



# **APL MUN 2024 US CONGRESS BACKGROUND GUIDE**

**The Need for Aid in Israel in the Wake of  
the Gaza War**

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# Letter from the Executive Board

Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to the 9th edition of APL MUN held on July 19 & 20th. We'd like to officially welcome you to The United States Senate. This year's agenda is: "The need for aid to Israel in the wake of the Gaza War." We are pleased to serve as your chairs for this meeting; where we will be discussing a matter of profound significance and urgency – the need for aid to Israel in the wake of the Gaza war.

The objective of this committee is to explore not only the humanitarian and developmental aspects of aid but also the political, economic, and social implications. We aim to foster productive discussions, promote collaboration, and develop comprehensive resolutions to combat the multifaceted dimensions of this issue. Delegates, your role is crucial in ensuring the development of concrete and innovative solutions through fruitful debate.

As your executive board, at any point in time, we may ask delegates to cite their sources for any statement made, chit passes, or POIs. Therefore, please ensure that you have your sources with you saved offline and printed.

We look forward to witnessing fruitful discussions, creative ideas, and impactful resolutions from each one of you. Let us embark on this journey to address and discuss the impacts of providing aid amid the conflict in Gaza.

Yours Sincerely,

Chairperson: Rhea Thomas

Vice Chairperson: Adithya Kashyap

Director: Adam Meshach

# Historical Background of The United States Congress

The United States Congress, established by the Constitution in 1787, is the legislative branch of the federal government, comprising the House of Representatives and the Senate. The framers of the Constitution designed Congress to embody the principles of federalism and separation of powers, ensuring a balanced government.

Initially, the Congress met in New York City and Philadelphia before settling in Washington, D.C., in 1800. The House of Representatives, with its members elected every two years, was intended to reflect the population's will, with representation based on state population. The Senate, where each state has two senators regardless of size, was designed to represent the states' interests, with senators originally chosen by state legislatures until the 17th Amendment in 1913 mandated direct election.

Throughout the 19th century, Congress played a pivotal role in westward expansion, passing legislation like the Homestead Act and establishing land-grant colleges. It was also central to major conflicts, such as the Civil War, where it enacted key measures like the Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery. In the 20th century, Congress expanded its role in domestic affairs through New Deal legislation and civil rights laws, significantly shaping social and economic policies. The legislative process involves bill introduction, committee review, debate, and voting in both chambers, with the president holding veto power.

Congress's evolution reflects the dynamic nature of American democracy, balancing state and federal powers while responding to the nation's changing needs and challenges. It remains a cornerstone of the U.S. government's structure, embodying the principles of representative democracy.

# US Congress' Past Actions

(pertaining to the agenda)

1. Congress has authorized significant financial aid to both Israel and the Palestinian territories, including Gaza, often through the annual foreign aid appropriations bills. This aid is intended to support humanitarian needs, economic development, and security.
2. The U.S. has provided substantial military aid to Israel, including the funding of missile defense systems like the Iron Dome, which is designed to intercept rockets fired from Gaza. Congress has repeatedly approved funding for these systems, recognizing - and assisting Israel's security concerns.
3. In the past, Congress has passed various resolutions expressing support for Israel's right to self-defense against attacks from Gaza. These resolutions often condemn actions by Hamas, the governing authority in Gaza, and call for the cessation of hostilities.
4. In some instances, Congress has called for both sides to work towards a peaceful resolution and the establishment of a two-state solution, promoting direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.
5. Some members of Congress have criticized Israeli military actions in Gaza, calling for investigations into potential human rights abuses and disproportionate use of force. These members have also called for greater accountability and protection of civilian lives.
6. Discussions within Congress have sometimes included proposals to condition aid to Israel on its actions in Gaza and the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These proposals reflect ongoing debates about the U.S. role in fostering peace and holding both sides accountable.
7. During times of escalated conflict, Congress has occasionally passed emergency aid packages to address immediate humanitarian needs in Gaza, such as medical supplies, food, and shelter for those affected by the violence.

## KEYWORDS

1. **Aid:**  
Refers to various forms of assistance provided by the United States to address

humanitarian needs, support economic development, and contribute to security and stability in the region.

Aid can be classified into 5 types:

**a. Humanitarian Aid**

- i. Emergency assistance is provided during and after conflicts to address immediate needs such as food, water, shelter, medical care, and other essential services.
- ii. Used to relieve the suffering of civilians who don't have access to necessary resources

**b. Economic Aid**

- i. Focuses on long-term development goals, such as rebuilding infrastructure, supporting education, and fostering economic opportunities.

