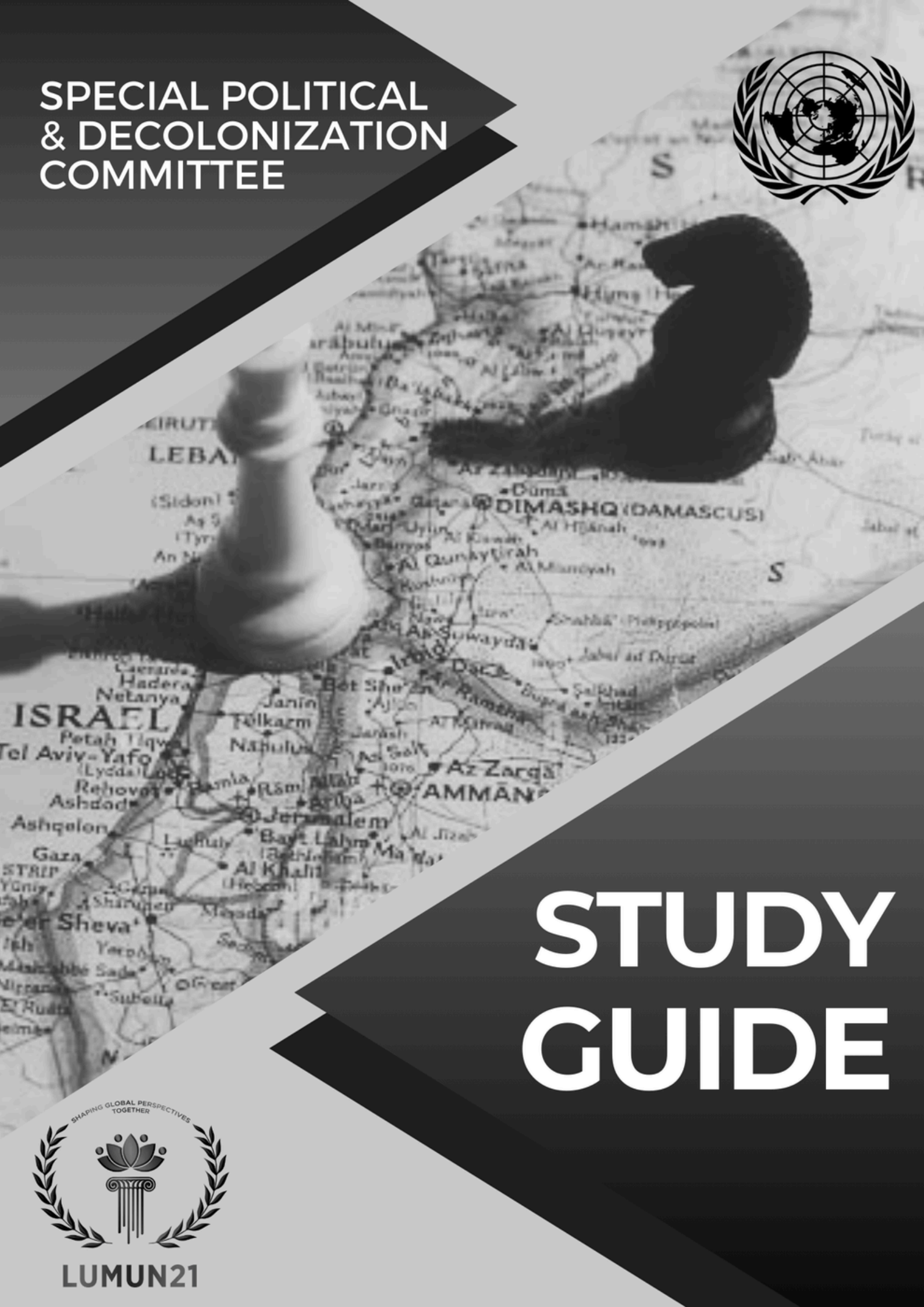


SPECIAL POLITICAL & DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE



STUDY GUIDE



LUMUN21



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THE LUMUN SPIRIT

The LUMUN Spirit was first introduced as a concept at LUMUN XV. It sought to reintroduce a recognition of the most essential components of MUN culture; imparting a sense of responsibility accepting that the onus is on us to be the forerunners of change. The fundamental premise of a Model UN is to develop our understanding of the issues and conflicts in the world as a collective, and to connect individuals with vastly differing life experiences with each other. The pursuit of quantitative success and accolades has fermented a tradition of MUN being a space mired in hostility and distrust. The LUMUN Spirit is our continuing effort to inculcate empathy, compassion, understanding and diplomacy within this competitive activity.

As we proceed on our journey of revamping Model UN, the LUMUN Spirit is an idea that we aspire to incorporate in the entire LUMUN experience: from the Host Team, to an expectation that we will have from the delegates as well. It is not an abstract concept – it is a vision that should embody the behavior of every delegate in every committee. Inside the committee or out; the enthusiasm to meet other people, present arguments in a true ambassadorial manner and the idea to enjoy LUMUN should never be forgotten. In this very essence we will be able to represent what it means to simulate a true world model; an actual representation of the United Nations. We continue to strive and ensure that the outlook of LUMUN XVIII is to not be an average Model UN conference anymore.

And so, leadership and prowess within a committee is not characterized by exerting one's overbearing presence on others or by alienating and excluding others from discussion. They manifest in a delegate's ability to engage with others, help them play their part in the committee, and to facilitate the committee as a whole to engage in a fruitful and informative debate. This includes actions as simple as maintaining a moderate temperament, inviting others' input and operating with honesty and respect. The LUMUN Society invites you to understand what it means to be an ambassador of a country and represent its foreign policy means to employ collaboration alongside reasoned argumentation to press forward with that actor's policy agenda.



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Secretary General



Laiba Noor Abid

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of our Secretariat and Staff, it is with great joy and immense pride that I extend a heartfelt invitation to you for the 21st edition of LUMS Model United Nations (LUMUN). This milestone marks not only a continued legacy of excellence in diplomacy at LUMS but extends beyond! It is both an honor and a privilege to carry forward this tradition of global engagement in collaboration with Oxford University this year.

At LUMUN, we believe in the power of dialogue. For just over two decades, each year young minds have come together to tackle issues of global and contemporary importance. In the process, they learn how to face adversity and difference while celebrating the spirit of negotiation and collaboration. These five days serve as a platform for utilizing real-world knowledge to craft actionable and feasible policy proposals.

