically, studies on the UNSC's interventions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict often lack robust data on the impact and implementation of its resolutions. While several resolutions, such as 242 and 338, have sought to address key aspects of the conflict, there is limited analysis of their effectiveness in achieving tangible progress toward peace. Questions remain unanswered about the practical outcomes of these resolutions, including whether they have contributed to reducing hostilities, protecting civilians, or fostering conditions for sustainable negotiations. Moreover, there is a dearth of comparative studies examining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict alongside other global conflicts, such as those in Bosnia, Rwanda, or Syria, where the UNSC has also played a role. This lack of comparative analysis restricts the ability to draw lessons from past interventions and adapt successful strategies to the unique challenges of this conflict.

Another critical gap lies in understanding the political biases and geopolitical influences shaping the UNSC's actions. While much has been written about the role of veto power and the strategic interests of permanent members, studies often fail to delve into how these dynamics specifically affect the Council's interventions in the Israeli-Palestinian context. The persistent use of vetoes by certain states to shield their allies undermines the Council's credibility and neutrality, yet this issue is rarely analyzed in depth with respect to its long-term implications for peace processes. Additionally, there is limited exploration of how regional actors, such as neighbouring Arab states or Iran, interact with and influence UNSC strategies, further complicating the Council's ability to act decisively.

The gaps identified in the literature are directly aligned with this study's research questions, which aim to address these deficiencies systematically. These questions are:

- I. How does the veto power of the P5 influence the United Nations Security Council's response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly in relation to power politics and international alliances?
- II. How effective is the United Nations Security Council in responding to conflict resolution and peacekeeping in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- III. What resolutions has the UNSC put forth for peacekeeping in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- IV. What are the major challenges faced by the UNSC in implementing effective peacekeeping operations in this conflict?

This study aims to fill the theoretical and empirical gaps in the literature by addressing these research questions, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the UNSC's role in conflict resolution and peacekeeping. This approach not only seeks to critique existing frameworks but also to propose practical and context-specific solutions for overcoming the challenges faced by international actors in one of the world's most enduring and complex conflicts.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design, which relies exclusively on existing data from past journals and online articles. Secondary research is beneficial as it provides access to a broad range of credible sources, allowing for comprehensive analysis without the need for primary data collection¹. Through reviewing published literature, the study synthesizes insights from various scholars, enhancing the depth and validity of findings.

Research design refers to the overall strategy and framework used to conduct a study, ensuring that data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted systematically to address research objectives. It

serves as a blueprint that guides the research process, defining the methods and techniques used to gather relevant information².

The use of past academic journals, articles, and reports enables a critical evaluation of existing knowledge, helping to identify trends, gaps, and patterns relevant to the study's objectives. This approach is cost-effective, time-efficient, and minimizes ethical concerns associated with primary data collection. Additionally, it ensures that the study is grounded in well-documented and peer-reviewed information, strengthening the reliability of conclusions drawn.

3.2 Population of the Study

The Population of this study is the United Nations Security Council.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The study's sample consists of selected secondary data sources, including legal documents, international conventions, protocols, scholarly articles, policy papers, and reports from reputable organizations addressing human trafficking in conflict zones, with a specific focus on Palestine. Key documents such as the Palermo Protocol, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Geneva Conventions form the core of the sample, as they represent the primary international legal frameworks. Reports from the United Nations, particularly the UNODC and UNHCR, as well as regional bodies, are also included to provide a diverse perspective on the issue.

A purposive sampling technique was used to identify and select sources most relevant to the research objectives⁴. This method ensures that the chosen materials directly address the study's focus on international legal frameworks, conflict-related human trafficking, and the challenges of implementation in Palestine. The sample also includes empirical studies that provide statistical insights and practical examples of trafficking trends, legal responses, and institutional efforts.

3.4 Description of the Research Instrument(s)

This study relies exclusively on secondary data, utilizing existing academic journals, articles, reports, and other credible literature as research instruments. These sources serve as the primary means of data collection, allowing for a comprehensive analysis based on previously conducted studies and documented findings⁵. The research instruments include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, government publications, institutional reports, and online databases that provide relevant insights into the subject matter.

A systematic approach is used to identify, select, and analyze these sources. Criteria for selection include relevance to the research topic, credibility of the source, publication date, and methodological rigor. Priority is given to peer-reviewed literature and publications from reputable institutions to ensure data reliability. Additionally, reports from international organizations, such as government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and policy institutions, are incorporated to provide broader context and policy-related insights.

Data extraction involves identifying key themes, trends, and findings from the selected sources. Thematic analysis is employed to categorize and interpret the data, ensuring a structured and coherent presentation of information. This approach allows for a critical examination of existing research, identifying patterns and gaps that contribute to the study's overall analysis.

Utilizing well-established and credible sources, the study ensures the reliability and validity of its findings. The research instruments facilitate an in-depth exploration of the topic, drawing from a diverse range of perspectives to provide a balanced and comprehensive assessment.

3.5 Validity of Research Instrument

The validity of the research instrument in this study is ensured through the careful selection and evaluation of secondary data sources. Since the study relies on past journals, articles, and reports, credibility and relevance are the primary criteria for determining the validity of the data. Only peer-reviewed journals, government publications, and reports from reputable institutions are considered, ensuring that the information used is accurate, objective, and methodologically sound⁶.

To enhance validity, multiple sources are consulted to corroborate findings and minimize bias. Cross-referencing different studies helps verify the consistency of data and interpretations, reducing the risk of relying on outdated or unverified information. Additionally, preference is given to recent literature to ensure that the research reflects current trends and developments in the field.

The study also ensures content validity by selecting data sources that comprehensively cover the research topic. This involves reviewing literature that addresses key themes, variables, and contextual factors relevant to the study. Incorporating diverse perspectives and sources, the research instrument maintains a balanced and well-rounded analysis.

Moreover, expert opinions and well-documented studies serve as benchmarks for evaluating the quality of the data. Reports from globally recognized organizations further enhance the reliability of the findings. The rigorous selection process ensures that the data used is not only valid but also applicable to the research objectives. Through these measures, the study maintains high validity, allowing for a credible and well-substantiated analysis of the research problem.

3.6 Reliability of the Research Instrument

The reliability of the research instrument is ensured through a structured approach to data selection, consistency in methodology, and thorough verification of sources. Since this study relies on secondary data from past journals, articles, and reports, the selection process prioritizes reputable and peer-reviewed sources. This guarantees that the data used is reliable and can be consistently referenced in similar studies⁷.

To further enhance reliability, the study employs a systematic approach to reviewing literature, ensuring that multiple sources confirm key findings. Cross-referencing different studies and reports, the research minimizes inconsistencies and increases the dependability of the information used. Additionally, preference is given to studies that have been widely cited and acknowledged within the academic community, as these are more likely to contain reliable data.

Another critical factor in ensuring reliability is the consistency of data interpretation. The study follows a standardized method for analyzing secondary data, ensuring that results are not influenced by subjective biases. Clear criteria are used to assess the quality and relevance of each source, maintaining uniformity throughout the research process.

Moreover, the reliability of the research instrument is reinforced by using recent and updated literature, which helps avoid outdated or obsolete data. Reports from globally recognized organizations and government agencies are also included to ensure accuracy. Implementing these measures, the study maintains a high level of reliability, ensuring that the findings and conclusions drawn are consistent, replicable, and suitable for academic and practical application.

3.7 Data Collection

This study utilizes secondary data collected from reputable journals, academic articles, published reports, and credible online sources. The selection of sources is guided by relevance, authenticity,

and reliability to ensure that the data accurately reflects the subject matter under investigation. Priority is given to peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, and publications from international organizations, as these sources provide verified and authoritative information⁸.

A systematic approach is followed in gathering data to maintain consistency and objectivity. First, a thorough literature search is conducted using academic databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, ResearchGate, and institutional repositories. Keywords related to the research topic are used to filter and identify relevant materials. Sources that meet the inclusion criteria, such as relevance to the research objectives, publication recency, and credibility, are then selected for further review.

To enhance the reliability of the collected data, cross-referencing is conducted to compare findings from multiple studies. This ensures that the information used is not biased or outdated. Additionally, reports from global institutions such as the United Nations, World Health Organization, and government agencies are included to provide a broader perspective on the research subject.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study follows a structured approach to ensure that the findings are accurate, relevant, and aligned with the research objectives. Since the study relies on secondary data, the analysis focuses on reviewing, comparing, and synthesizing information from various sources, including journal articles, reports, and online publications. A qualitative content analysis method is employed to identify patterns, trends, and key themes related to the research topic⁹.

The first step involves categorizing the collected data based on the research variables, allowing for a systematic review of relevant literature. Thematic analysis is then used to identify recurring

concepts and relationships within the data. This approach helps to provide an in-depth understanding of the subject while ensuring that all aspects of the research problem are thoroughly explored. Additionally, comparative analysis is conducted by cross-examining different sources to establish consistencies or discrepancies in findings.

To enhance the validity of the analysis, only credible and peer-reviewed sources are considered. Bias is minimized by incorporating multiple perspectives from various authors and institutions. Where necessary, statistical data from reports and studies are interpreted to support the qualitative findings.

The final stage involves synthesizing the results into a coherent discussion that aligns with the study's objectives. Key insights are highlighted, and conclusions are drawn based on the reviewed literature. The structured analysis ensures that the findings provide meaningful contributions to the research while maintaining accuracy and objectivity.

3.9 Ethical Approval

This study adheres to ethical guidelines to ensure that all research activities are conducted responsibly and with integrity. Since the research relies on secondary data, ethical approval primarily involves ensuring that all sources used are credible, properly cited, and free from plagiarism. The study strictly follows ethical research principles by acknowledging the original authors of the data and maintaining transparency in data interpretation¹⁰.