**c. Security or Military Aid**

- i. Security aid is primarily directed toward Israel to help it defend against attacks from Gaza
- ii. The U.S. has also provided minimal security assistance to Palestinian security forces
- iii. This aid aims to enhance security cooperation, improve policing capabilities, and support counter-terrorism efforts.

**d. Conditional Aid**

- i. Some aid packages come with terms attached, requiring certain actions or reforms by respective authorities.
- ii. These conditions can be related to governance, human rights, and efforts to combat terrorism.

**e. Funding International Organizations**

- i. The U.S. contributes to international bodies and agencies that operate in Gaza, such as UNRWA, which provides education, health care, and other services to Palestinian refugees. This support is crucial for maintaining the basic needs of the population in Gaza.

# History of The United States' Aid to Israel

## US AID TO ISRAEL

The United States was the first country to recognize Israel as an independent state on May 14, 1948, when President Harry Truman issued a statement of recognition following Israel's proclamation of independence on the same date. Diplomatic Relations were established when U.S. Ambassador James Grover McDonald presented his credentials on March 28, 1949. Since then, Israel has become and remains America's most reliable partner in the Middle East. Israel and the United States are bound closely by historic and cultural ties as well as by mutual interests.

Israel has become, and remains, America's most reliable partner in the Middle East. Israel and the United States are bound closely by historic and cultural ties as well as by mutual interests. Israel has received hundreds of billions of dollars in U.S. foreign aid in the post-World War II era, a level of support that reflects many factors, including a U.S. commitment to Israel's security and the countries' shared foreign policy interests in a volatile and strategically important part of the world. The two countries do not have a mutual defense pact, as the United States has with allies such as Japan and fellow members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). However, Israel is among a short list of "major non-NATO allies" and has privileged access to the most advanced U.S. military platforms and technologies.

The aid is often justified by U.S. officials and consecutive Israeli Governments as necessary for maintaining a strategic ally in the region, fostering peace, and promoting stability. The U.S. has, over the decades, committed billions of dollars annually to Israel, with the aid package frequently including advanced military technology and defense systems, such as the much-ensured Iron Dome, which intercepts incoming rockets and missiles with remarkably high accuracy. In addition to military aid, the U.S. also provides economic assistance to Israel, although this has diminished significantly compared to earlier decades. This support has facilitated Israel's economic development, helping it transition from a fledgling state to a robust economy with significant technological and industrial capacities.

U.S economic aid, especially in the humanitarian form, has been notable during times of war during Israel's early history, such as the supply airlift during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, which had then been the largest airlift of aid since the Berlin Airlift during World War 2.

The aid relationship is also underpinned by strong political and cultural ties, with shared democratic values and historical connections contributing to bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress.

A well-known statement by the current U.S. President, Joe Biden, underscores the decades-long support among both major parties of Israel's strategic value. "There is no apology to be made. It is the best \$3 billion investment we make...Were there not an Israel the USA would have to invent an Israel to protect her interest in the region."

However, this aid has been a point of contention both domestically and internationally, with critics arguing about its implications for regional dynamics and human rights issues. Despite these debates, U.S. aid to Israel remains a cornerstone of their bilateral relationship, reflecting deep strategic and ideological bonds. These ties, however, are now at the point of deep contention, warranting an honest and profound debate.

## **HISTORY OF ACTIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNITED STATES**

Despite the decades-long turmoil in the Middle East between the Arab nations and the State of Israel, there have, most notably in recent times, been attempts to provide tentative peace and cooperation for this tumultuous region. The U.S., with its salient presence in the region, has remained at the forefront in endeavoring to promulgate sustained cordiality.

The U.S. first showed its ability to be a geopolitical mediator when, under the administration of Jimmy Carter, the Camp David Accords were signed promoting peace between Egypt and Israel, the former becoming the first Arab nation to normalize relations with Israel. Bill Clinton's administration, in addition to the oversight of the infamous Oslo Accords, saw the Jordan-Israel peace treaty similarly signed.

More significantly, however, were the Abraham Accords, formally signed on September 15, 2020, which represented a historic breakthrough in Middle Eastern diplomacy, with Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Bahrain agreeing to normalize relations. The accords were brokered by the United States, under the Trump administration. They were later joined by Sudan and Morocco, significantly expanding the region's peace and cooperation network. The agreements included commitments to establish embassies, exchange ambassadors, and foster economic, scientific, and cultural cooperation. The bipartisan support in the U.S. to this most recent peace treaty has shown the transformative, positive lens through which these developments represent an incredibly challenging region of the world.