But LUMUN is so much more than just a forum for intellectual exchange; it is a community where lasting connections are forged! Now more than ever, as we diversify and internationalise the LUMUN community, we hope to facilitate bonds and create treasured moments for delegates to carry as souvenirs far beyond the conference days. Staffed by over 200 members, our team is dedicated to ensuring that delegates feel welcomed to the vibrant city of Lahore and enjoy a wide array of engaging social and recreational activities, outside their committee rooms.

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With a diverse range of committees – from General Assemblies to Specialized Agencies, Regional Bodies, and the Economic and Social Councils – there is something for everyone at LUMUN. Whether you are new to Model United Nations or a seasoned delegate, you will find a platform that perfectly aligns with your interests.

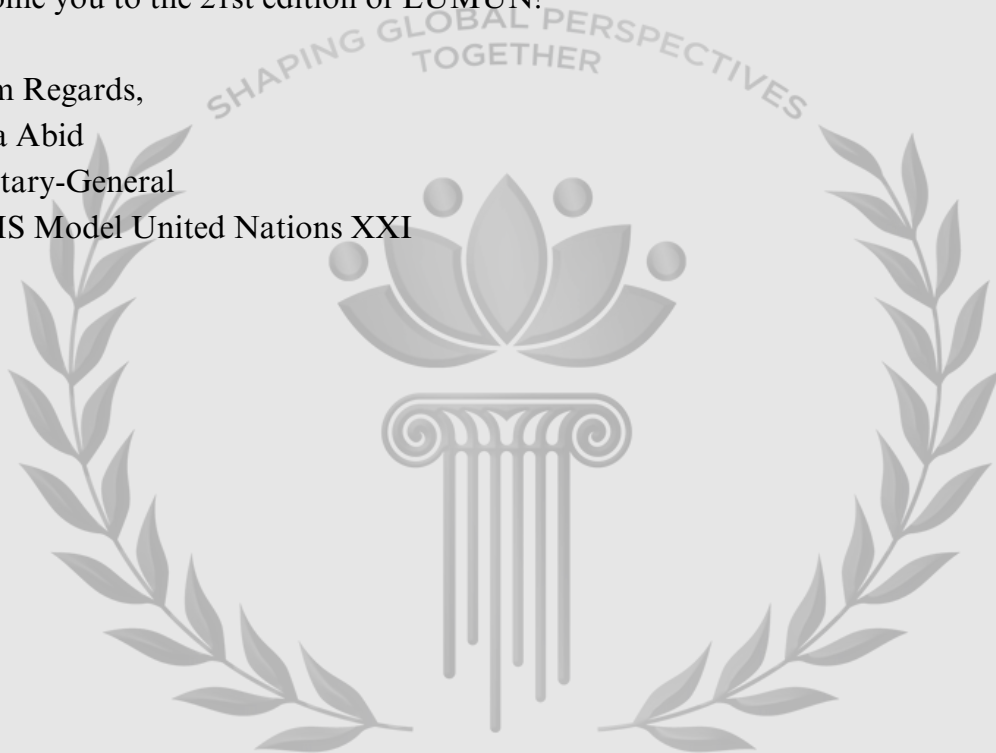
As we celebrate and expand our ongoing legacy of quality debate, we are committed to making this year's LUMUN more memorable than ever. The Staff and I are thrilled to welcome you to the 21st edition of LUMUN!

Warm Regards,

Laiba Abid

Secretary-General

LUMS Model United Nations XXI



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Under Secretary General



Noor Rashid

Hello everyone!

I'll be serving as the Under Secretary-General for the General Assemblies at LUMUN this year. Currently, I'm a sophomore at SDSB, majoring in Management Science.

My journey with MUNs began over seven years ago during O Levels. Back then, I could never have imagined that what started as a nerve-racking experience would evolve into such a defining part of my extracurricular life. If you'd asked me at the time whether I'd survive my first committee session, I'd have laughed nervously. Yet, here I am, years later, deeply grateful for how these conferences have shaped me.

MUNs have been instrumental in my personal and professional growth. They've boosted my confidence, expanded my understanding of global and social issues, and taught me the art of persuasion. Thanks to countless competitive committee sessions, I've honed my ability to back up arguments with facts—skills that now also complement my Management Science studies, where understanding perspectives is key.

These four days of LUMUN might be intense, but they're also transformative. By the end of day three, I hope you'll be able to say, "I feel a little more confident," or "Next time I speak, maybe my heart won't race as much." If you can say that, then we've done our job.

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Remember, LUMUN isn't just a conference—it's an experience. While you work hard, don't forget to embrace the fun moments along the way.

Wishing you all the best for the conference!
See you in committee.

Warm regards,
Noor Rashid
Under-Secretary-General | General Assemblies
LUMUN XXI



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Committee Director



Mahnoor Gul

Hello Delegates,

I am Mahnoor Gul, a third-year English major, Political Science minor at LUMS, and one of the committee directors for SPECPOL at LUMUN this year! Other than being your committee director I am also LUMUN's Travelling Team Head Delegate for the year. Outside of LUMUN, I am an artist and an avid reader. I also have cats (I think this is always important to mention). This is going to be my second committee as a committee director and I am so beyond excited to meet all the wonderful minds that will shape my experience. I, too, hope to leave you with not just a good Model UN experience but a fantastic set of memories of LUMS and LUMUN.

This year's topic is one that is extremely close to my heart, as I want it to serve as a reminder that it is a privilege to be able to research and debate a "topic" that is actually someone's every day. I want you to approach this topic with utmost sensitivity, a chance to walk a mile in the shoes of someone living in Palestine, Congo, or Syria. Take a moment to see that this space we are creating aims to be more than just a MUN but a chance to learn, understand, and reflect.

I have a feeling that many of you read these as a way to peek into the minds of the chairs and look for a roadmap, a guide to the awards. My advice is, this committee will be a marathon race. Energy is everything. Consistency is what you should strive for.

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Be creative, original and kind.

Reach out to me if you need any assistance at all before, during or after the conference.
I cannot wait to see what you all have in store for me!

Warmly,
Mahnoor Gul.



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Committee Director

SHAPING GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES
TOGETHER



Silvia Smith



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Glossary

Divestment: The act of no longer investing in a business.

Supply Chain: Refers to all the raw materials and parts that are made into a product.

UN Resolution 194: Defines principles for returning Palestinian refugees to their homes.

Sanctions: Restrictions on trade placed by a country

Introduction to mandate of the committee

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) considers a broad range of issues covering a cluster of five decolonization-related agenda items, the effects of atomic radiation, questions relating to information, a comprehensive review of the question of peacekeeping operations as well as a review of special political missions, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Israeli Practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories, and International cooperation

in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Introduction to the topic

The topic of conflict resolution in the Middle East and Africa has become increasingly relevant with the evolving international landscape of modern times. The tumultuous state of these regions has been a predominant factor that dates back to the era of colonialism and, later, World War 1.