As part of ethical considerations, only publicly available and authorized journal articles, reports, and online publications are included. No confidential or restricted data is used, ensuring compliance with data protection regulations. Additionally, the study does not involve human participants, eliminating concerns related to informed consent, privacy, and anonymity.

The research also follows academic integrity standards by avoiding data manipulation or misrepresentation. Information is presented objectively, ensuring that conclusions are drawn based on factual and unbiased analysis. Any conflicts of interest are disclosed to maintain credibility.

To further uphold ethical standards, the study aligns with institutional research ethics policies and guidelines. Where applicable, permissions for the use of specific data sources are obtained. These measures ensure that the research is conducted with high ethical standards while maintaining academic and professional credibility.

End Notes

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study's findings, based on a critical analysis of secondary data, including academic journals, policy papers, official UN documents, and credible reports. The purpose is to evaluate the role of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the lens of its decision-making structure, particularly the use of veto power by the P5, its peacekeeping efforts, issued resolutions, and implementation challenges. The chapter is organized around the research objectives and synthesizes insights drawn from previously published literature and historical records.

4.1 Presentation of Data

This study adopted a secondary research design, which relies exclusively on existing data from past journals and online articles. Secondary research was beneficial as it provided access to a broad range of credible sources, allowing for comprehensive analysis without the need for primary data collection. Through reviewing published literature, the study synthesizes insights from various scholars, enhancing the depth and validity of findings. The use of past academic journals, articles, and reports enabled a critical evaluation of existing knowledge, helping to identify trends, gaps, and patterns relevant to the study's research questions.

4.2 Research Questions

4.2.1 Research Question 1: How does the veto power of the P5 influence the United Nations Security Council's response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly about power politics and international alliances?

The veto power held by the five permanent members (P5) of the United Nations Security Council—namely the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China—has long been a subject of debate, particularly in the context of protracted and politically sensitive conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. Originally intended as a safeguard to prevent global superpowers from engaging in open conflict, the veto has instead become a tool for protecting national interests and reinforcing political alliances. This objective explores how the use of the veto, especially by the United States, has shaped the trajectory of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It critically assesses the extent to which the veto is driven by power politics rather than a commitment to justice, peacekeeping, or the protection of civilian lives. In this context, the UNSC often struggles to maintain credibility as a neutral peacekeeping body.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was established after the Second World War as a central organ of the United Nations, tasked with maintaining international peace and security. It consists of fifteen members, but only five — the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China — hold permanent membership. What sets these five apart is their possession of the veto power. This veto power allows any one of them to single-handedly block any substantive resolution, regardless of how much international support the resolution may have. While intended originally to ensure that major powers would cooperate within the UN rather than act outside it, the veto has over time become a major source of criticism and controversy¹. In the specific case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the exercise of veto power, particularly by

the United States, has had significant consequences, both for the credibility of the Security Council and for the chances of reaching a fair and lasting resolution to the conflict.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most enduring and complex conflicts in modern international politics. Over the decades, various attempts have been made at brokering peace, but with limited success. The UNSC, as the most powerful UN body, has the legal and moral authority to intervene in global conflicts. However, its actions have often been restrained or blocked altogether due to the veto wielded by one or more of the permanent members². Among these, the United States stands out as the most consistent user of the veto in relation to the Israel-Palestine issue. Since 1972, the U.S. has used its veto power over 40 times to block resolutions seen as critical of Israel's actions, particularly in the occupied Palestinian territories.

One of the most notable and controversial uses of the U.S. veto occurred in February 2011. During this period, a draft resolution was introduced in the Security Council, which condemned Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The draft had wide international support, all fourteen other members of the Council voted in favor of it, and over 120 UN member states backed it in general. Yet the resolution was blocked solely because of the U.S. veto. This incident drew sharp criticism from multiple quarters. The settlement activity that the resolution sought to address is widely regarded as illegal under international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the transfer of an occupying power's civilian population into the territory it occupies. Even the U.S., in its public statements and diplomatic discourse, has often described the settlements as unhelpful to peace. However, by exercising its veto, the U.S. effectively contradicted its own stated position. It justified the veto on the grounds that the resolution would hinder the peace process and that such matters should be resolved

through direct negotiations between the parties involved, not through international pressure. Nevertheless, for many observers, the U.S. action was yet another clear demonstration of its unwavering commitment to protecting Israel from international scrutiny, regardless of legal principles or the international community's consensus³.

This pattern of veto usage by the U.S. has had far-reaching implications for the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Security Council. The Council is meant to act as a collective voice of the international community in situations of threat to peace, aggression, or violations of human rights. When one member persistently uses its special privilege to block resolutions aimed at addressing clear violations, the body loses its credibility. Many international legal scholars and human rights advocates argue that the veto power in such instances serves not to preserve peace, but to shield allies from accountability⁴. In the case of Israel and Palestine, the consistent U.S. vetoes have prevented the UNSC from taking meaningful action to address decades of occupation, expansion of settlements, use of force, and the suffering of civilians, particularly Palestinians. In doing so, the Council has been unable to function as the impartial and effective body it was intended to be.

Moreover, the repeated use of the veto by the U.S. exposes a deeper contradiction in its foreign policy. Officially, the U.S. has long supported a two-state solution, in which Israel and an independent Palestine would coexist peacefully. It has often publicly criticized Israel's settlement expansion and has called for restraint in military operations affecting civilians. However, when the opportunity arises at the UN for the international community to hold Israel accountable for these very actions, the U.S. vetoes the resolutions. This contradiction has not gone unnoticed. It has led many countries and analysts to question whether the U.S. can truly be

considered an honest broker in the peace process⁵. If the U.S. consistently shields one party in the conflict from international censure, its role as a neutral mediator becomes highly questionable. This has affected how both sides of the conflict, as well as the broader international community, perceive the peace process.

The impact of these vetoes goes beyond diplomatic symbolism. The failure of the UNSC to act because of veto use has practical consequences on the ground. Without international pressure, Israel has continued to expand settlements, demolish Palestinian homes, and enforce policies in the occupied territories that many describe as forms of apartheid or systemic discrimination. Palestinian frustrations over lack of international support and justice contribute to cycles of violence, despair, and disillusionment with diplomacy⁶. Furthermore, the broader international community's confidence in the UN's ability to resolve conflicts diminishes when powerful nations are seen to prioritize alliances over principles. In essence, the U.S. veto has not only protected Israel diplomatically but also contributed to the perpetuation of the status quo — a status quo marked by occupation, violence, and the denial of basic rights to millions of Palestinians.

This situation has sparked calls for reforming the Security Council, particularly in relation to the use of the veto. Some have proposed that the veto should not be allowed in situations involving mass human rights violations or crimes against humanity. Others suggest that the use of the veto should require justification and be subject to challenge or override if a certain majority of the General Assembly disagrees. These reform proposals are grounded in the idea that no single country should have the power to block international consensus on matters involving basic human rights and international law⁷. While such reforms are difficult to implement — given that

they would require the consent of the very states holding the veto — the growing dissatisfaction with the status quo continues to add pressure for change.

It is also important to recognize that the U.S. is not the only P5 member to have used the veto in ways that protect its allies or interests. Russia and China have used their vetoes to shield the Syrian government from accountability for atrocities committed during the civil war. However, in the Israeli-Palestinian context, the U.S. stands alone in its frequency and consistency of veto usage. Unlike other conflicts where the use of the veto has been sporadic or situation-specific, in the case of Israel and Palestine, it has become a predictable feature of Security Council politics⁸. This makes it particularly concerning, as it reflects a long-term, structural bias in the Council's functioning.

The historical use of the veto in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — especially by the United States — reveals much about the challenges facing the United Nations Security Council today. While the veto was intended as a mechanism to ensure the cooperation of great powers, its frequent use for political shielding has undermined the Council's credibility and effectiveness. In the context of Israel and Palestine, the U.S. veto has blocked international efforts to address illegal settlements, human rights violations, and breaches of international law. This has allowed the conflict to continue with little accountability and has reduced the chances of achieving a just and lasting peace. It has also created a perception that the Security Council serves the interests of the powerful, rather than upholding the collective values of the international community⁹. As the conflict persists and new crises emerge, the need to revisit the role and limits of the veto becomes increasingly urgent — not just for the sake of the Palestinian people, but for the integrity of international peace and the future of multilateralism itself.

The United States' use of its veto power in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has long been a subject of serious international concern and criticism. This pattern of vetoes is not just a matter of political preference or disagreement over specific resolutions. It reflects a deeper and more strategic alliance between the United States and Israel—an alliance shaped by foreign policy priorities, ideological common ground, and mutual geopolitical goals¹⁰. This relationship influences not only U.S. decisions in the international arena but also shapes the global response to the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Since the early 1970s, the U.S. has used its veto power in the UNSC more frequently than any other permanent member when it comes to resolutions criticizing Israel. Most of these vetoes have been exercised to block resolutions that condemn Israeli settlement expansion, military actions in occupied Palestinian territories, or violations of international law and human rights. This consistent use of the veto by the U.S. has caused growing frustration among other UN member states and human rights advocates who see these actions as obstructive to achieving peace and accountability¹¹.

One notable example took place in February 2011, when the United States vetoed a resolution that condemned Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The resolution had widespread support—not only from the other 14 members of the Security Council but also from over 120 countries in the UN General Assembly. These settlements are widely recognized by the international community as illegal under international law and a major obstacle to peace. Despite this, the U.S. chose to veto the resolution, arguing that such measures would harm ongoing peace

negotiations rather than help them. Even though the U.S. acknowledged that the settlements were problematic, it still chose to protect Israel from international condemnation.

As the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations stated:

“On the contrary, we reject in the strongest terms the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlement activity... Continued settlement activity violates Israel’s international commitments, devastates trust between the parties, and threatens the prospects for peace”¹².