In recent times, various U.S. administrations have taken different approaches while attempting to approach the contentious tussle between Israel and Palestine. Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2017 was a significant geopolitical move, shifting long-standing U.S. policy and sparking international controversy. Along with



shifting the U.S. Embassy as well to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, his decision solidified U.S.-Israel relations but inflamed tensions with Palestinians and many Arab nations, who see East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state. It also prompted widespread protests and raised concerns about the peace process in the Middle East. The move was both praised and criticized, highlighting deep global divisions over the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.

Joe Biden, the current president, has realigned the U.S.'s commitment to a Two-State solution to the conflict. Biden has repeatedly reaffirmed the U.S.'s support for a two-state solution, calling for separate Israeli and Palestinian states with borders resembling those that existed before the 1967 war; this territory includes the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and parts of East Jerusalem.

# The October 7th Massacre & the Founding of Israel

The founding of Israel is rooted in the historical connection of the Jewish people to the land of Israel, which has profound religious, cultural, and historical significance for Jews worldwide. The movement for the establishment of a Jewish state, known as Zionism, emerged in the late 19th century in response to centuries of persecution and anti-Semitism in Europe. Theodor Herzl, often regarded as the father of modern Zionism, convened the First Zionist Congress in 1897, which set the political framework for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, then part of the Ottoman Empire.

During World War I, the British government expressed support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine through the Balfour Declaration of 1917. After the war, the League of Nations granted Britain a mandate over Palestine, where tensions between Jewish and Arab communities grew. Jewish immigration to Palestine increased, particularly during the 1930s and 1940s, as Jews fled persecution in Europe, including the horrors of the Holocaust.

These demographic changes exacerbated conflicts with the Arab population, who also aspired to self-determination and opposed large-scale Jewish immigration. In 1947, the United Nations proposed a partition plan to create separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem as an international city. The Jewish Agency accepted the plan, while the Arab leaders rejected it, leading to escalating violence.

On May 14, 1948, as the British mandate expired, David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Jewish Agency, declared the establishment of the State of Israel. Following the declaration of independence, Israel was invaded by a coalition of Arab armies, marking the beginning of the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. Despite being outnumbered and initially under-equipped, Israeli forces managed to secure a miraculous victory, leading to armistice agreements with Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria in 1949. The war resulted in significant territorial gains for Israel beyond the UN partition plan and created a large number of Palestinian refugees, an issue that remains unresolved. The founding of Israel marked a significant moment for Jewish self-determination but also laid the groundwork for ongoing conflict and complex geopolitical dynamics in the Middle East.

On October 7th, 2023, a coordinated attack was launched by Hamas, the militant Islamist group governing Gaza, against Israel. Occurring on the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah, the attack led to the largest mass casualty of Jews since the Holocaust. The incursion resulted in the loss of over 1100 lives, with both Israeli civilians and soldiers among the dead and wounded. This sudden assault involved a barrage of rocket fire targeting civilian

areas across southern and central Israel, along with incursions by armed militants who crossed the border into Israeli territory. The scale and intensity of the assault marked one of the most severe escalations in the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict in recent years, drawing immediate international condemnation and calls for restraint from various world leaders.

In response, Israel launched extensive military operations targeting Hamas positions in Gaza. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) conducted airstrikes on what they described as key militant infrastructure, including weapon storage sites and command centers, aiming to degrade Hamas' operational capabilities. The conflict has thus far led to a significant humanitarian crisis in Gaza, with numerous civilian casualties and widespread damage to infrastructure, exacerbating the already dire conditions faced by the population. The escalation underscored the deep-seated tensions and recurring cycles of violence between Israelis and Palestinians, highlighting the urgent need for a durable resolution to the conflict.