The topic has received global attention due to the adverse impact it can and has had on international relations and the domestic lives in affected regions. In particular, escalating wars including the Israeli-Palestine conflict and the turmoil in Sudan have raised humanitarian concerns while destabilising the region as a whole, due to the involvement of neighbouring countries as well.

This also has great geopolitical implications as the Middle East and Africa are rich in resources, which has been the cause of territorial claims and conflicts in the past as well. Thus, it has the potential to disrupt political and socio-economic stability across the world. The rising security and humanitarian concerns have thus prompted peace efforts, which have depicted the emergence of the situation at hand.



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This study guide will provide a comprehensive framework of the topic that revolves around introducing the historical background, past conflicts, and the benefactors that were involved, along with discussing case studies on certain regions that garner specific attention. A discussion of past mediation efforts shall also be included, opening up the forum to discuss potential solutions to the ongoing crisis.

The Importance of State Sovereignty and Borders

To fully understand the implications of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and Africa, it is imperative to assess the concept of statehood and sovereignty. A state is deemed to be sovereign when it is not governed by another state in order to attain independence. Within the strict sense of the term, sovereignty does not just refer to domestic independence but also to the acceptance of a particular state as sovereign, by other nations that have achieved this status. Hence, the notion of sovereignty moulds the foundation of international relations and forms the basis for conflict resolution and discussion.

Furthermore, the importance of sovereignty in this context stems from the fact that it enables 'weaker' states to

stand up against greater powers. Sovereignty can prevent a state from going extinct even if its continued existence is not guaranteed. In other worlds, it can hinder the ability of larger states to force their will on other, more inferior nations.

In addition to this, sovereignty also allows an indigenous government to capitalise on national passion and symbols. Thus, it fosters a sense of nationalism and state identity that develops vitality within the nation.

Moving on, borders also play an essential role in this discourse. Aside from allocating the physical confines of a nation's boundary, borders have evolved as entities that impact the international climate as a whole.

The Westphalian state structure that emerged after the Thirty Years War was based on the idea that a border marked the separation of two sovereign nations. The premise of the border shaped the security interests of the nations on either side. This is due to the idea of "interaction opportunity" which depicts borders as a "facilitating condition" for willingness and opportunity, or even conflict.



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Borders are thus represented as a “hard shell” that shapes geopolitics in the sense that the proximity or distance from various units impacts a nation’s sense of security and socio-economic relations. For instance, states that exist close to each other are assumed to have the potential for increased cordial bilateral relations. The European Union presents evidence for this, with close alliances and interactions across the countries involved.

Consequently, borders may also be a source of conflict because of the perceived importance of territory, which lays the ground for disputes on acquisition and establishing strategic dominance. In fact, territories can be described as having a “trip-wire” function in the case of military disputes. This was seen when Egyptian forces were moved into the Sinai by Nasser during the emergence of the Six-Day War in 1967.

Thus, in order to grasp the concept of conflict resolution, it is imperative to understand the role of national sovereignty and borders as they can lay the foundation for current disputes.

The History of Colonisation

Colonisation is defined as a situation where a powerful state attempts to

establish its authority and control over a weaker nation, usually motivated by economically exploitative agendas.

Colonialism carries deep historical roots due to its link to the Roman Empire and the Mediterranean world. Most of the early colonisation practices were influenced by the need to promote trade and extract commodities such as gold and spices after the Middle Ages. The peak of colonisation was later rejuvenated once again, leading to the “Scramble for Africa”.

The Scramble for Africa emerged after the Berlin Congo Conference in 1885, which partitioned the continent amongst the various European powers. These included the British, the French, and the Italians amongst other powers.

The abundance of natural resources and the pre-existing economy of slave labour in Africa were thoroughly exploited by the European powers under the guise of “civilising” the population. The ideology of colonisation, particularly regarding Africa, was thus centred around the need to redeem the inferior masses while making use of the substantial resources that were eminent across the region.



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Rampant cruelty, violence, and exploitation was evident in areas of Africa such as Kenya. Even after the colonial powers granted independence, it still carried repercussions. This sovereignty still carried a degree of dependence on the colonial states, thus insinuating that Africa had not truly achieved independence.

Alongside Africa, the Middle East was also subject to colonisation under the Ottoman Empire. Since the 16th Century, the Ottoman Empire had established administrative control over the Arab territories in the Middle East. This control began to crumble as resentment towards Ottoman rule was on the rise, While the British also began to encroach upon their territories. A primary point of conflict arose due to demands for Arabic to replace Turkish as the official provincial language.

The opposition to the Ottoman policies along with the indirect involvement of the British built up to the fall of the Ottoman Empire, until the defeat in World War 1 turned out to be the final nail in the coffin of its demise.

Additionally, being free from Ottoman rule did not fully subdue colonial influences in the Middle East region as the mandate system was developed after World War 1. This system gave

administrative control to the victorious powers over certain regions across the world.

In this case, the British mandate of Palestine can be discussed as it became a major source of conflict. The rise of the Zionist Movement and the introduction of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which called for a Jewish home in Palestine, sowed the seeds for political turmoil. The extent of colonisation in this region eventually came to an end when the British abandoned their mandate in Palestine, after which the war of 1948 ensued and Israel came into creation.

Thus, while colonisation has existed throughout the centuries, its implications have had a lasting impact on the conflicts that exist till this day.

Case Studies: History of events

This section will introduce the history of the three case studies:

1. *Congo Crisis*

The Congo Crisis of 1960 was a turbulent period of political instability and conflict following the independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from Belgium on June 30, 1960. The newly independent nation faced immediate challenges as its colonial structure rapidly



disintegrated. Soldiers of the Congolese army mutinied against their Belgian commanders, leading to widespread unrest. Belgium deployed troops without the consent of the Congolese government, prompting an appeal to the United Nations, which established a peacekeeping mission (ONUC).

The crisis escalated when the mineral-rich province of Katanga, under Moïse Tshombe, declared independence with Belgian support. Cold War tensions compounded this internal division as Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba sought Soviet assistance, alarming Western powers. The U.S. and its allies supported Joseph Mobutu, an army officer who orchestrated a coup against Lumumba and President Joseph Kasavubu. Lumumba's assassination in 1961 further destabilized the region.