This statement clearly shows that the U.S. government was aware of the negative impact of Israeli settlement activity on peace efforts. Yet, despite this admission, it exercised its veto to block collective international action. Many observers saw this as a clear signal of the U.S.’s willingness to shield Israel, even in the face of overwhelming global consensus and its own policy statements.

This repeated behavior is best understood within the context of the long-standing strategic alliance between the United States and Israel. This relationship is not based only on shared democratic values or mutual respect. It is deeply rooted in military cooperation, economic ties, political alignment, and shared geopolitical aims in the Middle East. Over the years, the U.S. has provided Israel with massive amounts of military aid, totaling billions of dollars annually. This assistance helps Israel maintain its military superiority in the region, which the U.S. views as essential to maintaining regional stability and defending its own interests¹³.

Politically, the United States has used its influence in the UN and other international institutions to support and defend Israel. This has included not only the use of veto power in the UNSC but

also efforts to pressure other countries and organizations not to pursue actions that could isolate or punish Israel. The U.S. often presents itself as an honest broker in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but its actions frequently suggest a deeper loyalty to Israel's interests¹⁴. This perceived bias has seriously damaged the U.S.'s credibility as a neutral mediator in peace negotiations.

Beyond the military and political levels, the alliance is also supported by ideological similarities. Both the U.S. and Israel are liberal democracies, and both have framed their alliance as one between two nations that share a commitment to freedom, security, and the rule of law. This ideological closeness is often used to justify policy alignment, especially in a region where many of the U.S.'s other alliances are more transactional or unstable¹⁵. However, this ideological alignment also contributes to the U.S.'s willingness to overlook Israel's violations of international law and human rights, especially when doing so fits broader strategic aims in the Middle East.

This unwavering support for Israel has caused growing criticism from international actors, civil society groups, and scholars. Critics argue that the United States' frequent use of its veto power to protect Israel has severely weakened the UNSC's role as a guardian of international peace and justice¹⁶. By blocking resolutions aimed at holding Israel accountable for actions such as settlement expansion, military attacks on civilians, or the blockade of Gaza, the U.S. is seen as enabling impunity. This has undermined efforts to resolve the conflict in a fair and lasting way.

Furthermore, the repeated use of the veto has raised serious concerns about the functioning of the Security Council itself. Many see it as an outdated institution where the interests of the five permanent members (P5) can override the will of the majority of nations. In this context, the U.S.'s protection of Israel is not just seen as biased, it is seen as an abuse of international power.

As a result, there have been increasing calls to reform the veto system within the UN, with proposals that would either limit or completely abolish the use of the veto in cases involving mass human rights violations or violations of international law¹⁷.

The U.S.'s behavior has also caused problems in its relations with other countries, especially those in the Arab and Muslim world. Many of these countries view the U.S. as an enabler of Israeli aggression and occupation. While the U.S. government often claims to support a two-state solution and criticizes some of Israel's actions, these statements are often undermined by its behavior in the UNSC. This inconsistency damages the trust that other countries, as well as the Palestinian people, might place in the U.S. as a peace mediator.

This contradiction was clearly noted in a report:

“President Obama wants to tell the Arab world in his speeches that he opposes settlements, but he won't let the Security Council tell Israel to stop them in a legally binding way”¹⁸.

This quote shows the deep contradiction between public statements and political actions. While U.S. presidents may express concern about Israel's policies, they often fail to back those concerns with action when given the chance through the UNSC.

These issues are not just historical—they are ongoing. In 2024, the United States once again used its veto power to block a UN Security Council resolution that called for a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas. The resolution was introduced in response to escalating violence and worsening humanitarian conditions in Gaza. It was backed by 13 other Security Council members, with one abstention. However, the U.S. vetoed the resolution on the grounds that it did

not make the release of Israeli hostages by Hamas a condition for the cease-fire. The U.S. argued that any cease-fire agreement must include the release of all hostages to be effective and just.

“The resolution, proposed by the E10 group at Algeria's urging, demanded an immediate, unconditional cease-fire and humanitarian aid for Gaza's civilians. The U.S. sought to link the cease-fire directly to the release of hostages, rejecting the unconditional terms. Consequently, this led to a stalemate and the U.S. veto”¹⁹.

This example again illustrates how the U.S. continues to use its veto power in a way that aligns with Israeli interests. While the protection of hostages is a legitimate concern, many argued that the need to stop the violence and allow humanitarian access should have taken priority. Once again, the U.S. chose to block a resolution with wide international support, reinforcing perceptions that it is more committed to defending Israel than to achieving peace or protecting civilians.

The United States' use of its veto power in the UNSC concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is deeply linked to its strategic alliance with Israel. This alliance, based on shared political, military, and ideological interests, has led the U.S. to consistently prioritize its relationship with Israel over broader international opinion and legal norms. While this approach may serve certain strategic objectives, it has serious consequences. It undermines the legitimacy of the UNSC, damages the U.S.'s image as a neutral actor, and weakens global efforts to achieve a fair and lasting resolution to the conflict. The continued use of the veto in this way raises critical questions about international justice, the credibility of multilateral institutions, and the true costs of strategic alliances that ignore legal and moral responsibilities.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was formed after the Second World War as part of the broader aim to prevent future large-scale conflicts and to ensure international peace and

security. It was intended to be a neutral and decisive body that would act in the interest of global stability. The core idea was that the Security Council, backed by a strong mandate and a unique structure, would be able to step in quickly and effectively wherever peace was under threat²⁰. However, while the mission was noble, the actual functioning of the UNSC has, over time, revealed major contradictions between its original peace-driven goals and the reality of power politics among its five permanent members (P5): the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France.

These five countries hold special status, including the controversial veto power, which allows any one of them to block any substantive resolution, even if it has majority support from the rest of the Council. While the veto power was introduced as a way to ensure cooperation among the major powers and to prevent the recurrence of another world war, it has increasingly become a tool used by the P5 to protect their own national interests and the interests of their close allies. This has often come at the cost of peace, justice, and the rights of vulnerable populations in crisis zones.

One of the clearest illustrations of this misuse is seen in the behavior of the United States, especially in matters related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since 1972, the U.S. has consistently used its veto to block resolutions critical of Israel, even when such resolutions enjoyed overwhelming international support. In February 2011, the U.S. vetoed a draft resolution that sought to condemn Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. This move was despite the fact that the resolution had the backing of every other Security Council member and over 120 United Nations member states. Interestingly, even while casting the veto, the U.S. Ambassador to the UN stated,

“On the contrary, we reject in the strongest terms the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlement activity... Continued settlement activity violates Israel’s international commitments, devastates trust between the parties, and threatens the prospects for peace” ²¹.

This contradiction, criticizing Israel’s actions while still blocking a resolution to address them, highlights the extent to which the U.S. prioritizes its alliance with Israel over the international consensus and the pursuit of peace.

Similarly, Russia’s use of the veto has also been a major obstacle in international peacekeeping efforts, particularly in the Syrian conflict. Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, Russia has used its veto multiple times to block resolutions aimed at investigating war crimes, enforcing humanitarian access, and holding the Assad government accountable. The intention behind these resolutions was to respond to the massive civilian suffering, the use of chemical weapons, and the overall destruction caused by the war. However, Russia’s strategic alliance with the Syrian government and its own geopolitical interests in maintaining influence in the Middle East have taken precedence. As stated in a report by the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect,

“Russia has exercised vetoes more than 100 times since 1946, most recently – and unhappily – four times since 2011 to block resolutions intended to halt the carnage in Syria” ²².

These vetoes effectively paralyzed the UNSC and left millions of Syrians without any meaningful international intervention.

China, another permanent member, has also used its veto power in a manner that aligns more with state interests than with global peace. China’s actions at the UNSC have been particularly focused on shielding itself and its allies from international scrutiny, especially in cases related to human rights. China has vetoed or threatened to veto resolutions aimed at addressing the

situations in Myanmar and the treatment of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang. In both cases, China's primary concern was defending the principle of national sovereignty and avoiding international interference in domestic matters²³. This rigid stance often prevents the Council from taking collective action on humanitarian crises that involve internal oppression or abuse by state actors. These instances highlight how the veto, rather than serving as a stabilizing tool, has been repeatedly used as a political weapon to shut down action that could bring accountability or relief in conflict situations.

The UK and France, though generally more moderate in their use of the veto, are also part of a system that gives them power far beyond what most other UN member states possess. The existence of the veto itself creates an imbalance in the structure of the UNSC. Only five countries, based on their roles in World War II, can unilaterally shape the Council's decisions²⁴. This arrangement increasingly feels outdated in the 21st century, where global power dynamics have shifted and where many other countries and regions are playing key roles in international politics, trade, and peacekeeping.

The use and misuse of the veto power by the P5 members has not only made the Council ineffective in many crises but has also damaged its credibility as a neutral and authoritative body. When countries see that powerful states can block decisions that have global support, trust in the Council diminishes. This concern is echoed by Pratik Mathur, Counsellor in the Permanent Mission of India to the UN, who stated, the exercise of veto is driven by political considerations, not by moral obligations²⁵.

This insight points to a core problem: that decisions within the UNSC are often shaped not by what is right, but by what is politically convenient or advantageous to one of the big five.

The structural imbalance created by the veto power has led to ongoing calls for reform. Many countries argue that the composition of the UNSC does not reflect the geopolitical and economic realities of the modern world. Large and influential nations like India, Brazil, and South Africa, as well as entire continents like Africa and South America, are underrepresented. This lack of representation creates a feeling of exclusion and inequality among UN member states and limits the Council's ability to respond to global problems with the full weight of international consensus. As the Noble World Foundation notes, the veto power held by the five permanent members often hinders the UNSC's ability to resolve conflicts²⁶. This sentiment is widely shared among member states, who feel that the UN system is failing to live up to its promise of collective security and justice.