# Senator's Viewpoints

1. Senator Bernie Sanders [D/NV]
  - a. Quote: "We need to ensure that our aid is not supporting actions that violate international law and human rights. Both Israelis and Palestinians deserve peace and security."
  - b. Supports conditional aid, has criticized Israel's military actions in the past, and calls for a balanced approach that addresses and considers Palestinian rights as well. He believes conditional aid is necessary to prevent human rights abuse and misuse of funding.
2. Senator Lindsay Graham [R/SC]
  - a. Quote: "Israel must be able to defend itself from terrorist attacks. The U.S. stands firmly with our ally, Israel, in its efforts to secure its citizens and borders."
  - b. Supports Israel's right to defend against Hamas and other attacks launched from Gaza. He routinely emphasizes that US military aid is needed for Israel to defend its security and stability regionally.
3. Senator Elizabeth Warren [D/MA]
  - a. Quote: "It is critical that we provide humanitarian aid to those suffering in Gaza and ensure that our military assistance does not contribute to further violence and suffering."
  - b. Calls for the US to take accountability for how US military aid is misused in Israel. A strong advocate for humanitarian aid to Palestinians. Remains deeply distressed by the impact of the conflict on local citizens in Gaza.
4. Senator Tom Cotton [R/AR]
  - a. Quote: "Israel has every right to defend itself against the indiscriminate rocket attacks by Hamas. The U.S. must continue to support Israel's defense capabilities."
  - b. Frames Israel's military actions as necessary responses to combat terrorism. He strongly opposes any reduction in the amount of aid provided by the US to Israel.
5. Senator Chris Murphy [D/CT]
  - a. Quote: "A diplomatic resolution is essential for lasting peace. We must support efforts to bring both parties to the negotiating table and address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza."

- b. Takes a more diplomatic approach - and believes that a two-state solution is needed to broker peace between Israel and Palestine. Supports humanitarian assistance and mediation efforts by the US.

# Impacts on the US: Funding Israel

Several U.S. universities are actively protesting against funding to Israel due to the ongoing Gaza conflict. These protests are part of a broader movement to express solidarity with Palestinians and call for changes in U.S. foreign policy.

This list covers the tip of the iceberg:

1. Columbia University
2. Harvard University
3. Brown University
4. University of California, Berkeley
5. University of Southern California (USC)
6. University of Texas at Austin
7. University of Michigan

While U.S. funding to Israel supports strategic and defense interests, it also generates significant economic, political, and social repercussions locally, influencing public debate, community dynamics, and international diplomacy.

Examples:

1. Economic Impact
  - a. Allocation of taxpayer's dollars
  - b. Job creation in the US defense sector
2. Social Impact
  - a. Rise in campus activism; by both staff and students
3. Political Impact
  - a. Congress debates on foreign policies and issues over local concerns
4. Impact on Community Relations
  - a. Influences the political and social dynamics within the Jewish and Arab-American population
  - b. exacerbates incidents of antisemitism and Islamophobia, impacting community safety and cohesion
5. Impact on Diplomatic Influence
  - a. shapes America's diplomatic relationships with other Middle Eastern countries and influences its role in global politics.

# History of Hamas

**Hamas**, which stands for **Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya** (Islamic Resistance Movement), was established in 1987 during the First Intifada, a Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation.

Founded by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and other members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza, Hamas initially focused on grassroots social services, including schools, clinics, and charities, which helped garner local support. In 1988, Hamas issued its charter, advocating for the establishment of an Islamic state in historic Palestine and rejecting the existence of Israel. It distinguished itself from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) by its Islamist ideology and commitment to armed struggle. Hamas gained notoriety through its militant wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, responsible for numerous attacks against Israeli military and civilian targets. The group's popularity surged due to its social services and perceived incorruptibility compared to the PLO.

In 2006, Hamas won a majority in the Palestinian legislative elections, leading to a power struggle with the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority. This culminated in Hamas seizing control of Gaza in 2007, resulting in an Israeli-Egyptian blockade. Since then, Hamas has engaged in several conflicts with Israel, marked by rocket attacks and Israeli military operations in Gaza. The organization faces criticism for its tactics and human rights abuses while maintaining significant support among Palestinians for its resistance against Israeli occupation.

As of 2024, Hamas remains a pivotal, yet controversial, player in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, involved in ongoing hostilities and political maneuvering within Palestinian territories.

# Closing Remarks

We hope this background guide serves as a basis for your research.

**Please note that the material provided above is just to give you a better understanding of the agenda and not the only material. Do conduct extensive research on your respective senators, their stances on the agenda, relations with other senators on the matrix, possible past resolutions, and future resolutions pertaining to the agenda. All research and notes must be available offline.**

Remember that even if this is your first time, give it a shot! All delegates must actively engage in healthy debating. We urge delegates to keep in mind the importance of; lobbying in committee, raising Moderated Caucuses, Unmoderated Caucuses, and Points of Information, all leading up to the final document: resolution drafting.

We wish you all the best with your preparations and look forward to seeing you next week.

Sincerely,

*The executive board of US Congress*

**For any further inquiries, write to [uscongressmun@apl.edu.in](mailto:uscongressmun@apl.edu.in)**