UN forces played a critical role in suppressing the Katanga secession and attempting to stabilize the Congo. By 1965, Mobutu seized power, establishing a dictatorship that lasted until the 1990s. The crisis exemplified the challenges of post-colonial governance and the influence of Cold War geopolitics on newly independent states.

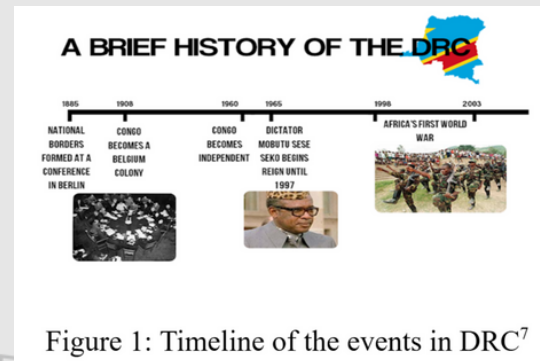


Figure 1: Timeline of the events in DRC⁷

Second Congo War

The Second Congo War (1998–2003), often referred to as the Great War of Africa, was one of the deadliest conflicts since World War II, claiming the lives of approximately 5.4 million people primarily through disease, hunger, and displacement. The war emerged from the fragile aftermath of the First Congo War (1996–1997) and the regional instability following the Rwandan genocide of 1994. After Laurent-Désiré Kabila ousted long-time dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in 1997, tensions escalated as Kabila severed ties with his former allies, Rwanda and Uganda. This provoked a rebellion in 1998, supported by these nations, against Kabila's regime. The conflict grew into a multi-state war involving nine African nations and numerous armed groups. Resource-rich regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), laden with valuable minerals like coltan and diamonds, became central to the fighting, fueling the interests of foreign and domestic factions. Alliances shifted



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frequently, with nations like Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia supporting the DRC, while Rwanda, Uganda, and their allied rebel groups fought for control. The war officially ended in 2003 with the signing of peace agreements and the formation of a transitional government. However, eastern DRC continues to experience instability due to unresolved ethnic tensions, competition over resources, and the presence of armed militias. The conflict highlighted global apathy toward African crises despite its catastrophic human toll and strategic implications.

2. Israel-Palestine Conflict

Gaza Wars:

From 2008–2009, Israel launched a military offensive in Gaza, often referred to as *Operation Cast Lead*. The conflict resulted in over 1,400 Palestinian and 13 Israeli deaths, marking a significant escalation in the Israel-Palestine conflict. In 2012, *Operation Pillar of Defense* followed, consisting primarily of Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, causing substantial destruction. The 2014 conflict, known as the *Gaza War* or *Operation Protective Edge*, was a 50-day confrontation that devastated Gaza, leading to over 2,000 Palestinian deaths and 70 Israeli casualties. From 2018–2019, further escalations by Israel inflicted damage on

Gaza, underscoring the ongoing volatility. In 2021, an 11-day escalation caused significant casualties, with hundreds of Palestinians and dozens of Israelis killed.

Arab-Israeli War

The Arab-Israeli conflict traces its roots to the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, sparked by the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947, which proposed separate Jewish and Arab states. While Israel accepted the plan, Arab nations rejected it, leading to a full-scale conflict. Subsequent wars reshaped the region. In 1956, the Suez Crisis erupted after Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal, prompting military intervention by Israel, Britain, and France. The 1967 *Six-Day War* escalated tensions over border disputes, water resources, and Palestinian territories, resulting in significant territorial gains for Israel, including the West Bank and Gaza. The 1973 Yom Kippur War saw Egypt and Syria launch a surprise attack on Israel, heightening hostilities and contributing to acts of terrorism during that year. In 1982, the Lebanon War marked Israel's invasion of Lebanon to weaken the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). These wars profoundly shaped Middle Eastern geopolitics, fueling debates on colonialism, nationalism, and human rights while leaving a legacy of

unresolved tensions and humanitarian crises.



Figure 2: Timeline of Arab-Israeli War⁸

3. Sudan Crisis

Sudan had been at war either within itself or with other nations for most of its young existence. Therefore, sovereignty was a critical component. A nation could only progress when it did not have outside powers intruding on its ability to govern itself.

Independence was a sign of success. When nations established independence, they established control over borders and territory—an existence that stabilised them—for at least a time. There were a variety of ways nations achieved such success—through negotiations, treaties, and settlements—and, unfortunately, through wars that redrew boundaries and territories, sometimes fought to get settled.

Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005).

In 2005, the CPA was signed between Sudanese and SPLM forces in an effort to end the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005). The 2005 agreement aimed to stabilize, in the short term, a temporary transitional period of autonomy for the southern region of Sudan with a long-term referendum in mind. The agreement sought to assess power-sharing and resources and wealth allocation. This was a significant agreement because it represented the end of decades of warfare with planned intentions of set pathways; however, subsequent implementation was so fraught with uncertainty that it created much more instability in the short and long run, which ultimately facilitated the secession of South Sudan.

South Sudan Independence (2011).

South Sudan became a nation in 2011. Years of conflict enabled such a proposal, with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) setting this up and, four years later, a referendum where the majority of the Southern Sudanese wanted to break away from the North. However, with nation-states established in the region, this was not problem-free. Borders needed to be adjusted, dissolutions had to be navigated, discussions about resources and who got



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what were needed, and citizenship before and after the split was still uncertain. Therefore, South Sudan entered a difficult transitional period, fighting for its nation as well as its anticipated borders, with intranational conflict, ethnic challenges, and resource deprivation.

Sudanese Revolution and Transitional Period (2018–2021)

The Sudanese Revolution occurred in 2018 as protests erupted nationwide to remove President Omar al-Bashir after three decades of rule. The citizens desired freedom from corrupt governments, failing economies, and politically mandated policies that forced them to do so. The revolution sparked a citizen coup that removed al-Bashir from power in April 2019 and created a transitional government of civilian and military powers alike in a hopeful, facilitated transition to democratic operations. Yet, the transitional government complicated matters with stability and politics as many of the protests turned violent, suggesting there would be cause for concern about how—and more importantly, why—the government would remain.

Case Studies: Contemporary Events

This section highlights the present situation of the aforementioned crisis.

1. Congo Crisis

What is the current situation like?

After the signing of the Nairobi Declarations between the Congolese government and the March 23 Movement and the following years following a dormant presence of the M23, the deadly conflict in the DRC resurfaced with the eventual breaking of the ceasefire deal by the M23 in the October of 2021.

What is M23's stance?