However, reforming the UNSC is extremely difficult. Any amendment to the UN Charter must be ratified by two-thirds of the General Assembly and approved by all five permanent members. This creates a Catch-22 situation, where the very countries that benefit most from the current system must voluntarily give up some of their power for reforms to happen. As an article explains,

"The problem... is that for abolishing the veto power, the UN Charter will have to be amended, and no amendment in the Charter can be made without the consent of the P-5. So, there is no way out of this Catch"²⁷.

In essence, the UNSC is locked into a system that benefits the few while putting the many at a disadvantage, and there is little room to change that under the current rules.

The result of these structural flaws and political maneuvers is a Council that often fails to act when action is most needed. The world has witnessed the Council's paralysis in addressing the Syrian conflict, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the ongoing crises in Gaza and the West Bank,

and multiple humanitarian disasters in Africa. In each of these cases, the UNSC has struggled—or outright failed to provide timely and effective responses. These failures have not gone unnoticed by the global public, civil society organizations, and governments who look to the UN for leadership in times of crisis.

Without urgent and genuine reform, the UNSC risks becoming increasingly irrelevant. The world is facing new and complex challenges such as climate change, cyber warfare, pandemics, and global terrorism—issues that require strong, fair, and united global leadership. If the UNSC continues to be seen as a tool for the powerful rather than a platform for peace, it will not be able to meet these challenges. Reform must not only address representation but also put limits or controls on the use of the veto, especially in situations involving genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Summarily, the contradictions within the UNSC are rooted in the misuse of the veto power by the P5 members, who often place national interests above the Council's peace mandate. While the UNSC was founded to act as a guardian of global peace, it has too often been sidelined by the politics of its most powerful members. The examples of U.S. actions in defense of Israel, Russia's shielding of Syria, and China's stance on human rights issues demonstrate how the veto can block needed action. This behavior weakens the Council's legitimacy, restricts its ability to respond to crises, and raises serious questions about its effectiveness in today's world. Unless meaningful reforms are implemented, the UNSC will remain trapped between its original ideals and the harsh reality of power politics.

4.2.2 Research Question 2: How effective is the United Nations Security Council in responding to conflict resolution and peacekeeping in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was established to play a central role in maintaining global peace and resolving conflicts. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Council has long been expected to act as a neutral and authoritative body capable of reducing violence, encouraging dialogue, and fostering long-term peace between the two sides. This objective evaluates how effective the UNSC has been in fulfilling this responsibility specifically within the Israeli-Palestinian context. It examines the extent to which the Council's resolutions, peacekeeping roles, and diplomatic interventions have made any meaningful impact.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has, over several decades, passed numerous resolutions in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These resolutions are meant to reflect the collective will of the international community in seeking a peaceful resolution to one of the longest-running conflicts in modern history. However, the effectiveness of these resolutions remains highly questionable. The pattern that emerges from a critical analysis of these resolutions shows that while the UNSC has made repeated calls for ceasefires, territorial withdrawals, the respect of international law, and the protection of civilians, the actual impact of these efforts on the ground has been minimal²⁶. In many cases, the resolutions have been ignored, selectively implemented, or even undermined by the very states expected to uphold them, including permanent members of the Council itself.

One of the most widely cited resolutions is **UNSC Resolution 242**, adopted in the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War. It called for the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict" and "respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area"²⁹. While this resolution became a foundational document in peace negotiations, including the Oslo Accords, its language was deliberately vague.

The phrase "from territories occupied" lacked the definite article "the," leading to conflicting interpretations by Israel and Arab states. Israel viewed it as allowing for partial withdrawal, while Arab countries saw it as requiring full withdrawal. The result was decades of diplomatic paralysis, with both sides claiming legitimacy based on their own reading. As observed, resolution 242 was written in such a way as to enable both sides to accept it, but also to interpret it differently³⁰. This ambiguity allowed Israel to continue its occupation of key areas such as the West Bank, while claiming it was not in breach of international law.

Other resolutions followed, such as **Resolution 338 (1973)**, which called for an immediate ceasefire and the implementation of Resolution 242, and **Resolution 446 (1979)**, which declared Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories illegal. Yet despite these clear statements, Israeli settlement expansion has continued unabated. As noted, Israel's steady and relentless settlement policy has created facts on the ground that have rendered Security Council resolutions largely irrelevant³¹.

The continued expansion of settlements has not only made the two-state solution more difficult but also demonstrated how the UNSC lacks the enforcement tools needed to compel compliance. In the absence of real consequences, the resolutions have come to represent symbolic gestures rather than instruments of legal and political authority.

Even when resolutions receive unanimous support, their implementation often depends on the political will of the P5 members, especially the United States. In many instances, Washington has either blocked stronger language from being included in the texts or failed to act when Israel ignored the resolutions. The case of **Resolution 2334 (2016)** is especially revealing. This resolution reaffirmed the illegality of Israeli settlements and demanded a halt to all settlement

activities. The United States, in a rare move, abstained rather than vetoing, allowing the resolution to pass. However, it took no further action to enforce it. Within months, the Israeli government approved thousands of new settlement homes. As remarked, resolution 2334 was a diplomatic high point but a practical low, as Israel simply ignored it and faced no consequences³². This points to a major structural flaw within the UNSC—the absence of enforcement mechanisms or the political courage to use them.

In the context of Palestinian compliance, the situation is no less complex. While some Palestinian leaderships have expressed support for UNSC resolutions, especially those that align with their calls for statehood or protection of civilians, others have ignored the Council's recommendations when they contradict political or militant strategies. Repeated calls for an end to rocket attacks on Israeli civilians have gone unheeded by militant groups like Hamas. However, the lack of differentiation between state and non-state actors and the absence of direct dialogue mechanisms between the UNSC and these non-state groups make enforcement and accountability deeply problematic. The UNSC has largely failed to offer any coherent strategy for engagement with Palestinian factions beyond official state representatives. This gap contributes to the Council's limited influence on the actual events on the ground.

Another serious limitation lies in the failure of the UNSC to react decisively when its resolutions are openly defied. Whether it is Israel continuing settlement construction or Palestinian factions engaging in violence, the Council's response has typically been diplomatic silence or non-binding statements. As pointed out, resolutions without enforcement are like laws without police—beautiful in theory, but weak in practice³³.

The UNSC's inability to follow through with sanctions or collective action when its authority is undermined signals to conflicting parties that non-compliance carries no cost. This perception emboldens continued violations and delegitimizes the Council's role as a peacekeeper.

In terms of civilian protection, UNSC resolutions have often failed to prevent or halt large-scale violence. During major outbreaks of conflict, such as in Gaza in 2008–09, 2014, and 2021, the Council has either struggled to pass resolutions or has done so after significant delays. In each case, thousands of civilian casualties occurred, infrastructure was destroyed, and humanitarian conditions deteriorated. Even when ceasefires were eventually brokered, they were short-lived and failed to address the root causes of violence. As stated,

“The Security Council has been largely absent or delayed in responding to repeated cycles of violence, and its resolutions have lacked the teeth to stop the suffering of civilians on both sides”³⁴.

This again underscores the gap between symbolic action and practical intervention.

It is also important to consider how the parties involved—Israel and the Palestinian Authority—have responded to UNSC calls for negotiation and peace processes. Israel has often refused to engage with resolutions it deems biased or unbalanced, particularly those that make direct demands regarding territorial withdrawal or settlements. On the other hand, the Palestinian Authority has used resolutions as diplomatic tools to push for recognition and international support, but without any real guarantee of enforcement. In effect, both parties have used UNSC resolutions to support their political narratives without necessarily committing to implementation. As remarked, UN resolutions have become a rhetorical battlefield, not a roadmap to peace³⁵.

This critical observation highlights how UNSC action has become entangled in broader political agendas rather than serving as a neutral peacebuilding mechanism.

The geopolitical bias within the UNSC further compromises the legitimacy of its resolutions. The United States, a permanent member, has consistently used its veto power to block resolutions perceived as anti-Israel, regardless of the humanitarian or legal context. This has led many countries, particularly in the Global South, to view the Council as an instrument of Western interests rather than an impartial body. As stated,

"The perception of double standards in the Security Council's treatment of Israel undermines its moral authority and weakens its capacity to mediate conflict³⁶".

Without a sense of fairness and impartiality, conflicting parties are less likely to take the Council's decisions seriously.

The symbolic nature of many UNSC resolutions also feeds into this problem. Because the Council often stops short of imposing binding measures, its resolutions, while legally significant, are largely political statements. This symbolic diplomacy creates an illusion of progress without actual change. For example, when the UNSC passed **Resolution 1515 (2003)** endorsing the "Roadmap for Peace," it was hailed as a major step forward. But within a few years, the roadmap collapsed due to lack of compliance and political will, and the resolution faded into obscurity. As pointed out, the UNSC has a long record of endorsing peace plans that quickly dissolve into irrelevance due to lack of monitoring and enforcement³⁷.

In essence, the pattern that emerges is one of repetition without resolution. The UNSC continues to pass resolutions that reiterate earlier ones, condemn violence, call for negotiations, and urge the protection of civilians. But the lack of follow-through, the influence of geopolitical interests,

and the absence of enforcement tools mean that these resolutions have limited practical effect. Instead of being agents of peace, they often serve as placeholders—used to show international concern without real commitment to action.