The M23 justified its refusal to abide by the agreement any further due to its grievances over the government's failure to meet its initially stipulated demands under the agreement. It was contested that the government failed to sufficiently bring reforms to address the marginalisation and discrimination faced by the Tutsi ethnic population in the DRC - the major ethnic constituent of the M23. As such, as of current, the March 23 Movement has taken control of several regions within the Rutshuru territory in Eastern Congo. The M23 seems to be envisioning its aim of re-occupying Goma, the capital of the



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North Kivu province.

Further, it was claimed that the government failed to bring the previous leaders of the movement back into the borders of the country, and also provide sufficient reintegration of the M23 soldiers and militants into the country's military, amongst grievances about other political reforms .

What does the Congolese Government think?

The Congolese government has denied the accusations levelled at it and has alleged that the resurfacing of the M23 is linked to the Rwandan government's intentions to further its economic interests within the region and to continue its exploitation of the rich mineral resource nest of Eastern Congo. As such, Rwanda has repeatedly been accused by the DRC as a direct supporter and supplier of the M23. It must be noted that the United Nations experts through various reports including the UN midterm report have concluded the presence of sufficient evidence of direct Rwandan support for the M23 Movement .

Naturally, The Rwandan Government has always denied involvement with the M23 Movement.

Other Actors Within The Issue:

On the other hand, another relevant actor within the crisis is the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) which is a non-state rebel militant group operating from inside Congo, and is in direct opposition to the M23, and can also be seen as the biggest opponent to M23 in Eastern Congo .

Although the Congolese government has formally denied any associations or support for the FDLR, further solidified by the President's intention to dismantle any and all militant groups including the FDLR, the government's measures to counter this group have been short of effective. It is also alleged that factions of the Congolese military, the FARDC, have fought alongside the FDLR militants against the M23 Movement.

The Eastern African Community (EAC) has also continually worked towards a plausible and feasible peace process between relevant actors. However, the EAC's efforts have proven to be majorly futile due to short-lived ceasefires along with the Congolese government's reservations about the EAC's refusal to station an offensive military force against militant groups. The EAC has also tried to initiate peace talks between the DRC and the militants in Nairobi as part of a larger peace process like the Nairobi



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Declarations, however, the process remains at a deadlock due to the Congolese president's refusal to initiate peace talks with a group they recognise as a terror organisation.

This has created further complications as Congo's distrust in the EAC has only grown, and the President has resorted to seeking military help from the South African Development Community (SADC), to which a positive response has been the SADC's troop mobilization in Eastern Congo in cooperation with the FARDC.

What Does The Humanitarian Situation Look Like?

The humanitarian crisis in Congo represents one of the world's most complex crises of the status quo. The continuous in-fighting has led to more than 6 million dead and more than 7 million people internally displaced.

The crisis presents nearly 25.4 million people currently in need of some form of aid as documented by UN statistics.

The rate of refugee status for civilians in the country has been growing exponentially in recent years, with the number of refugees having grown from nearly 30,000 in 2018 to more than a million in 2024. The recent surge in

violence between the M23 and the government forces has displaced more than half a million people in a short span of 2024 with the situation growing worse.

Neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Tanzania, Malawi etc., having held an open-door policy for years, have been the major states accepting refugees out of Congo.

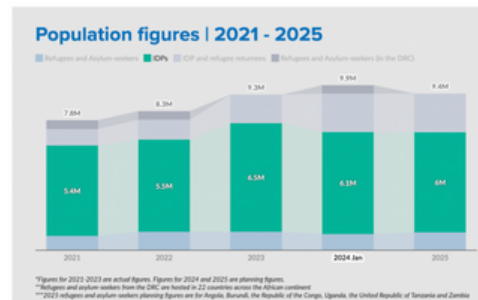


Figure 3: Distribution of Congolese refugees¹⁶

25.6 MILLION

at crisis and emergency levels of food insecurity

6.4 MILLION

people are internally displaced

3.7 MILLION

children and pregnant and breastfeeding women are acutely malnourished

Figure 4: Statistics of humanitarian crisis in Congo by WFP Organisation¹⁷.



Despite stated alarming statistics regarding the scale of catastrophe within the region, the extent of investment, provision of aid and expenditure on covering urgent needs of those in urgent crisis is nowhere near reasonable:

Figure 5: Funding to re-shelter refugees¹⁸

Total requirements (USD)	Funding total (USD)	Funding coverage (%)
2.6B	1.3B	48.76
2024	2024	2024

The crisis has recently seen a sharp rise in the cases of gender-based and sexual violence both against women and children. Crimes against children have risen by a massive amount of 40% ranging from sexual violence to recruitment into militant groups as child soldiers and bonded labourers.

With every form of humanitarian crisis festering and growing across the huge landscape of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a resolution seems far from comprehension, as local parties remain at a deadlock regarding a peace solution, and important international actors refrain from bringing the issue on a greater geopolitical front.

2. Israel-Palestine Conflict

Hamas Offensive

At 6:30 am local time, Hamas carried out an unprecedented attack on Israel by launching thousands of rockets and sending troops on the ground, killing Israeli forces and civilians. This included raids on a music festival near Re'im and attacks on Kfar Azza and Be'eri. According to Israeli sources, a total of 1200-1300 Israelis were killed with over 200 people being held as hostage by Hamas. The sources also accused Hamas of carrying out sexual violence during this attack.

In response to this, President Netanyahu declared a state of "war" and launched a counteroffensive the next day. risen by a massive amount of 40% ranging from sexual violence to recruitment into Since then, thousands of rockets and drone attacks have been carried out by Israel on the Gaza Strip. On 8th October, a military spokesperson stated that Hamas is operating among Palestinian civilians. This statement will later be used repeatedly by Israel's government to justify attacks on highly populated areas in Gaza.

On the 20th and 23rd of October, Hamas released four hostages after talks between the two parties mediated by Qatar.



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However, since then no other hostages On the 20th and 23rd of October, Hamas released four hostages after talks between the two parties mediated by Qatar. However, since then no other hostages have been released with Tel Aviv claiming the killings of most of them by Hamas.

Israeli Offensive

8th October onwards, Israel carried out repeated attacks by both land and air which resulted in more than 44,000 Palestinians being killed including 17,429 children in the Gaza Strip according to the Palestinians Ministry of Health. Israel has hit high-rise buildings including the Rimal neighbourhood in Gaza City, and the Jabalia and Shati refugee camps, resulting in half of the total houses being demolished. Despite the continuous atrocities being committed against Palestinians, two Israeli attacks resulted in a great international outcry.

On 19th October, Israel launched drone attacks on Saint Porphyrius Greek Orthodox Church killing 16 refugees while in April, the largest Gazan hospitals namely Al-Shifa and Nasser became targets of Israeli operations leading to a death toll that exceeded 300. Labelled as war crimes by many countries and international human rights bodies, these incidents will later be taken to the

ICJ to accuse Israel of genocide. Within the West Bank, due to the aggression of Israel's government coupled with attacks by Israeli civilians, the death toll has risen to 785.

Human Rights Crisis

The scale of destruction within the Gaza Strip has been so high that Israel is being accused of "domicide" which refers to the mass destruction of residential and commercial areas to make the place inhabitable. Israel's drone attacks, in addition to increasing the death toll, have also damaged houses, commercial buildings, electricity, water and fuel sources. The takeover of crops by the army has deprived many Palestinians of their source of food and income.





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The Right to Self-Determination of Palestinian People

One of the vital functions of SPECPOL is to address matters of self-determination which play a significant part in the Palestinian issue. Therefore, the committee will be required to discuss any threats to the right of self-determination of Palestinian people and subsequently bring solutions to this issue.

Here the study guide approaches the issue by highlighting a potential for genocide against the Palestinian people which if proven to be true is a significant barrier to providing the right of self-determination to this group.

In a report issued on March 2024 by the UN Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, there are indications of a genocide being committed by Israel in Gaza. The Genocide Convention defines this term in Article 2 as:

“Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”

Using this definition, there are two criteria then left to fulfil to prove a genocide. The first is the intent behind the act and the second is the nature of the act in itself.

Over the past 1 year, President Netanyahu and other Israeli government and military officials have made public statements that raise the question of their intent behind the military operations in Gaza. On 28th October, President Netanyahu stated: “You must remember what Amalek has done to you, says our Holy Bible, and we do remember, and we are fighting”. This biblical reference where the Israelites were asked by God to annihilate their enemies is just one example of such a statement.

The UN report of March believed that 3 out of 5 conditions for genocide have been proven. Due to the mass killings of Palestinian people which have resulted in many lineages going extinct, the reports of torture, sexual violence, kidnapping and use of biochemical weapons and the



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domicide of Gaza the first three conditions seem to have been fulfilled.

The Hezbollah-Israel Issue

Following Hamas’s attack on Israel on 7th October, Hezbollah, a militant group in Lebanon and a declared terrorist group by the United States, launched missiles at Israel in support of Palestinians. In retaliation, Israel’s drone strikes on Lebanese regions have been the cause of 2,083 people getting killed and 9,869 injured in the span of about 1 year. The constant skirmishes between the two parties have resulted in a large-scale displacement issue on the Israel-Lebanon border as well as within the countries. About 608,509 persons are internally displaced in Lebanon with 350,000 being children. Amid the relentless destruction of populated cities of Lebanon including the capital, Beirut, the Israeli military has succeeded in killing several Hezbollah officials as well including commander Fuad Shukr which it claimed was responsible for missile attacks in the Golan Heights regions occupied by Israel. One of Israel’s most recent attacks has been in September of this year when pager mobiles of Hezbollah members detonated killing dozens.

This sudden spike in the Lebanon-Israel conflict points towards regional insecurity and the possibility of a regional

war. United Nations Secretary General condemned the recent incidents claiming that a “New Gaza” might be created in Lebanon. In addition to this, Lebanon is already facing economic instability in light of the country reaching default despite its collaborations with the IMF. The displacement of refugees, poor economic status and the constant threat of an all-out war with Israel pose a threat to the Middle Eastern region.



Figure 8: Statistics of humanitarian crisis in Lebanon due to Israel’s attacks ³⁰.



Iran-Israel Issue

Even though the rivalry between Iran and Israel has existed for decades now, neither of the countries has resorted to excessive military use against each other directly. The Hamas attack on Israel and the Hezbollah support of Palestinians put Iran into the limelight as the country is accused of having ties to both militant groups. The tensions escalated on April 1st 2024, when Israel struck the Iranian consulate in Damascus, killing 13 people including an IRGC major general. In response, Iran launched 300 missiles on the Israeli territory though the damages were minimal. This began a series of rhetorical statements by the government officials of both countries, promising to destroy the other if the need arises. Making the situation worse, on July 31st of this year, Iran assassinated Ismael Haniyah, Hamas leader in Iran. Even though Iran responded in the same fashion by launching aerial attacks on Israel, it failed to reach the outcomes it desired.

The beginning of Joe Biden's government promised better diplomatic relations between Iran and the United States however the recent incidents with the US's close ally have acted to counter any progress made.

3. Sudan Crisis

Sudan has been plunged into a devastating civil war since April 15, 2023, stemming from a power struggle between General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, leader of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, head of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Post-Bashir, Sudan embarked on a transition toward democracy with Hamdok, a civilian member, being appointed as the Prime Minister. Burhan led the Transitional Sovereignty Council, with Hemedti as his deputy, alongside civilian leaders. However, tensions escalated after a military coup in October 2021 ousted civilian Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, sparking mass protests and international condemnation. A December 2022 framework agreement proposed a two-year transition to civilian rule, but disagreements by the public and among the leaders over the RSF's integration into the SAF heightened the rivalry between Burhan and Hemedti.

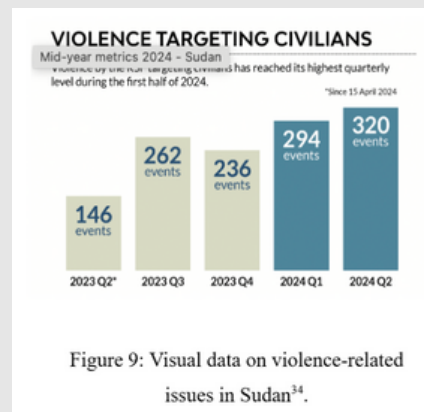


Figure 9: Visual data on violence-related issues in Sudan³⁴.

On April 15, 2023, fighting erupted in Khartoum following months of military buildup with neither side taking responsibility for initiating violence. The SAF and RSF clashed over strategic control of the capital, while conflict spread to Darfur, South Kordofan, and other regions. The civil war has led to the death of about 15 million people and displaced about 8.2 million within Sudan. The neighbouring countries like Chad have seen an influx of more than 2 million refugees. Due to damage to the public infrastructure, about 70% of the hospitals are not working anymore.