Summarily, the UNSC's record in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reveals a disturbing contradiction. While it has issued numerous resolutions aimed at addressing the conflict, those resolutions have largely failed to bring about substantial change. Both Israel and Palestine have, at different times, rejected or ignored these resolutions, often with no consequence. The Council's inability to enforce its decisions, combined with the geopolitical biases of its most powerful members, has turned many of its resolutions into symbolic gestures rather than instruments of peace. If the UNSC is to have any meaningful role in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it must move beyond symbolism, confront power politics, and develop real mechanisms to hold violators accountable. Without such changes, its resolutions will continue to gather dust in UN archives while violence and injustice persist on the ground.

4.2.3 Research Question 3: What impact have the resolutions by the UNSC had on peacekeeping in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has been at the forefront of international efforts to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the issuance of multiple resolutions over the decades. These resolutions, particularly those such as Resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 446 (1979), and 2334 (2016), have aimed to provide a framework for peace and to bring stability to the region. While these resolutions were adopted with the promise of addressing the core issues of the conflict, such as territorial disputes, military occupation, and the recognition of rights, their impact has been hotly debated³⁸. The effectiveness of these resolutions in achieving long-

term peace or even short-term change is a subject of continued scrutiny, particularly given the persistent nature of the conflict. By critically analyzing the resolutions' short-term and long-term impacts, we can better understand their significance and assess the role of the UNSC in promoting peace.

Resolution 242, adopted after the 1967 Six-Day War, is one of the most significant and well-known UNSC resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. It called for Israel to withdraw from territories occupied during the war and for the recognition of every state's right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries. In the short term, Resolution 242 laid the groundwork for the Camp David Accords in 1978, which resulted in a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, the first Arab state to officially recognize Israel. The immediate effect of the resolution was a temporary shift toward diplomacy, as it suggested a path toward territorial adjustments and peaceful negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors. However, despite its initial promise, the long-term impact of Resolution 242 has been far less consequential. Israel has not fully implemented the resolution's call for a withdrawal from all occupied territories, particularly the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and no permanent peace agreements have been reached that resolve the underlying territorial disputes. As noted in an analysis,

“Resolution 242, despite its widespread acceptance and appeal, has failed to achieve its goal of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region”³⁹.

Resolution 338, passed in the wake of the Yom Kippur War in 1973, called for an immediate ceasefire and the implementation of Resolution 242. While the resolution succeeded in bringing about a ceasefire, its long-term effects were similarly limited. The immediate impact of Resolution 338 was the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Egypt and Syria, leading to a temporary lull in violence. However, the resolution did not lead to any significant political

breakthroughs, as the underlying issues regarding territorial disputes and security were not addressed adequately. It is argued that,

“While Resolution 338 was successful in halting the fighting, it did little to address the root causes of the conflict, leaving the door open for future military confrontations”⁴⁰.

In this sense, Resolution 338 reflects the limitations of UNSC resolutions in achieving long-term peace without a fundamental shift in the underlying dynamics of the conflict.

Resolution 446, adopted in 1979, was another important UNSC decision that addressed Israel’s policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. The resolution determined that Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip had no legal validity and called for an immediate halt to settlement activities. While the resolution was clear in its condemnation of Israeli settlements, it was largely ignored in practice. Israel continued to expand its settlements, with minimal consequences from the international community. As indicated, resolution 446, like many others before it, lacked the enforcement mechanisms to compel Israel to comply, making it symbolic rather than effective⁴¹.

Despite its strong language, the resolution had little effect on curbing the expansion of Israeli settlements, and settlement activity has continued to be a major point of contention in the peace process. Over time, this lack of enforcement has contributed to the perception that the UNSC is ineffectual in its ability to hold Israel accountable for violations of international law.

Resolution 2334, passed in 2016, reiterated the condemnation of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and called for a halt to settlement expansion. This resolution was notable for its strong wording and for being passed with the U.S. abstaining rather than vetoing it, marking a

departure from the U.S.'s usual position of shielding Israel. However, like Resolution 446, the long-term impact of Resolution 2334 has been minimal. While it garnered widespread international support, Israel continued to expand its settlements, and the resolution did not lead to any meaningful change on the ground. In fact, Israel's government dismissed the resolution as "biased" and "counterproductive," continuing its settlement activities in defiance of the international community. As commented,

"Resolution 2334, although a step toward holding Israel accountable, ultimately failed to alter the course of Israeli settlement expansion or bring about any substantive change in the policies of the Israeli government" ⁴².

This illustrates a critical challenge for the UNSC: without strong enforcement mechanisms, its resolutions often remain unenforced, making them ineffectual in achieving long-term peace.

The short-term impacts of these resolutions, particularly in terms of ceasefires or temporary lulls in violence, can be seen as symbolic gestures, providing an international framework for peace. These moments of diplomacy, however, often fade without tangible results. The long-term impact, on the other hand, reveals a stark pattern of inconsistency and a lack of follow-through on the part of both the UNSC and the international community as a whole. While resolutions like 242 and 338 may have been instrumental in promoting temporary peace talks, they ultimately failed to deliver sustainable solutions. Similarly, while resolutions like 446 and 2334 condemned Israeli settlements, they did not achieve any significant reduction in settlement activity or contribute to a lasting peace agreement.

A critical factor in the failure of these resolutions to produce lasting peace lies in the political dynamics surrounding the UNSC. The P5 members, particularly the United States, have been reluctant to impose serious consequences on Israel, often vetoing or abstaining from actions that

would hold Israel accountable. This selective enforcement of UNSC resolutions undermines the legitimacy of the body and its ability to enforce its decisions. As observed,

“The United States, which has the power to veto any UNSC resolution, has often been a shield for Israel, ensuring that the resolutions adopted by the Council carry little weight”⁴³.

The U.S.’s unwavering support for Israel in the UNSC has been a significant factor in limiting the effectiveness of UNSC resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The UNSC’s failure to enforce its resolutions, coupled with the lack of a coherent and consistent approach to the conflict, raises critical questions about the effectiveness of the Security Council in conflict resolution. It is argued that the UNSC’s impotence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is emblematic of its broader failure to deal with contemporary global conflicts, where its decisions are often disregarded or diluted by the interests of its permanent members⁴⁴. This selective application of power demonstrates the limitations of the UNSC in achieving its core mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

Summarily, while the UNSC has passed a number of resolutions aimed at addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the short-term impact of these resolutions has been largely confined to temporary ceasefires or peace talks, which often collapse once the pressure subsides. The long-term impact, on the other hand, reveals the inability of the UNSC to address the root causes of the conflict, such as territorial disputes, security concerns, and the status of Jerusalem. The lack of enforcement mechanisms, coupled with the political dynamics of the P5, has contributed to the ineffectiveness of these resolutions. In the absence of real accountability and meaningful action, UNSC resolutions have often remained symbolic, failing to bring about lasting peace or substantial changes on the ground.

Ultimately, these resolutions highlight the deep contradictions within the UNSC's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While they have the potential to shape international discourse and guide diplomatic efforts, their actual impact has been minimal, raising critical questions about the efficacy of the UNSC as a mechanism for peace and conflict resolution.

4.2.4 Research Question 4: What are the major challenges faced by the UNSC in implementing effective peacekeeping operations in this conflict?

This section focuses on identifying and discussing the major challenges the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) faces in implementing effective peacekeeping measures in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Despite the UNSC's role as the global body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, its actions in this conflict have often been limited by various obstacles. These challenges range from the political influence of the five permanent members (P5) of the UNSC, who often prioritize national interests over global peace, to the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms that prevent resolutions from being translated into meaningful actions on the ground. This objective seeks to critically analyze these challenges and assess how they have impacted the effectiveness of the UNSC's peacekeeping efforts in resolving one of the world's most enduring and volatile conflicts.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, has long struggled with its ability to effectively address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Despite passing numerous resolutions intended to resolve the conflict and promote peace, the Council's effectiveness is often undermined by the political

influence of the five permanent members (P5) — China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The most significant of these influences is the veto power held by these five countries, which allows any one of them to block resolutions, regardless of the views of the remaining members of the Council. This power imbalance plays a crucial role in hindering the UNSC's ability to implement meaningful peacekeeping measures in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The veto power was originally conceived as a mechanism to ensure that the major powers were on board with decisions that could have wide-ranging consequences. However, over time, it has proven to be a double-edged sword. While it preserves the interests of the P5 members and maintains a delicate balance of power, it also allows these nations to prioritize their national or geopolitical interests over the collective goal of peace⁴⁵. As a result, the veto has been used repeatedly to block actions that could bring about meaningful change in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly when these actions are perceived to be against the strategic interests of any of the P5 members. This undermines the UNSC's credibility as an impartial and effective institution for resolving international disputes.

One of the most telling examples of the veto's impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the repeated use of the veto by the United States to shield Israel from international condemnation. The U.S. has vetoed numerous UNSC resolutions critical of Israel's actions in the occupied Palestinian territories, including settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. In 2011, for example, the U.S. vetoed a resolution that would have condemned Israel's settlement activity in the West Bank, despite the fact that the resolution had broad support within the UNSC and the wider international community. As noted in an analysis,

“The U.S. has repeatedly used its veto to block resolutions that hold Israel accountable, often citing Israel’s right to self-defense as a justification for its actions”⁴⁶.

The veto not only shields Israel from accountability but also sends a clear message that the U.S. prioritizes its strategic alliance with Israel over the pursuit of peace in the region. This dynamic effectively perpetuates the status quo and prevents the UNSC from fulfilling its mandate to resolve the conflict.

Similarly, Russia has used its veto power to block resolutions that would put pressure on its allies in the region. In particular, Russia’s vetoes have been instrumental in shielding the Syrian government from international censure for its role in the conflict. Russia has long been a key ally of the Syrian regime, and its vetoes in the UNSC have repeatedly frustrated efforts to hold Syrian President Bashar al-Assad accountable for his government’s actions, including the use of chemical weapons against civilians. This geopolitical alignment between Russia and Syria has prevented the UNSC from taking decisive action in the region, further complicating the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as the conflict is intricately tied to broader regional dynamics. As pointed out,

“Russia’s strategic interests in the Middle East, particularly its alliances with countries like Syria and Iran, often take precedence over the UNSC’s collective efforts to secure peace”⁴⁷.

This creates a deadlock in the UNSC, where the national interests of one P5 member can derail the entire peace process.

China, while less directly involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has also used its veto power in ways that impact the broader Middle Eastern geopolitical landscape. As a rising global power with strong economic and diplomatic ties to many countries in the region, China’s stance on the

conflict has been shaped by its desire to maintain good relations with Arab states and preserve its own strategic interests. China has occasionally exercised its veto power in response to resolutions that it perceives as biased or that could undermine its relations with key regional actors. However, as noted,

“China’s position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is guided more by its broader geopolitical and economic interests than by a commitment to a particular side in the conflict”⁴⁸.

This often results in a situation where China, like the other P5 members, uses its veto power to protect its own interests, regardless of the broader implications for peace and stability in the region.

The United Kingdom and France, historically influential players in the Middle East, also have their own interests in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The UK’s historical ties to Israel and its strategic interests in the region have led to a tendency to shield Israel from international scrutiny. Meanwhile, France has sometimes sought to position itself as a mediator in the conflict, advocating for a two-state solution. However, when push comes to shove, France’s actions are often constrained by its need to align with the EU and its own geopolitical interests. As noted,

“France’s position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is shaped by its desire to maintain its standing as a key player in the EU and to balance its support for Palestinian statehood with its need to maintain ties with Israel”⁴⁹.

This careful balancing act often results in a lack of decisive action in the UNSC, where competing national interests prevent consensus and inhibit the ability to enforce peacekeeping measures.

The interplay of these competing interests creates a profound challenge for the UNSC in implementing effective peacekeeping measures in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The veto power, which was designed to ensure consensus among the major powers, has instead become a tool for advancing national interests at the expense of global peace. In this environment, the UNSC is rendered ineffective, as resolutions that might advance peace or address critical issues are repeatedly blocked by the vetoes of one or more P5 members. The result is a cycle of inaction and frustration that prevents the UNSC from fulfilling its core mission of resolving conflicts and ensuring international security.

Moreover, the political influence of the P5 members also affects the composition and mandate of peacekeeping missions. When the UNSC does authorize peacekeeping operations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the mandates of these missions are often watered down to avoid offending any P5 member. For example, peacekeeping forces are frequently deployed in a limited capacity, with insufficient resources and unclear mandates, rendering them ineffective in preventing violence or protecting civilians. As noted,

“Peacekeeping missions under the auspices of the UNSC often reflect the priorities of the P5 members rather than the needs of the people caught in conflict”⁵⁰.

This undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of the peacekeeping efforts, as the focus shifts from a genuine desire for peace to the pursuit of political advantage by the P5 members.

The challenge of political influence and the veto power of the P5 members has long been recognized as a fundamental flaw in the UNSC’s structure and functioning. The repeated use of the veto to block resolutions related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict illustrates the inability of the UNSC to transcend the narrow national interests of its most powerful members. As noted,

“The veto power ensures that the UNSC remains a reflection of the global power structure, rather than an impartial institution for conflict resolution”⁵¹.

Until these systemic issues are addressed, the UNSC will continue to struggle in its efforts to implement effective peacekeeping measures in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and other global crises.

Summarily, the political influence of the P5 members and their use of the veto power have significantly hindered the UNSC’s ability to implement peacekeeping measures in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The competing national interests of these countries often lead to stalemates, preventing consensus and blocking resolutions that could bring about meaningful change. The resulting paralysis within the UNSC has undermined its credibility and effectiveness, highlighting the need for comprehensive reform of the Council’s structure and decision-making processes. Until such reforms are made, the UNSC will remain an ineffective instrument for addressing the complex and ongoing challenges of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) faces significant challenges in translating its resolutions into effective and actionable peacekeeping mandates, particularly in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These challenges are rooted in the lack of robust enforcement mechanisms and the reluctance of member states to deploy peacekeeping forces or take strong, decisive action. While the UNSC has passed a number of resolutions aimed at addressing the conflict, the absence of effective implementation strategies and the limitations imposed on peacekeeping mandates have rendered these efforts largely ineffectual⁵². This issue is compounded by the reluctance of member states, particularly those with significant political and strategic interests in the region, to fully commit to the deployment of peacekeeping forces or other enforcement

measures. As a result, the UNSC's peacekeeping efforts in the region have often been weak, fragmented, and ultimately insufficient to bring about lasting peace.

One of the most glaring problems is the lack of enforcement mechanisms within UNSC resolutions. While the UNSC has the authority to pass resolutions that demand specific actions, it lacks the ability to enforce these demands effectively. In principle, the UNSC can authorize the use of force through Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, but this power is rarely exercised, particularly when the interests of the P5 members are at stake. This lack of enforcement is particularly evident in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where resolutions aimed at halting violence, preventing settlement expansion, and ensuring humanitarian access have often been ignored or violated without consequence. The absence of meaningful punitive measures for states that disregard UNSC resolutions undermines the legitimacy of the Council and its capacity to promote peace. As noted, the UNSC often lacks the political will and the backing of the international community to translate its resolutions into concrete actions⁵³.

Furthermore, the lack of enforcement mechanisms is often exacerbated by the political influence of the P5 members, who can veto any action they perceive as contrary to their national interests. The United States has repeatedly used its veto power to shield Israel from condemnation in the UNSC, thereby undermining the effectiveness of resolutions that would otherwise hold Israel accountable for its actions in the occupied territories. As pointed out,

“The U.S. veto has effectively rendered the UNSC powerless in enforcing resolutions that challenge Israel's actions, even when those actions are in clear violation of international law”⁵⁴.

This dynamic creates a significant imbalance in the UNSC, where the political interests of the most powerful members often take precedence over the collective goals of the international community.

In addition to the lack of enforcement mechanisms, the peacekeeping mandates authorized by the UNSC in the region have often been limited in scope and authority. The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), established in 1974 to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Syria in the Golan Heights, serves as a prime example of this issue. While the mandate of UNDOF was initially focused on maintaining a ceasefire and facilitating disengagement between the two sides, its scope has remained limited, and its effectiveness has been undermined by a lack of authority and resources. UNDOF's inability to intervene directly in the event of renewed hostilities or to prevent violations of the ceasefire has made it largely ineffective in ensuring long-term peace and stability in the region. As observed,

"UNDOF's mission has been constrained by a limited mandate and insufficient resources, which has rendered it incapable of addressing the root causes of the conflict" ⁵⁵.

This highlights a broader issue with UNSC peacekeeping mandates: they are often too narrowly defined and fail to address the underlying political dynamics that fuel the conflict.

The lack of robust enforcement mechanisms is also evident in the broader peacekeeping efforts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the UNSC has authorized the deployment of peacekeeping forces in various parts of the region, including the West Bank and Gaza, these missions have often been plagued by limitations on their authority and a lack of political will among member states to fully support their mandates. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which was established to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah,

has faced significant challenges in implementing its mandate. While UNIFIL has been relatively successful in maintaining a ceasefire, it has been unable to prevent violations of the ceasefire by either side, and its mandate has been repeatedly diluted over time. It is argued that UNIFIL's inability to fully enforce its mandate is a reflection of the broader challenges faced by UN peacekeeping missions in the region, where political considerations often prevent effective action⁵⁶. This issue is compounded by the reluctance of member states to commit sufficient resources to these missions, leading to peacekeeping forces that are often understaffed and underfunded.

The limited effectiveness of peacekeeping mandates is further exacerbated by the lack of a clear and unified strategy for conflict resolution in the region. While the UNSC has passed numerous resolutions calling for a two-state solution and the cessation of hostilities, these resolutions have often been vague and lacking in concrete measures for implementation. As noted,

"The UNSC has failed to articulate a coherent and actionable plan for peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, relying instead on vague calls for negotiations and dialogue"⁵⁷.

This lack of a clear strategy has made it difficult for peacekeeping missions to operate effectively, as they are left to deal with the symptoms of the conflict rather than addressing its root causes.

Moreover, the peacekeeping missions that have been deployed in the region have often been hindered by the reluctance of key member states to fully commit to their success. While the UNSC can authorize peacekeeping missions, it is ultimately up to individual states to provide the necessary troops, funding, and logistical support. In many cases, member states are unwilling to contribute the necessary resources due to their own political and strategic interests. As noted, the

lack of political will among member states to fully support peacekeeping missions is a key factor in their limited effectiveness⁵⁸.

This reluctance to invest in peacekeeping efforts is particularly evident in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where member states are often more focused on advancing their own interests than on contributing to the success of peacekeeping operations.

In light of these challenges, the UNSC's peacekeeping efforts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have often been ineffective, with limited impact on the ground. The lack of robust enforcement mechanisms, coupled with the reluctance of member states to fully support peacekeeping mandates, has undermined the ability of the UNSC to implement meaningful peacekeeping measures. This failure to translate resolutions into concrete actions has resulted in a situation where violence continues unabated, peace talks stall, and civilians remain vulnerable to harm. The lack of a clear and unified strategy, combined with the political dynamics of the P5 members, has further hindered the UNSC's ability to resolve the conflict and ensure lasting peace.

As a result, the international community must confront the fundamental flaws in the UNSC's approach to peacekeeping in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The absence of effective enforcement mechanisms and the reluctance of member states to fully support peacekeeping efforts highlight the need for a more robust and cohesive strategy. This strategy must go beyond the passing of resolutions and must include clear, enforceable actions that hold all parties accountable. Additionally, there must be a commitment from the international community to provide the necessary resources and political support for peacekeeping missions to succeed. Without such changes, the UNSC's peacekeeping efforts in the region are likely to remain ineffective, and the prospects for a lasting peace will continue to diminish.