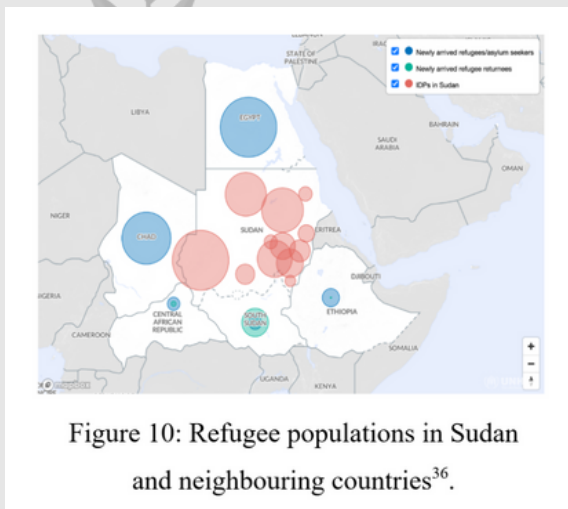


Figure 10: Refugee populations in Sudan and neighbouring countries³⁶.

The SAF, backed by Egypt, gained ground through the use of Iranian-supplied drones, while the RSF reportedly received arms and support from the Wagner Group and the UAE. The infighting can be categorized over three major regions of Sudan: Khartoum, Darfur and Kordofan.

Even though the power struggle has not allowed for any one party or militia to come forward as the winner, different regions are marked by the dominating presence of a certain party. Khartoum is largely under the control of SAF however this has not been possible without the massive support it had from other militias. With the outbreak of violence between SAF and RSF, SAF called for a mobilisation which was accepted by Popular Defence Forces, Sudan Entity Forces, an Islamist militia, al Baraa ibn Malik and sometimes later by the ethnic and communal militias. This alliance together is known as Popular Resistance. In its response, RSF received support from Sudan Shield Forces, the Tamazuj armed group, among several other ethnic militias.

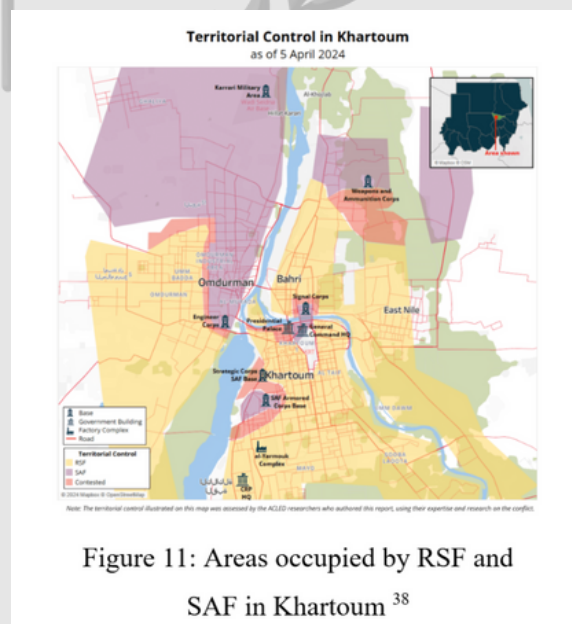


Figure 11: Areas occupied by RSF and SAF in Khartoum³⁸



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The Darfur region, initially under SAF's control has recently seen a growing influence of RSF in most territories. RSF's victory in Darfur was marked by two events. First, the killing of Khamis Abakar, the governor of West Darfur and the leader of the predominantly Masalit Sudanese Alliance supported by SAF which allowed RSF to establish its own government in West Darfur. Second, the cease of Infantry Divisions of SAF by RSF in the capital of South Darfur, nyala, handed this territory to RSF forces as well.

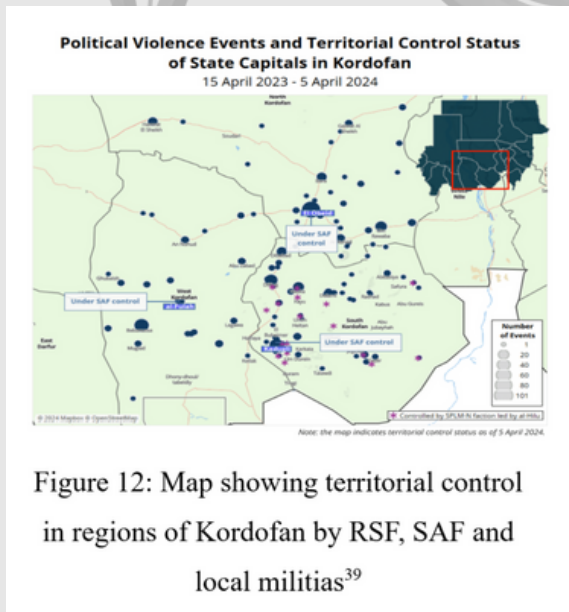


Figure 12: Map showing territorial control in regions of Kordofan by RSF, SAF and local militias³⁹

Economic Turmoil

Sudan had already been nearing default nearer to 2023 before the start of the recent civil war. The destruction brought about by the current conflict has halted most industrial activities due to the constant threat of violence and damage to public infrastructure. According to the IMF, Sudan's GDP contracted by 18.3% in 2023 while the country's exports of livestock, oil, and cotton among other products collapsed by the start of 2024

Key Stakeholders

Multinational Companies

Apple

Apple, one of the largest tech companies in the world, has come under scrutiny by Congo regarding its supply chain practices. A group of international lawyers representing Congo recently sent a letter to Apple's CEO and its French subsidiary, questioning the methods used to verify the integrity of Apple's supply chain. The concern arises from the ongoing conflict in the mineral rich region of Eastern Congo, where armed groups have been fighting for control over valuable minerals. It has been alleged that Apple purchases its raw materials from armed groups which are spreading violence in the region. While

Apple has denied that its mineral purchases contribute to funding these armed groups or perpetuate violence, the issue remains highly contentious. This debate is further strengthened by the fact that Apple presents Rwanda as the mineral supplier even though the country has very few reserves of its own. Congo has also accused Rwanda of funding M23, an armed rebel group, which has also been corroborated by the United Nations.

BDS Movement



Figure 13: Specific targets of BDS Movement

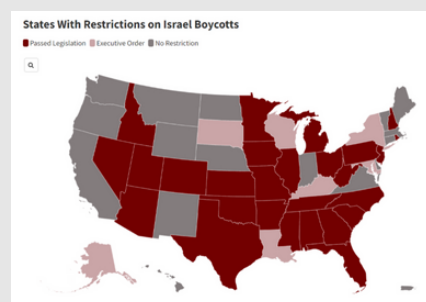
The BDS (boycott, divestment and sanction) movement was launched in 2005. The movement aimed to “impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era”. This movement was highly inspired by the sanctions movement which helped to end South African apartheid.