Summarily, the lack of enforcement mechanisms and the limitations of peacekeeping mandates have been significant obstacles to the success of UNSC peacekeeping efforts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The inability of the UNSC to translate its resolutions into effective action, combined with the reluctance of member states to fully support peacekeeping missions, has rendered these efforts largely ineffectual. The resulting lack of progress on the ground has perpetuated the cycle of violence and instability in the region, highlighting the urgent need for reform in the UNSC's approach to peacekeeping and conflict resolution. Only through a more cohesive and robust strategy can the UNSC hope to make meaningful progress in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and achieving lasting peace.

4.3 Discussions of Findings

The findings of this study expose a deeply rooted trend of political bias, strategic alliances, and structural shortcomings in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), specifically concerning the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Most fundamental to the ineffectiveness is the veto power of its five permanent members (P5), which consistently impedes meaningful interventions. Among these, the United States' repeated use of the veto to shield Israel from international censure stands out as particularly consequential. This behaviour, shaped by a long-standing strategic and ideological alliance with Israel, has undermined the Council's impartiality and contributed to its inability to enforce resolutions or hold violators accountable.

The U.S. has exercised its veto more than 40 times to protect Israel in the past and, in that process, vetoed resolutions condemning illegal settlement expansion, military expansion, or human rights violations in Palestinian territories. Despite international consensus evidenced by overwhelming Council and UN General Assembly member votes, these resolutions

are consistently blocked by U.S. vetoes. The most notable case occurred in 2011 when the U.S. vetoed a resolution that condemned Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, even while acknowledging that the settlements were harmful to peace efforts. This duality in policy—denouncing certain actions publicly while simultaneously blocking efforts to address them legally—erodes trust in the U.S. as a neutral mediator and, more broadly, in the UNSC as a fair peacekeeping institution.

The consequences of this political immunity are profound. Israel has continued to behave with a huge sense of impunity, growing settlements, and launching military operations with little regard for international condemnation. These activities perpetuate patterns of violence and dampen hopes of a negotiated two-state settlement. Concomitantly, the failure to pressure Palestinian non-state actors to comply, somewhat due to the UNSC's limited engagement with such entities, contributes to the complexity of the conflict. The Council's focus on state actors has left a gap in accountability for all parties involved.

Other than the United States case, the research also highlights how other P5 members utilize the veto in promoting national interests. Russia and China have exercised their veto powers in other wars, most notably Syria, to promote the interests of allies and counter Western hegemony. These actions suggest that the misuse of veto power is a systemic issue rather than an isolated behaviour, and they point to a broader structural failure in the UNSC's design. Instead of acting as a neutral body committed to peace, the Council often functions as a platform for geopolitical rivalry.

A second key finding concerns the inefficacy of UNSC resolutions. Resolutions such as 242, 338, 446, and 2334, while having immense symbolic value, do not seem to alter

the ground realities. The resolutions are always ambiguous in their wording and allow for interpretations. More importantly, the absence of an enforcement mechanism within them means that even if violations occur, no actual consequences follow. The result is a cycle where resolutions are passed but ignored by both Israeli and Palestinian factions, without actual international enforcement. The lack of peacekeeping troops unique to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also indicates the UNSC's inability. While in other global crises, peacekeepers have been deployed to secure locales, the UNSC has been quite reluctant to intervene with a robust presence here. Missions like UNTSO and UNDOF have mandates that are largely observational and lack the authority or resources to enforce peace or protect civilians. Political resistance from powerful members and regional actors has slowed down the deployment of a comprehensive peacekeeping force, further weakening the Council's authority.

Lastly, this study shows that there is a serious credibility crisis within the UNSC. When the most powerful global organization for peace and security is handicapped by politics internally, not only does it fail the immediate people embroiled in war, but the international community at large's overall expectation of justice and stability. The Council's structure allows a small number of states to override collective will, thereby diminishing global trust in multilateralism. If the UNSC is to remain effective and viable, it must do something about its institutional deficits, particularly the unrestricted use of the veto in situations of human rights abuses and chronic conflicts. Otherwise, the Council risks becoming a mere symbolic institution whose actions are perceived as performative rather than transformative. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in particular, will continue to expose these institutional weaknesses unless decisive steps are taken to restore balance, impartiality, and enforceability in the Council's operations.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of Findings

The analysis of Objective one reveals that the veto power held by the five permanent members (P5) of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—has become one of the most controversial and deeply problematic features of the Council's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The original aim of the veto was to ensure that the major world powers remained engaged in global peace and security decisions without being sidelined. However, over the years, it has increasingly functioned as a political shield, allowing powerful countries to protect their allies and national interests, even at the cost of justice, peace, and international law. This objective has critically

examined the misuse and implications of the veto, especially in the context of how it influences the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

The United States stands out as the most frequent user of the veto in issues relating to Israel. Since 1970, the U.S. has consistently used its veto power to block resolutions seen as critical of Israeli actions, including those concerning settlement expansion, military actions in Gaza, or violations of international humanitarian law. This pattern of behaviour has not only weakened the credibility of the UNSC as a neutral body but has also fuelled accusations of bias and double standards. By continuously defending Israel in the Council, the U.S. has essentially ensured that any significant condemnation or enforcement measure against Israel remains blocked. This political protection, driven by strategic and ideological alliances, has allowed Israel to act with a high level of impunity, particularly in the occupied Palestinian territories. The repeated use of the veto to shield Israel has raised serious ethical and legal concerns, especially when civilian lives are lost and human rights are violated without accountability.

Russia and China have also used the veto in other global conflicts for similar strategic purposes, but in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they have mostly positioned themselves as counterweights to U.S. influence, often criticizing Western bias and pushing for more balanced approaches. Nevertheless, their actions are still guided by their geopolitical interests rather than a strong commitment to justice or peace in the Middle East. While their opposition to certain Western-led initiatives in the region can be seen as an attempt to balance global power politics, it does not always translate into constructive engagement or practical solutions. In fact, the behavior of all P5 members reflects a broader trend: the Security Council has become a space for international political competition, rather than a platform for genuine conflict resolution.

The result is a Council that is often deadlocked, unable to take decisive actions when crises emerge or worsen. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, the UNSC has frequently failed to agree on effective interventions or peacekeeping strategies due to vetoes and political bargaining. As a result, many critical resolutions have either been blocked or watered down to the point of ineffectiveness, leaving the victims of violence and occupation without any meaningful protection. The paralysis of the UNSC due to power politics not only frustrates the pursuit of peace but also sends a message that powerful states can violate international norms with little to no consequences.

Moreover, this consistent misuse of the veto has had long-term effects on the legitimacy of the UNSC itself. Many observers and scholars argue that the Council, in its current form, no longer reflects the realities of a multipolar world and often prioritizes the political interests of the P5 over the actual needs of conflict zones like Israel-Palestine. The growing dissatisfaction among non-permanent members, regional blocs, and civil society groups reflects a widening gap between the Council's responsibilities and its actual performance. The call for reform—either to limit the use of the veto in situations involving mass atrocities or to expand membership—has become louder, especially in the face of the UNSC's repeated failures in Palestine.

The findings under Objective two clearly show that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has struggled to carry out effective actions in conflict resolution and peacekeeping within the Israeli-Palestinian context. While the Council has passed numerous resolutions and issued repeated calls for ceasefires, peace negotiations, and respect for international law, these actions have not translated into meaningful changes on the ground. Resolutions are often ignored or selectively followed by the parties involved, and the UNSC lacks both the authority and political

unity to enforce its decisions. This has greatly weakened its credibility and effectiveness in dealing with this conflict.

One of the main issues is that many of the UNSC's efforts have been symbolic rather than practical. For example, although some resolutions like 242 and 338 called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories and the recognition of all states within secure borders, they have not been implemented effectively. Israel has continued to expand settlements, and the Palestinian territories remain under occupation. Despite the strong language used in several resolutions, the lack of enforcement has made it easy for violations to go unpunished. This creates the perception that the UNSC lacks the power or the will to act beyond statements.

Furthermore, peacekeeping efforts have been minimal and largely absent in this conflict. The Council has not deployed a major peacekeeping mission to the region, in part because of political disagreements among its permanent members and the refusal of key actors to accept foreign presence. Missions like the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) have been limited in both mandate and capacity. They observe and report rather than actively enforce peace or protect civilians. As such, they have had little influence in preventing violence or protecting vulnerable populations.

Another challenge is the highly politicized environment within the UNSC. The Council's actions are often shaped by the interests of its most powerful members, especially the United States, which has repeatedly used its veto to block resolutions seen as critical of Israel. This political imbalance has seriously undermined efforts to hold parties accountable or push forward a fair and lasting solution.

The findings under Objective three reveal that while the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has passed several key resolutions concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—such as Resolutions 242, 338, 446, and 2334—their actual impact has been limited, uneven, and largely dependent on the political will of the actors involved. These resolutions have addressed critical issues including Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories, condemnation of settlement activities, and the need for a two-state solution. However, most of them have either been ignored, misinterpreted, or selectively implemented over time, raising serious questions about their long-term effectiveness.

In the short term, some resolutions encouraged peace negotiations and temporary ceasefires, but they failed to lead to lasting agreements or significant structural changes. Resolution 242—often seen as a foundation for peace talks—was never fully implemented, especially concerning territorial withdrawal. Similarly, Resolution 2334, which reaffirmed that Israeli settlements have no legal validity, did not result in any concrete policy reversal. Instead, settlement expansion continued in defiance of international opinion, showing the limits of UNSC influence on ground realities.