The parallel between them was drawn to showcase the parallel between Israel’s policies towards Palestine and the apartheid’s racism showcasing the long standing notions and internalised ideas against different groups.

The BDS movement has three major goals:

1. “Ending Israel’s occupation and colonisation of all Arab lands and dismantling the West Bank barrier wall.”
2. “Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality.”
3. “Respecting, protecting, and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194”.

The BDS movement has received mixed responses from the public. Several states have termed the movement as anti semitic and passed anti-BDS laws to tackle this. In the US, several states (shown in the map) have made it illegal to work with companies that boycott Israel.





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Several other countries that have passed anti- BDS legislation include Canada, Spain, Germany and Austria.

However, the movement has seen substantial success. The boycotts have assisted in raising awareness and causing consumers to shift to other goods. This is evident by “Starbucks seeing a 8.96 percent loss, losing \$11 billion in market value in just a few weeks”.

Other Nations

USA

The US government has strongly supported Israel’s right to defend itself and even vetoed resolutions calling for a ceasefire in the Gaza region.

The US has also showcased its support to the Democratic Republic of Congo by providing assistance to end the conflict that persists in the region. The US has provided more than \$1.7 billion in health assistance to the DRC over the past 20 years and has worked with the DRC for decades to fight infectious diseases like Ebola, measles, and HIV/AIDS. It has also facilitated peace talks between the leaders of Congo and Rwanda.

UK

UK is closely working with a number of other countries and organisations, including its Troika (UK, US and

Norway) and Quad (UK, US, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) partners to establish peace in the region of Sudan.

China

China has a complex economic and military relationship with the DRC. China is one of the major suppliers of arms to the government of DRC. Moreover, China has negotiated deals with the Congolese government which has given it access to metals that it can use in production.

Uganda

Reports have been put forward by the UN that suggests that one of the well armed rebel groups, M23, not only has the support of Rwanda but also Uganda.

Burundi

Burundi shares close borders with DRC that has resulted in a huge spillover effect in the country. It currently hosts over 80,000 refugees from the country. Burundi has also provided military assistance to the government of DRC on various occasions.



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Russia

Russia has been continuously providing arms to RSF through the Wagner group which is a private military company closely linked to the Russian government.

International Organizations

International Criminal Court

ICC has prosecuted several militia leaders who were responsible for conducting war crimes during the second Congo war.

ICC has also strived to pursue accountability for the war crimes conducted during the Darfur conflict. However, it has been met with a lack of cooperation as well as non-compliance from the Sudanese government.

ICC has also received numerous complaints against Israel due to the war crimes carried out in Gaza. However, as Israel has not signed the Roman Statue, its jurisdiction over the matter is highly disputed.

European Union

The EU has facilitated negotiations between Israel and Palestine. It endorses the terms of a two state solution based on the boundaries of 1967. It has also provided humanitarian aid to the people in Palestine.

Along with providing humanitarian aid in DRC, EU also provides economic aid in the region to facilitate the development of the private sector in the region.

The EU has also condemned the fighting between SAF and RSF. It has tried to facilitate peace talks between the two groups while also providing humanitarian aid to the civilians.

African Union

The AU has repeatedly requested the SAF and RSF to implement a ceasefire. Furthermore, in 2019, the AU Peace and Security Council also suspended Sudan from participating in any AU activities until the restoration of democracy in the region.

Past UN Actions

The United Nations – African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)





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UNAMID was established on 31 July 2007 with the adoption of Security Resolution 1769. This resolution authorised combining a new UN operation with the efforts of AU's existing peacekeeping force, African Union Mission in Sudan.

The core mandate of UNAMID is to protect civilians. However, it also protects the human rights in the region by assisting in the implementation of Darfur Peace Agreement and providing aid to those affected by the conflict.

United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS)

Due to an improvement in the security situation of Sudan, UNAMID slowly began to withdraw from the region. This mission was then replaced by UNITAMS whose mandate was to support the transition process of Sudan. However, UNITAMS also closed on 29th February 2024 in accordance with UN Resolution 2715.

United Nations Reliefs and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the near East (UNRWA)

UNRWA was established after the 1948 war to provide relief for the Palestine refugees. It's services include education,

health care, relief and social services as well as emergency assistance.

UNRWA is funded by the UN member states including regional governments and European Union. However, several countries, including US, Italy, Canada and Finland, have suspended aid to UNRWA post 7th October.

United Nations Operations in the Congo (ONUC)

ONUC was a peacekeeping force deployed by the UN in Congo in July 1960 to help restore order in the region and ensure the withdrawal of Belgian forces. The function was later modified to also include "preventing the occurrence of civil war in the region and maintaining the territorial integrity of Congo".

United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC)

MONUC was established in November 1999 following the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. The goal of MONUC was to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and protecting civilians in conflict zones.



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United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)

MONUC was replaced by MONUSCO in 2010. While MONUSCO has a similar mandate to MONUC, it also involves supporting the government of DRC in its efforts to establish peace in the region.

United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)

UNTSO is the first ever peacekeeping mission that was established by United Nations. Ever since its inception in May 1948, UNTSO aims to monitor ceasefires and promote peace in the Middle East.

Potential Solutions

Quartet on the Middle East

The Quartet on the Middle East includes four entities (UN, US, EU and Russia) that have engaged in mediating peace talks between Israel and Palestine.

However, it has been severely criticised for a lack of development in promoting the peace process.

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The Quartet on the Middle East includes four entities (UN, US, EU and Russia) that have engaged in mediating peace talks between Israel and Palestine.

However, it has been severely criticised for a lack of development in promoting the peace process. The UN has led several awareness campaigns to raise awareness regarding the conflicts in Palestine, Sudan and Congo.

One such campaign is “Dignity for All” that was launched by UNRWA. It aimed to raise awareness regarding the challenges faced by Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

International Peacekeeping Forces

The UN has deployed peacekeeping forces, such as the MONUC, in these conflict driven regions.

These forces are generally funded by the UN regular budget with military and personnel contributions from the member states.

QARMA

1. How can we differentiate between “the right to self defence” and colonisation?
2. What other funding mechanisms can be implemented by the UN to support its peacekeeping operations?



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3. How can the Quartet on the Middle East increase its efficacy?
4. What restrictions (if any) should be placed on multinational corporations which are extracting resources from conflict-driven regions?
5. Does the suspension of conflict-driven regions, such as Sudan, from international agencies, such as AU, slow down the mediation process?

Additional Resources

1. Apple accused by Congo over conflict minerals in iPhones
2. What is the BDS movement?
3. State Anti-BDS Legislation
4. A Brief Explanation of Second Congo War | Africa's "World" War



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