The findings also point to a pattern where resolutions are more symbolic than practical. While they articulate international norms and expectations, they lack enforcement mechanisms, making them ineffective in securing long-term peace or justice. Moreover, the responses of both Israel and Palestinian groups to these resolutions vary widely—ranging from partial compliance to outright rejection—further weakening their impact. The UNSC's inability to follow up or hold violators accountable further undermines the authority and relevance of these resolutions.

The findings under Objective four clearly highlight that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) faces several deep-rooted and ongoing challenges in implementing effective peacekeeping measures in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A major obstacle is the political influence and veto power of the five permanent members (P5), especially the United States, which has consistently used its veto to block resolutions seen as critical of Israel. This has created a pattern where political alliances override global peace interests, leading to frequent deadlocks and an inability to take unified action. The power dynamics within the UNSC thus allow individual nations to control the direction of international response based on their national interests, not on the urgency of the humanitarian or security situation.

Another serious challenge is the lack of strong enforcement mechanisms and the weak nature of existing peacekeeping mandates. Resolutions passed by the UNSC often remain unenforced, as they are not backed by the deployment of robust peacekeeping forces or follow-up mechanisms. Missions like the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) have limited mandates, operate under serious restrictions, and lack the authority and resources to intervene meaningfully on the ground. This means that even when the UNSC speaks out or condemns actions, there is usually no practical system in place to ensure compliance or protect civilians.

These findings suggest that the UNSC's peacekeeping role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been largely symbolic. Without the ability to enforce resolutions or deploy powerful mandates, the Council's actions have not produced meaningful outcomes. The combination of political bias, selective enforcement, and structural weakness continues to undermine the effectiveness of the UNSC, making it ill-equipped to drive real peace in one of the world's most enduring conflicts. This exposes a major gap between the Council's mission and its real-world impact.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has clearly shown that the veto power held by the five permanent members (P5) of the United Nations Security Council—namely the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Russia, and France—has consistently created a deep contradiction between the Council's original mission and its actual operations. Although the UNSC was founded to maintain peace and security, the use of veto by P5 members has often served to protect national interests or their close allies, rather than uphold international law or protect vulnerable populations. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this is especially evident. The United States has used its veto power several times to block resolutions critical of Israeli policies, regardless of the broader international support behind such resolutions. This behavior has weakened the legitimacy of the Council and exposed its bias. Instead of acting as a fair and neutral peacekeeping body, the UNSC appears to be an arena of power politics. As long as the veto continues to be used for political loyalty rather than justice, the UNSC will struggle to meet its peace mandate. Reform of the veto system is therefore essential to restore global confidence in the Council's credibility.

From the analysis presented, it is clear that the effectiveness of the UNSC in resolving and managing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been limited and inconsistent. While the Council has passed numerous resolutions over the decades, many of them have lacked enforcement and have not led to meaningful outcomes on the ground. Several resolutions that called for ceasefires, the protection of civilians, or the resumption of peace talks were either ignored or openly violated by parties to the conflict, with no clear consequences. The Council has also failed to mobilize strong peacekeeping missions in the region, often relying on passive observer forces with little power or authority. Moreover, the inconsistent responses of the UNSC to similar

situations, depending on which parties are involved or which P5 member's interests are at stake, show a clear political imbalance in the Council's actions. These weaknesses make it difficult for the Council to be seen as an effective peacekeeping body. Without stronger political will, better enforcement, and fairer representation in decision-making, the UNSC's influence in this conflict will remain symbolic rather than impactful.

The examination of key UNSC resolutions such as 242, 338, 446, and 2334 has shown that while these documents contain strong language and clear calls for action, their long-term impact has been very limited. In many cases, the short-term outcomes of these resolutions—like brief ceasefires or renewed dialogue—quickly collapsed under the weight of ongoing violence and political mistrust. The long-term goals, such as withdrawal from occupied territories or a two-state solution, have remained unrealized despite the passage of decades. This gap between the intent of the resolutions and their real-world results exposes a serious weakness in the UNSC's influence. One major problem is the lack of enforcement. These resolutions often depend on voluntary compliance, which rarely occurs when political interests are at stake. Additionally, the unwillingness of key states to hold violators accountable, especially when allies are involved, has made these resolutions appear hollow. Therefore, while the language of these resolutions may promote peace and justice, the lack of serious follow-through renders them largely ineffective in producing lasting change in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The UNSC faces serious challenges in implementing effective peacekeeping measures in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as revealed by this study. Two of the most pressing issues are the political use of veto power by P5 members and the Council's overall lack of strong enforcement mechanisms. When one or more P5 members have strategic alliances or national interests in the

conflict, they often use their veto to block resolutions that could lead to progress. This undermines any hope for consensus or joint action. Furthermore, the UN's peacekeeping missions in the region have been weak, underfunded, and limited in scope. Missions like UNDOF lack the authority or tools to enforce peace, protect civilians, or ensure compliance with UN mandates. This leaves the UNSC without a working strategy to enforce its own decisions. Without meaningful reforms to limit political interference and strengthen peacekeeping structures, the Council will continue to fall short in addressing the realities on the ground. Its role risks being reduced to a symbolic presence that issues resolutions but fails to change outcomes. The long-term credibility and relevance of the UNSC depend on its ability to overcome these internal weaknesses and act decisively in favor of peace.

5.3 Recommendations

1. Reform the Veto Power Mechanism in the UNSC

One of the clearest conclusions from this study is that the veto power held by the five permanent members (P5) severely hinders the Council's ability to act impartially and effectively. It is recommended that reforms be introduced to limit the use of veto in situations involving mass human rights violations or prolonged conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. The establishment of a requirement for justification or a two-thirds General Assembly review of vetoed resolutions could add checks and reduce abuse of this power.

2. Strengthen Enforcement Mechanisms for UNSC Resolutions

Many UNSC resolutions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been ignored or selectively followed due to the Council's inability to enforce them. It is recommended that the UNSC develop clearer enforcement tools such as automatic sanctions, timelines for compliance, or referral systems to international courts. Enforcement must no longer depend solely on political will but be embedded in international mechanisms with accountability.

3. Depoliticize Peacekeeping Deployments and Increase Mandate Power

Peacekeeping in this region has been weak and passive. UN missions such as UNDOF have lacked the mandate and resources needed to protect civilians or enforce peace terms. It is recommended that peacekeeping deployments be depoliticized and empowered with stronger operational mandates, clear rules of engagement, and sufficient logistical and financial support to function independently and effectively.

4. Enhance Inclusivity and Regional Representation in Decision-Making

The study revealed that global south voices and regional actors are often excluded from critical UNSC decisions. It is recommended that regional stakeholders, including Arab League representatives and civil society groups from both Israeli and Palestinian communities, be given more space in discussions and consultations. Broader representation could provide more context-specific insights and foster trust in the process.

5. Shift Focus from Symbolic Resolutions to Practical, Measurable Actions

The UNSC has often issued resolutions that sound powerful but lack follow-through or practical utility. Future efforts should shift toward achievable, step-by-step actions with clear indicators of success. Instead of wide-sweeping declarations, the Council should adopt smaller but enforceable measures—such as protecting schools, enabling humanitarian access, or monitoring settlement activities—with regular reviews and penalties for non-compliance.

6. Promote Transparent Monitoring and Reporting Systems

A significant challenge to accountability in the conflict is the absence of reliable reporting and follow-up. It is recommended that the UN establish an independent, transparent mechanism for monitoring compliance with resolutions related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This body should report to both the UNSC and the General Assembly, ensuring broader global oversight and reducing selective reporting by parties with political interests.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by offering a detailed and critical analysis of the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with particular focus on the influence of the P5 veto power, the effectiveness of resolutions, and the challenges of peacekeeping enforcement. Unlike many previous works that focus solely on the political dimensions or legal aspects of the conflict, this study bridges both by showing how the UNSC's structural flaws, especially the unchecked use of veto by permanent members, directly affect the

ground realities in Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel. It also examines how the gap between passed resolutions and actual implementation reveals the symbolic rather than practical role of the UNSC in peacekeeping efforts. Moreover, by evaluating specific resolutions and highlighting the limited impact of peacekeeping missions such as UNDOF, the study adds empirical depth to the debate on UN reform. It also provides an African and Global South perspective on global governance, representation, and justice in international affairs. Through its comprehensive and thematic exploration, the study not only advances academic understanding but also offers concrete recommendations that policymakers, scholars, and reform advocates can use to push for a more effective and inclusive international peace architecture.

5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research

1. **Comparative Analysis of UNSC Intervention in Other Conflicts:** Future research could explore how the UNSC has handled other prolonged conflicts—such as those in Syria, Ukraine, or Sudan—and compare them with its involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This may help uncover patterns, biases, or inconsistencies in peacekeeping efforts across different geopolitical settings.
2. **Role of Regional Actors and Alliances in Shaping UNSC Outcomes:** Further studies could investigate how powerful regional blocs (like the Arab League, the African Union, or the European Union) influence or challenge UNSC decisions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Their lobbying roles, diplomatic pressures, or alliances with P5 members deserve deeper exploration.
3. **Impact of Civil Society and Grassroots Movements on UNSC Policy Shifts:** An emerging area of interest is how global advocacy, public opinion, and non-governmental organisations

(NGOs) are influencing the UNSC's responsiveness to conflicts. Studying this in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis may reveal whether external pressure contributes to policy adjustments.

4. Effectiveness of Alternative Peace Mechanisms Beyond the UNSC: Researchers may also explore the possibility and success of parallel diplomatic channels—such as bilateral negotiations, mediation by neutral states, or international courts—in addressing the conflict where the UNSC has failed or stalled.
5. Legal Accountability and the Limitations of International Law in Enforcement: Another useful direction is a legal analysis of how international law interacts with UNSC resolutions, especially in cases of non-compliance. This could include studying the limitations of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in conflicts involving P5 member interests.

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